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Family Planning Advice in State-Socialist Poland, 1950s–1980s: Local and Transnational Exchanges

Abstract: This paper scrutinises the relations between different models of family planning advice and their evolution in Poland between the mid-1950s and the late 1980s, focusing on their similarities and dissimilarities, conflicts and concordances. From 1956 onwards, the delivery of family planning advice became a priority for both the Polish Catholic Church and the party-state, especially its health authorities, which supported the foundation of the Society of Conscious Motherhood and aspired to mainstream birth control advice through the network of public well-woman clinics. As a consequence, two systems of family planning counselling emerged: the professional, secular family planning movement and Catholic premarital and marital counselling. We argue that reciprocal influence and emulation existed between state-sponsored and Catholic family planning in state-socialist Poland, and that both models used transnational organisations and debates relating to contraception for their construction and legitimisation. By evaluating the extent to which the strategies and practices for the delivery of birth control advice utilised by transnational birth control movements were employed in a ‘second world’ context such as Poland, we reveal unexpected supranational links that complicate and problematise historiographical and popular understandings of the Iron Curtain and Cold War Europe.

Key words: family planning services; family planning activism; state-socialist Poland; Catholic family planning; history of contraception; history of reproductive health

Introduction

Despite a widespread and on-going perception of the ‘socialist bloc’ as a homogenous entity, demographers and sociologists had demonstrated by the late 1980s that the nations involved

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did not have uniform reproductive and population policies.¹ While several countries, including Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Yugoslavia, followed the USSR's lead in the mid-1950s and liberalised abortion laws, others continued to strictly limit access to terminations. Legal requirements were only relaxed in the German Democratic Republic (GDR) during the late 1960s and in Albania after the collapse of communism, while one of the most liberal abortion policies in Europe, enacted in Romania during 1957, was replaced by the notoriously oppressive Decree 770 a decade later. Attitudes to contraception also diverged. Demographers have reported that in many state-socialist countries, such as Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia and Soviet Russia, abortion was the primary method employed to limit family size.² In Russia in particular, contraceptives were viewed with suspicion by both doctors and women, perhaps due to the virtual nonexistence of family planning advice services and limited access to the pill and IUD.³ Yet, these modern contraceptive methods were widely distributed and easily available in other state-socialist countries, including the GDR,

¹ Henry P. David (ed.), *From Abortion to Contraception: A Resource to Public Policies and Reproductive Behavior in Central and Eastern Europe from 1917 to the Present* (Westport, Conn. and London: Greenwood Press, 1999); Andrzej Kulczycki, *The Abortion Debate in the World Arena* (New York: Routledge, 1999); Andrzej Kulczycki, 'Abortion Policy in Post-communist Europe: The Conflict in Poland', *Population and Development Review*, 21, 3 (1995), 471-505; Andrej A. Popov, 'Family Planning and Induced Abortion in the USSR: Basic Health and Demographic Characteristics', *Studies in Family Planning*, 6, 22 (1991), 368-77; Alena Heitlinger, *Reproduction, Medicine and the Socialist State* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1987); Gail Kligman, *The Politics of Duplicity: Controlling Reproduction in Ceausescu's Romania* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998); Loren Anton, Yoshie Mitobe, and Kristina Schulz, 'Politics of Reproduction in a Divided Europe. Abortion, Protest Movements and State Intervention after the Second World War', in Kathrin Fahlenbrach et al. (eds), *The 'Establishment' Responds. Power and Protest during and after Cold War* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012); Rada Drezgić, 'Policies and Practices of Fertility Control under the State Socialism', *The History of the Family*, 15, 2 (2010), 191-205.

² Vladimir Wynnyczuk and Radim Uzel, 'Czech Republic and Slovak Republic', in David, *op. cit.* (note 1); Dimitar Vassilev, 'Bulgaria', in David, *op. cit.* (note 1).

³ Andrej A. Popov and Henry P. David, 'The USSR', in David, *op. cit.* (note 1), 241-48.

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Yugoslavia and Hungary, where various forms of public family planning advice centres functioned within socialist health systems.⁴

Family planning policies and practices in Poland only partially mirrored the models and activities in other 'Bloc' countries. With abortion initially legalised in 1956, the addition of a 1959 decree had made the procedure practically available on demand, with state hospitals admitting women for terminations free of charge. However, doctors and family planning activists involved in popularization of family planning consistently depicted abortion as a dangerous surgery that should only be used as a last resort, and recommended contraception as the preferable alternative.⁵ In fact, from the late 1950s onwards, Polish authorities declared the provision of contraceptive advice and products a public health priority.

Additions to the 1956 law obliged doctors who performed terminations, whether in public hospitals or private surgeries, to instruct women about contraception, and legislated for the creation of a network of well-woman clinics, *Poradnie K (kobiety* [women]), as the main sites for this instruction. In addition, a voluntary association founded under the auspices of the Ministry of Health in 1957, the Society for Conscious Motherhood (henceforth Society), went on to open their own clinics, supplying birth control advice for a modest fee. The Cold War notwithstanding, the Society maintained a close relationship with Western family planning organisations such as the British Family Planning Association from the mid-1950s, and the

⁴ Jurgen Dorbritz and Jochen Fleischhacker, 'The Former German Democratic Republic', in David, *op. cit.* (note 1), 137-8; Henry P. David, 'Hungary', in David, *op. cit.* (note 1), 153-8; Nila Kapor-Stanulovic and Henry P. David, 'Former Yugoslavia and Successor States', in David, *op. cit.* (note 1), 303; Meredith Philip and Lyn Thomas, 'Planned Parenthood in Europe in the 1980s. A Human Rights Perspective,' 1985, 83, 87, 124. Report located in the Archives of Instituto de la Mujer in Madrid, IM-LO005346.

⁵ Agata Ignaciuk, 'Ten szkodliwy zabieg. Dyskursy na temat aborcji w publikacjach Towarzystwa Świadomego Macierzyństwa/Towarzystwa Planowania Rodziny (1956-1980)', *Zeszyty Etnologii Wrocławskiej*, 20, 1 (2014), 75-97.

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International Planned Parenthood Federation, becoming a member in 1958. The Polish Catholic Church also provided followers with information through premarital courses and Church family advice, including advice on which methods were Church-approved and which were not.

This article examines the development of different models of family planning advice in state-socialist Poland after 1956 using a wide range of print and archival sources. Apart from local press or Polish and international professional literature on family planning, in our scrutiny we rely on the publications of the Society such as manuals and brochures, a bi-monthly *Problemy Rodziny* [*Family Issues*], archival collections of local branches of the Society in Cracow and Poznań as well as the collection of the Ministry of Health and of Educational Film Studios in Lodz. For our analysis of Catholic ‘responsible parenthood’ advice, we use published manuals on marriage and family planning aimed at Catholic spouses and archival materials, including brochures, scripts, and programmes located in the collection of the Department of the Chaplaincy of Families of the Cracow Metropolitan Curia Archive and the archival collection of the Section of the Families of Warsaw Catholic Intelligentsia Club.

Our article examines the relations between different models of family planning advice and their evolution in subsequent decades of state socialism, as well as their similarities and dissimilarities, conflicts and concordances. While commercial medical practice existed in state-socialist Poland and gynaecologists delivered family planning advice in private surgeries and medical cooperatives, this paper focuses on services designed to be accessible and universal – those sponsored, in a broad sense, by the State and by the Catholic Church. We argue that reciprocal influence and emulation existed between state-sponsored and Catholic

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family planning in state-socialist Poland, and that both models used transnational organisations and debates relating to contraception for their construction and legitimisation.

By evaluating the extent to which the strategies and practices for the delivery of birth control advice utilised by transnational birth control movements were employed in a ‘second world’ context such as Poland, we reveal unexpected supranational links that complicate and problematise historiographical and popular understandings of the Iron Curtain and Cold War Europe. We situate our work alongside emerging scholarship that places the previously neglected region of Central and Eastern Europe within the international history of family planning movements.⁶

The majority of scholarship on family planning advice has focused on birth control clinics established in Europe and the United States by voluntary organisations and social movements for birth control, during the inter-war years and the decades following the Second World War.⁷ Historians of the United States have emphasised the voluntary and charitable

⁶ Amy E. Randall, “‘Abortion Will Deprive You of Happiness!’: Soviet Reproductive Politics in the Post-Stalin Era”, *Journal of Women’s History*, 23, 3 (2011), 13-38; Mie Nakachi, ‘Liberation without Contraception? The Rise of the Abortion Empire and Pronatalism in Socialist and Postsocialist Russia’, in Rickie Solinger and Mie Nakachi (eds), *Reproductive States: Global Perspectives on the Invention and Implementation of Population Policy* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 290-328; Yuliya Hilevych and Chizu Sato, ‘Popular Medical Discourses on Birth Control in the Soviet Union during the Cold War: Shifting Responsibilities and Relational Values’, in Ann-Katrin Gembris and Theresia Theuke (eds), *Children by Choice? Changing Values, Reproduction and Family Planning in the 20th Century* (Berlin: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2018), 99-121; Eszter Varsa, ‘The Gypsy Population is Constantly Growing: Roma and the Politics of Reproduction in Cold War Hungary’, in Heike Karge, Friederike Kind-Kovacs and Sara Bernasconi (eds), *From the Midwife’s Bag to the Patient’s File: Public Health in Eastern Europe* (Budapest: CEU Press, 2017), 263-91.

⁷ Atina Grossmann, *Reforming Sex: The German Movement for Birth Control and Abortion Reform, 1920–1950* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995); James Woycke, *Birth Control in Germany, 1870-1930* (London and New York: Routledge 1988); Angus McLaren and Arlene Tigar McLaren, *The Bedroom and the State: The Changing Practices and Politics of Contraception and Abortion in Canada, 1880-1980* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1986); Hera Cook, *The Long Sexual Revolution: English Women, Sex and Contraception, 1800-1975* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).

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character of clinic provision, its functioning in ‘the market of birth control’, and the salient role of local organisations in establishing and running birth control advice centres.⁸ A similar approach can be noted in scholarship on family planning advice in inter-war Europe highlighting the early initiatives of such prominent birth control movement leaders as Marie Stopes in Great Britain.⁹ Recent work in British and Irish historiography has explored the roles played by a tradition of voluntary activism, the presence of women doctors and opposition by the Catholic Church in local-level birth control advice initiatives.¹⁰ Little attention has been paid to more recent developments influenced by 1967 legislation that made abortion accessible or the free provision of contraceptive advice by local medical authorities operating within the National Health Service since 1972.¹¹ The role of state-funded medicine in family planning advice is a distinct historiographical gap that needs to be filled. Our article,

⁸ Cathy Moran Hajo, *Birth Control on Main Street: Organizing Clinics in the United States, 1916-1939* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2010); Rose Holz, *The Birth Control Clinic in a Market Place World* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2012); Jimmy Elaine Wilkinson Meyer, *Any Friend to the Movement: Networking for Birth Control, 1920-1940* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2004).

⁹ Audrey Leathard, *The Fight for Family Planning: The Development of Family Planning Services in Britain* (London: Macmillan, 1980); Richard Allen Soloway, *Birth Control and the Population Question in England, 1877-1930* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982); Robert A. Peel (ed.), *Marie Stopes, Eugenics and the English Birth Control Movement* (London: Galton Institute, 1996); Clare Debenham, *Birth Control and the Rights of Women: Post-Suffrage Feminism in the Early Twentieth Century* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2014); Clare Debenham, *Marie Stopes' Sexual Revolution and the Birth Control Movement* (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).

¹⁰ For example Kate Fisher, *Birth Control, Sex, and Marriage in Britain 1918-1960* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2006); Leanne McCormick, ‘“The Scarlet Woman in Person”: The Establishment of Family Planning Service in Northern Ireland, 1950-1974,’ *Social History of Medicine*, 21, 1 (2008), 345-60; Leanne McCormick, *Regulating Sexuality: Women in Twentieth Century Northern Ireland* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2009); Emma L. Jones, ‘The Establishment of Voluntary Family Planning Clinics in Liverpool and Bradford, 1926-1960: A Comparative Study,’ *Social History of Medicine*, 24, 2 (2010), 352-69; Julie Grier, ‘Eugenics and Birth Control: Contraceptive Provision in North Wales, 1918-1939,’ *Social History of Medicine*, 22, 3 (1998), 443-48; Kristen Elliott, ‘Birth Control Clinics in Scotland, 1926-c.1939,’ *Journal of Scottish Historical Studies*, 34, 2 (2014), 199-217.

¹¹ Leathard, *op. cit.* (note 9); Roger Davidson and Gayle Davis, *Sexual State: Sexuality and Scottish Governance, 1950-80* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012).

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albeit addressing the issue in a different political context, is intended to stimulate discussion in this area.

Scholarly debate relating to post-1945 developments in international family planning has largely been dominated by the so-called ‘overpopulation’ paradigm. While for the inter-war years historians have stressed the presence of eugenic discourse in birth control propaganda and collaboration between eugenicists and birth control proponents,¹² publications on international family planning initiatives since the 1950s have emphasised the efforts of ‘first world’ countries to control ‘third world’ populations.¹³ Matthew Connelly’s influential *Fatal Misconception: The Struggle to Control World Population* published in 2008 has particularly dominated discussions of post-war family planning developments.¹⁴ Purportedly a ‘global history’ and advertised as such, *Fatal Misconception* entirely ignores the Soviet Bloc and the presence and role of socialist countries in the international movement for planned parenthood. More recent scholarly insights into this topic, such as *Figuring the Population Bomb* by Carol R. McCann, do not go beyond a ‘first world’/‘third world’

¹² Grossmann, *op. cit.* (note 7); Peel, *op. cit.* (note 9); Richard Allen Soloway, *Demography and Degeneration: Eugenics and the Declining Birthrate in Twentieth Century Britain* (Chapel Hill: the University of North Carolina Press, 1990); Gisela Bock, *Zwangssterilisation im Nationalsozialismus: Studien zur Rassenpolitik und Frauenpolitik* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1986); Paul Weindling, *Health, Race and German Politics between National Unification and Nazism, 1870–1945* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989); Cornelia Osborne, *The Politics of the Body in Weimar Germany: Women’s Reproductive Rights and Duties* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992); Richard David Sohn, ‘“Your Body is Yours”: Anarchism, Birth Control and Eugenics in Interwar France’, *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 14, 4 (2005), 415-32; Jane Carey, ‘The Racial Imperatives of Sex: Birth Control and Eugenics in Britain, the United States and Australia in the Interwar Years’, *Women’s History Review*, 21, 5 (2012), 733-52.

¹³ Alison Bashford, *Global Population: History, Geopolitics, and Life on Earth* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014); Matthew Connelly, *Fatal Misconception: The Struggle to Control World Population* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2008); Carol R. McCann, *Figuring the Population Bomb: Gender and Demography in the Mid-Twentieth Century* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2017).

¹⁴ Connelly, *ibid.*

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dichotomy despite efforts to embrace gender perspectives.¹⁵ Our article sheds light on developments in the previously underrepresented region and prompts an evaluation of post-Second World War paradigms in research on family planning initiatives. One such emerging paradigm is ‘transnationalism’, a scholarship to which our paper is intended to contribute.¹⁶

With regard to Poland, while research pertaining to twentieth-century reproductive and population policies has recently increased, this has tended to focus predominantly on inter-war debates and the movement for ‘conscious motherhood’, as birth control was euphemistically entitled.¹⁷ Scholarly discussion on reproductive politics in the post-1945 years has so far concentrated on abortion, pro-natalism and the provision of contraceptives, particularly the oral contraceptive pill.¹⁸ Likewise, while the history of twentieth-century intersections between Catholicism and contraception have attracted increasing attention from

¹⁵ McCann, *op. cit.* (note 13).

¹⁶ Heinrich Hartmann and Corinna R. Unger (eds), *A World of Populations: Transnational Perspectives on Demography in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2014).

¹⁷ Dobrochna Kałwa, ‘Głos kobiet w sprawie planowania rodziny w świetle prasy z lat 1929-1932’, in Anna Żarnowska and Andrzej Szwarc (eds), *Kobieta i kultura życia codziennego. Wiek XIX i XX* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo DiG, 1997), 123-32; Magdalena Gawin, ‘Planowanie rodziny – hasła i rzeczywistość’, in Anna Żarnowska and Andrzej Szwarc (eds), *Równe prawa i nierówne szanse: kobiety w Polsce międzywojennej* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo DiG, 2000), 213-34.

¹⁸ 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: Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 2012), 99-186; Barbara Klich-Kluczevska, ‘Making Up for the Losses of War: Reproduction Politics in Post-War Poland’, in Maren Roger and Ruth Leiserowitz (eds), *Women and Men at War: A Gender Perspective on World War II and its Aftermath in Central and Eastern Europe* (Osnabruck: Fibre Verlag, 2012), 307-28; Barbara Klich-Kluczevska, ‘Biopolitics and (Non)Modernity: Population Micro-Policy, Expert Knowledge and Family in Late-Communist Poland’, *Acta Poloniae Historica*, 115 (2017), 151-74; Michael Zok, ‘Wider die “angeborene und nationale Mission der Frau”? Gesellschaftliche Auseinandersetzungen um Abtreibungen in Polen seit der Entstalinisierung’ *Zeitschrift für Ostmitteleuropa-Forschung/Journal of East Central European Studies*, 68, 2 (2019): 249-78; Sylwia Kuźma-Markowska, ‘Walka z “babkami” o zdrowie kobiet: medykalizacja przerywania ciąży w Polsce w latach pięćdziesiątych i sześćdziesiątych XX wieku’, *Polska 1944/45-1989. Studia i Materiały*, 15 (2017), 189-215; Agata Ignaciuk, ‘Clueless about Contraception: The Introduction and Circulation of the Contraceptive Pill in State-socialist Poland (1960s-1970s)’, *Medicina nei Secoli*, 26, 2 (2014), 509-35.

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scholars in America,¹⁹ and more recently Europe,²⁰ Catholic family planning in state-socialist countries – Poland included – has, with a few exceptions,²¹ been particularly neglected, and restricted to memoirs or theological reflexions by priests and doctors involved in shaping the theoretical background and local provision of ‘family advice’ by the Polish Catholic Church from the mid-1950s onwards.²² While these academic and non-academic accounts shed a degree of light on the development of Catholic family planning advice in post-war Poland, the full history awaits systematic study.

¹⁹ Leslie Woodcock Tentler, *Catholics and Contraception: An American History* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004); Raúl Necochea López, ‘Priests and Pills: Catholic Family Planning in Peru, 1967–1976’, *Latin American Research Review*, 43, 2 (2008), 34-54; Karina Felitti, ‘La Iglesia Católica y el Control de la Natalidad en Tiempos de Concilio: La Recepción de la Encíclica Humanae Vitae (1968) en Argentina’, *Anuario IEHS*, 22 (2007), 349-72.

²⁰ Alana Harris (ed.), *The Schism of '68: Catholicism, Contraception and Humanae Vitae in Europe, 1945-1975* (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2018), includes two chapters on Central and Eastern Europe: Agnieszka Kościańska, ‘Humanae Vitae, Birth Control and the Forgotten History of the Catholic Church in Poland’, 187-208; Mary Heinmann and Gábor Szegdi, ‘Catholicism behind the Iron Curtain: Czechoslovak and Hungarian Responses to Humanae Vitae’, 303-48.

²¹ Katarzyna Jarkiewicz, ‘Primum non nocere. Stanowisko środowiska medycznego wobec problemu aborcji a jego relacje z Kościołem w okresie Wielkiej Nowenny (1956–1966)’, *Pamięć i Sprawiedliwość*, 30, 2 (2017), 398-433; Katarzyna Jarkiewicz, ‘“W obronie życia nienarodzonych”. Głos Kościoła i środowisk katolickich w debacie okołaborcyjnej w okresie Wielkiej Nowenny (1956–1966)’, *Pamięć i Sprawiedliwość*, 29, 1 (2017), 137-75.

²² These memoirs and similar accounts include: Włodzimierz Fijałkowski, *Moja droga do prawdy* (Katowice: Księgarnia św. Jacka, 1991); Władysław Gasidło, *Duszpasterska troska Kardynała Wojtyły o rodzinę* (Kraków: Wydział Duszpasterstwa Rodzin Kurii Metropolitalnej ‘Czuwajmy’, 1996); Elżbieta Sujak, *Charyzmat zaangażowania. Życie Teresy Strzembosz* (Warszawa: Instytut Wydawniczy ‘Pax’, 1988); Benedykta Perzanowska, *Teresa Strzembosz i jej dzieło poradnictwa rodzinnego w Polsce* (Łomianki: Fundacja ‘Pomoc Rodzinie’, 2010); Jerzy Buxakowski, *Wprowadzenie do teologii duszpasterstwa rodzin* (Pelplin: Wydawnictwo Bernardinum, 1999); Kazimierz Majdański, *Ocalić prawdę o rodzinie* (Łomianki: Fundacja ‘Pomoc Rodzinie’, 2000); Adam Skreczko, *Troska Kościoła katolickiego w Polsce o małżeństwo i rodzinę w okresie Wielkiej Nowenny (1957-1966): studium teologiczno-pastoralne* (Białystok: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu w Białymstoku, 2002); Piotr Sukiennik, ‘Rys historyczny działalności duszpasterstwa rodzin w Polsce ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem archidiecezji krakowskiej’, *Studia nad Rodziną*, 10, 1-2 (2006), 315-22.

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Secular family planning advice: public healthcare and the Polish family planning organisation

The Society for Conscious Motherhood played a pivotal role in the early years of family planning advice in state-socialist Poland. Comprised of birth control enthusiasts, the Society developed and subsequently attempted to implement a model of family planning advice throughout the health care system. In this section, following a brief introduction to the organisation and its international associations, we present the tenets of secular family planning advice the Society attempted to disseminate across Poland. We also discuss legislation pertaining to contraceptive advice in the public health care system and the implementation of birth control advice in well-woman clinics. Moreover, we describe the development of the Society's own birth control clinics, initiated at the turn of the 1960s and expanded during the 1970s. Finally, we focus on the difficulties the Society and its clinics encountered with the ascendancy of Catholic contraceptive doctrine in Poland during the 1980s, and the Society's response.

Family planning advice centres were initially established in Poland during the 1930s by voluntary organisations, and doctors and activists from socialist, eugenic and literary backgrounds.²³ Many of these inter-war birth control advocates would also be involved with the Society during the 1950s, driving cooperation with gynaecologists and family planning advocates in Western Europe. Even before this time, many of the Polish doctors who would later fill Society ranks were liaising with the Family Planning Association (henceforth FPA)

²³ Gawin, *op. cit.* (note 7).

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of Great Britain.²⁴ Barbara Evans, biographer of FPA leader Helena Wright, has argued that Wright's visit to Warsaw in November 1957 directly contributed to the decision to restart a Polish family planning association.²⁵ Over the following years, Society gynaecologists and lay leaders from various branches visited London, testing Polish contraceptive devices at FPA headquarters and learning about the British association's activism and operation.²⁶ As Evans claims, the structure and organisation of the Society and its clinics emulated a British model that emphasised a broad and holistic approach to reproductive health.²⁷

Almost since its founding, the Society also had close ties with the most prominent transnational family planning organisation at the time: the International Planned Parenthood Federation (henceforth IPPF). Established in India in 1952, IPPF had become the hub of population and reproductive policies for the global family planning movement.²⁸ In 1958, forsaking organisations in other state-socialist countries, the Society became affiliated with the IPPF region of Europe–Near East–Africa, the headquarters of which were situated in London.²⁹ As a result, the Society benefited from the international transfer of contraceptive information from its early years, acquiring contraceptive know-how and establishing contacts with Western birth control activists despite Cold War conditions.

²⁴ Sylwia Kuźma-Markowska, 'Międzynarodowe aspekty działalności Towarzystwa Świadomego Macierzyństwa w latach 50. i 60. XX w.', in Bożena Płonka-Syroka and Aleksandra Szlagowska (eds), *Problem kontroli urodzeń i antykoncepcji. Krytyczno-porównawcza analiza dyskursów* (Wrocław: Uniwersytet Medyczny im. Piastów Śląskich, 2013), 263-82.

²⁵ Barbara Evans, *Freedom to Choose: the Life and Work of Dr. Helena Wright, Pioneer of Contraception* (London: Bodley Head, 1984).

²⁶ Kuźma-Markowska, 'Międzynarodowe aspekty', *op. cit.* (note 24).

²⁷ Evans, *op. cit.* (note 25); Leathard, *op. cit.* (note 9).

²⁸ Beryl Suitters, *Be Brave and Angry: Chronicles of the International Planned Parenthood Federation* (London: International Planned Parenthood Federation, 1973).

²⁹ Kuźma-Markowska, 'Międzynarodowe aspekty', *op. cit.* (note 24).

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As Society president Marcin Kacprzak emphasised, the association was not intended to create its own clinic network but rather develop family planning advice in close cooperation with the public health care system and ‘maintain and propagate the policies of the state’. The objective was to ‘advise and aid state health care institutions’ that were providing contraceptive information to Polish women. The provision of contraception – a requirement of the social health service after a number of regulations following the 1956 abortion law – was inscribed in the public health narrative of preventive medicine, promoted as the desirable alternative to abortion.³⁰

The 1959 Executive Order to the 1956 abortion law, which simplified the procedure of referring a woman for a termination, obliged the doctor issuing the referral to inform her about contraceptive methods, prescribe a suitable method, inform her about the necessity of post-abortion check-up and of visiting a women’s and conscious motherhood clinic regularly.³¹ The Ministry of Health, renamed the Ministry of Health and Social Assistance (henceforth MHSA) in 1960, also issued instructions in 1957, 1960, and 1963 concerning the setting up of permanent contraceptive vending points in outpatient women’s health clinics within the public system.³²

³⁰ Marcin Kacprzak, ‘Rzut oka w przyszłość,’ *Problemy Rodziny*, 25, 5 (1965), 6. On public health campaign popularising contraception: Agata Ignaciuk, ‘No Man’s Land? Gendering Contraception in Family Planning Advice Literature in State-Socialist Poland’, *Social History of Medicine* (2019), advanced online version, <https://doi.org/10.1093/shm/hkz007>

³¹ ‘Rozporządzenie Ministra Zdrowia z dnia 19 grudnia 1959 w sprawie przerywania ciąży’, *Dziennik Ustaw*, 2 (1959), 32.

³² ‘Zarządzenie (1) z dnia 19 kwietnia 1957 w sprawie organizacji sprzedaży środków antykoncepcyjnych w pomieszczeniach zakładów opieki zdrowotnej otwartej; Instrukcja Ministra Zdrowia i Opieki Społecznej z 28 lipca 1960 w sprawie punktów sprzedaży środków antykoncepcyjnych’, reproduced in Michalina Wisłocka, *Metody Zapobiegania Cięży* (Warszawa: Towarzystwo Świadomego Macierzyństwa, 1965), 26-30; ‘Instrukcja nr 19/63 Ministra Zdrowia i Opieki Społecznej z dnia 12 kwietnia 1963 w sprawie popularyzowania przez zakłady społecznej

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At the turn of the 1960s, the early years of family planning campaigning in state-socialist Poland, healthcare authorities and Society members designed a two-level system of state family planning advice. The higher tier consisted of eighteen ‘conscious motherhood’ clinics, one in each voivodeship, to demonstrate exemplary practices and control lower-echelon institutions advising patients about contraception. In the first years of clinics’ functioning they were intended mainly for women (as the concept of ‘conscious motherhood’ implies) and expected mainly married women to be the patients. The ‘conscious motherhood’ clinics cooperated closely with the Society, often operating in the same premises as their local branches. Society doctors, among whom were both men and women, also provided contraceptive advice in voivodeship clinics, propagating the tenets of birth control advice developed by the Society.³³

In booklets intended for doctors published during the early 1960s by acclaimed Society gynaecologists, such as Jan Lesiński or Michalina Wisłocka³⁴, one can find the main principles of contraceptive advice adopted by the lower-level state family planning institutions, the *Poradnie K* (well-woman clinics) and hospital maternity wards. Well-woman clinics that provided general gynaecological care were deemed particularly appropriate places for disseminating birth control propaganda and information. These were midwives and gynaecologists, and not general practitioners, who were to provide contraceptive advice to

śłużby zdrowia zasad świadomego macierzyństwa’, Society for Family Development in Cracow. National Archives in Cracow (henceforth SFDC – NAC) 29/1435/0/13.

³³ ‘Oddział Łódź – miasto przedstawia swoją działalność’, *Problemy Rodziny*, 7, 3 (1964), 40; ‘Kierunki pracy TŚM na rok 1964’, *Problemy Rodziny*, 5, 1 (1964), 57-8.

³⁴ Michalina Wisłocka was an acclaimed gynaecologist and sexologist and an author of the most popular sex manual in state socialist Poland *Sztuka Kochania* [The Art of Love]. See Agnieszka Kościańska, ‘Sex on Equal terms? Polish Sexology on Women’s Emancipation and “Good Sex” from the 1970s to Present’, *Sexualities*, 19, 1-2 (2016), 236-56.

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women as in state socialist Poland trained gynaecological practitioners advised women on reproductive health issues. The number of outpatient clinics addressing women's needs – understood as reproductive health – increased steadily after the Second World War, and by 1971 had doubled, with over 1300 in operation and eight million registered consultations.³⁵ The steady development of these clinics – freestanding or attached to primary healthcare facilities, outpatient clinics in regional and university hospitals, and clinics established to serve particular groups of women: namely factory workers and students – was symptomatic of intense investment in boosting maternal health and diminishing neonatal mortality, both declared top public health priorities in Poland during and beyond the six-year plan (1950-1955).³⁶

From the beginning of the 1960s, well-woman clinics thus took on the additional role of contraceptive advice. Society doctors such as Lesiński clearly preferred channelling contraceptive advice through *Poradnie K*, as visiting a clinic specialising solely in contraception could 'be troublesome and embarrassing for women, especially in rural contexts.'³⁷ However, as Wisłocka insisted, family planning advice should be offered during specific hours, and separately from general gynaecological advice so as not to intimidate

³⁵ According to Ireneusz Roszkowski, one of the most renowned professors of gynaecology and obstetrics in post-war Poland, in 1946, there were 646 public clinics for women in Poland. Ireneusz Roszkowski, 'Dwudziestolecie polskiej ginekologii', *Ginekologia Polska*, 35, 4 (1964), 1-8; 'Zatrudnienie i działalność poradni dla kobiet w przychodniach – ogółem za rok 1971', Ministry of Health and Social Assistance in Warsaw, Central Archives of Modern Records (henceforth MHSAW – CAMR) 2/1939/0/19/925 f. 45.

³⁶ Kuźma-Markowska, 'Walka z „babkami”', *op. cit.* (note 18); Barbara Klich-Kluczevska, 'Przypadek Marii spod Bochni. Próba analizy mikrohistorycznej procesu o aborcję z 1949 r.', *Rocznik Antropologii Historii*, 2, 1-2 (2012), 195-209.

³⁷ Jan Lesiński, *Zarys zapobiegania ciąży dla lekarzy i studentów medycyny*, 2nd ed. (Warszawa: Państwowy Zakład Wydawnictw Lekarskich, 1961), 84-5.

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women seeking contraceptive advice.³⁸ How to put patients not accustomed to family planning at ease was a foremost concern in the early years of birth control advice in Poland.

In their publications both Wisłocka and Lesiński highlighted the primary role of gynaecologists in the family planning facility. Having performed a gynaecological exam they would then select the best birth control method for the patient, preferably fitting a barrier contraceptive device (a cap or a diaphragm), considered the best method of contraception during the 1960s.³⁹ The role of teaching the patient how to use the device correctly, however, was relegated to a midwife: the second crucial medical professional a patient would encounter in family planning advice at a well-woman clinic. Midwives, apart from providing patients with device instructions and filling in specially designed patient cards, were also designated to run the mandatory contraceptive vending points. Immediate access to birth control devices and products in well-woman clinics was regarded as one of the prerequisites for contraceptive success: again, there was concern about the potential embarrassment for patients having to purchase contraceptives outside the clinic.⁴⁰ Moreover, women were advised to return in a fortnight in case their contraceptive devices required adjustment and attend twice-yearly follow-up appointments.⁴¹ This protocol was intended to entrench the medicalisation of birth control, one of the tenets of contraceptive advice in Poland at that time, as it was in Western Europe and North America.⁴²

³⁸ Michalina Wisłocka, *Technika zapobiegania ciąży: poradnik dla lekarzy* (Warszawa: Towarzystwo Świadomego Macierzyństwa, 1959), 63.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 61-62; Lesiński, *op. cit.* (note 37).

⁴⁰ Lesiński, *ibid.*

⁴¹ Wisłocka, *Technika zapobiegania, op. cit.* (note 38), 61-62; Lesiński, *ibid.*

⁴² Lara Marks, *Sexual Chemistry: A History of the Contraceptive Pill* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001); Elizabeth Siegel Watkins, *On the Pill: A Social History of Oral Contraceptives, 1950-*

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As Wisłocka acknowledged in her 1959 publication, the network of state family planning advice facilities at that time was still in its infancy.⁴³ One of the most crucial organisational issues was the training of doctors in contraceptive advice. This was undertaken at two facilities established by the Society in Warsaw and Cracow. The Warsaw clinic was opened in 1958. Four years later the Cracow branch opened in the renovated part of an historic building called the ‘Grey House’ (Szara Kamienica), situated in an extremely privileged location at the very heart of the city: Rynek Główny.⁴⁴ In the early years, female and male doctors and lay activists were told to prioritise establishing contraceptive advice in the central and northern part of Poland (Warsaw clinic) as well as the southern region of the country (Cracow clinic). With the onset of the ‘conscious motherhood’ campaign, the two Society clinics were also to provide birth control advice, rarely available in the public health sector at that time.

While well-woman clinics and voivodeship ‘conscious motherhood’ centres admitted patients free of charge, the Society charged for the advice they provided – in the late 1950s, the fee was 10 złotys⁴⁵. This amount was equal to the cost of one, 6-unit box of one locally manufactured condom brand, *Eros*⁴⁶, and can be considered a relatively modest one if compared to the average salary in 1960 which amounted to 1560 złotys.⁴⁷ In this regard,

1970 (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1998); Andrea Tone, *Devices and Desires: A History of Contraceptives in America* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2001).

⁴³ Wisłocka, *Technika zapobiegania*, *op. cit.* (note 38), 63.

⁴⁴ ‘Towarzystwo Planowania Rodziny. Tradycje-Działalność-Perspektywy, Kraków 1977’, SFDC – NAC, 29/1455/0/55 f.9.

⁴⁵ ‘O Towarzystwie Świadomego Macierzyństwa’, Archive of the Educational Film Studios in Lodz. 497/60 f. 5.

⁴⁶ Towarzystwo Świadomego Macierzyństwa, *Nie tędy droga* (Warszawa: Towarzystwo Świadomego Macierzyństwa, 1960).

⁴⁷ Główny Urząd Statystyczny, ‘Przeciętne miesięczne wynagrodzenie w gospodarce narodowej w latach 1950-2017’, <https://stat.gov.pl/obszary-tematyczne/rynek-pracy/pracujacy-zatrudnieni->

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Society's family planning advice clinics functioned at the intersection of public and private medicine. The latter, due to doctors' shortages and patients' demand had never been completely eliminated in state socialist Poland. Prices for contraceptive advice in the clinics fluctuated but remained affordable for the majority of patients and became a competitive alternative to the increasing number of gynaecologists establishing private practices during the 1980s.⁴⁸ The Society clinics were closely associated with the state healthcare system. Doctors providing advice in the Society's clinics were officially state employees and could not exceed the state-mandated working hours and salaries, resulting in frequent personnel shortages.⁴⁹ The Cracow facility was subsidised by the state; in the early years government funding amounted to seventy-eight per cent of the clinic's revenue, but decreased to twenty-two per cent in the ensuing years.⁵⁰ During the 1960s this clinic also received subsidies from the Society, before the board insisted the Cracow facility needed to become financially independent.⁵¹ The 'Grey House' clinic was at a disadvantage compared to the self-sufficient Warsaw facility, which relied not only on patient fees but also the revenue of the state-dependent but Society-controlled manufacturer of contraceptives, 'Securitas'.⁵²

The Society clinics were also intertwined with state-socialist medicine with regard to the patients that came for contraceptive advice. In the years after contraceptive advice

[wynagrodzenia-koszty-pracy/przecietne-miesieczne-wynagrodzenie-w-gospodarce-narodowej-w-latach-1950-2017,2,1.html?pdf=1](#) (accessed 31 May 2019).

⁴⁸ 'VII Zjazd Krajowy TRR, 28-29.04.1988', SFDC – NAC, 29/1455/0/28, f.70.

⁴⁹ 'Sprawozdanie z działalności wojewódzkiego oddziału Towarzystwa Świadomego Macierzyństwa w Krakowie za okres od 29.10.1959 do dnia 16 stycznia 1965 r. wraz z kroniką', SFDC – NAC, 29/1435/0/15, f.12.

⁵⁰ 'Budżet i sprawozdania 1963', SFDC – NAC, 29/1435/0/25; 'Preliminarz kosztów na rok 1965', SFDC – NAC, 29/1435/0/7; 'Sprawozdanie 1966', SFDC – NAC, 29/1435/0/3.

⁵¹ 'Sprawozdanie finansowe, 1968', SFDC – NAC, 29/1435/0/9.

⁵² 'Informacja o działalności Towarzystwa Świadomego Macierzyństwa', SFDC – NAC, 29/1435/0/13; 'Protokół posiedzenia zarządu oddziału wojewódzkiego TSM w Krakowie z dnia 27 września 1962', SFDC – NAC, 29/1435/0/12, f.3.

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following termination became mandatory, the Society's clinics largely received hospital-referred abortion patients. Over the ensuing years, however, as emphasised by Cracow clinic personnel, they succeeded in drawing patients actively seeking contraceptive advice to prevent unwanted pregnancies. Patient numbers increased to such an extent that by 1970 the Cracow clinic was struggling to meet demand.⁵³ In the mid-1980s, the 'Grey House' clinic was receiving around 67,000 patients a year and was prevented from expanding this number only by a shortage of space.⁵⁴

The Society clinics also disseminated contraceptive information beyond Warsaw and Cracow, replying to queries by phone and post. A number of voivodeship 'conscious motherhood' facilities, including those in Poznan, Lodz, and Opole, adopted similar methods of contraceptive propaganda.⁵⁵ Shortly after the opening of the Society facility at Plac Trzech Krzyży, a 'corresponding' 'conscious motherhood' clinic was also opened in Warsaw. In the first two years of its existence, personnel replied to over 22,000 letters, around half of which were seeking advice on contraception.⁵⁶ As highlighted by the Society activist and doctor, Jadwiga Beaupre, letters were often sent by people who were too embarrassed to visit a clinic, or who lived in rural areas, without access to contraceptive advice.⁵⁷ As historian Ewelina Szpak has detailed, the 'conscious motherhood' campaign had limited success in the

⁵³ 'Sprawozdanie z działalności Lekarskiej Przychodni Specjalistycznej TPR w Krakowie za Okres 1962-1976', SFDC – NAC, 19/1435/0/55.

⁵⁴ 'Sprawozdanie z działalności LPS TRR w Krakowie z okazji 30-lecia Towarzystwa', SFDC – NAC, 29/1435/0/55, f.3-4.

⁵⁵ 'Ocena działalności TSM za rok 1961', SFDC – NAC, 29/1435/0/12, f.18; 'Wiadomości z terenu', *Problemy Rodziny*, 16, 2 (1964), 37; Aleksandra Kutyna, 'Praca oddziałów wojewódzkich TSM', *Problemy Rodziny*, 1, 1-2 (1961), 17.

⁵⁶ '30 lat działalności Towarzystwa Rozwoju Rodziny', SFDC – NAC, 29/1435/0/55, f.4; 'Informacja o działalności Towarzystwa Świadomego Macierzyństwa', SFDC – NAC, 29/1435/0/12.

⁵⁷ Jadwiga Beaupre, *Jak zapobiegać ciąży?*, 2nd ed. (Warszawa: Państwowy Zakład Wydawnictw Lekarskich, 1959), 53.

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countryside.⁵⁸ The corresponding clinic also circulated millions of Society brochures and booklets,⁵⁹ which may have gone some way to bridge the urban/rural divide.

As well as the aforementioned training of gynaecologists and providing patients with contraceptive advice, the Warsaw and Cracow Society clinics fulfilled several other roles. The Cracow facility instructed midwives and students of medicine, midwifery and nursing about contraception up until the end of the 1980s.⁶⁰ The Warsaw clinic specialised in researching contraceptive methods as well as testing newly developed contraceptive devices and products made by 'Securitas' and other local manufacturers.⁶¹ One such product was the Polish contraceptive pill *Angravid*, the reliability and side effects of which were tested on the clinic's patients.⁶² Clinic personnel and Society activists in general also encouraged and then supervised the dissemination of contraceptive advice in well-woman clinics.

In a 1972 report summarising the first fifteen years of activism, the Society took pride in its leading role in preparing the public health service for family planning advice, particularly during the early years: 'Between 1957 and 1958 public healthcare was not taking action, because it was unprepared. Doctors lacked experience; there was no professional or popular literature for doctors and women. Doctors themselves did not know which

⁵⁸ Ewelina Szpak, *Chory człowiek jest wtedy gdy coś go boli. Społeczno-kulturowa historia zdrowia i choroby na wsi polskiej po 1945 r.* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwa IH PAN, 2016), 238-239.

⁵⁹ Ignaciuk, 'Ten szkodliwy zabieg', *op. cit.* (note 5), 85.

⁶⁰ '30 lat działalności Towarzystwa Rozwoju Rodziny', SFDC – NAC, 29/1435/0/55, f.4; 'Sprawozdanie z działalności LPS TRR w Krakowie w okazji 30-lecia Towarzystwa', SFDC – NAC, 29/1435/0/43.

⁶¹ 'Informacja o działalności Towarzystwa Świadomego Macierzyństwa', SFDC – NAC, 29/1435/0/13, f.3; Marcin Kacprzak, 'Rzut oka w przyszłość', *Problemy Rodziny*, 25, 5 (1965), 5.

⁶² 'Sprawozdanie z działalności LPS TPR w Krakowie za rok 1975', 29/1435/0/35; on *Angravid*: Agata Ignaciuk, 'Paradox of the Pill: Oral Contraceptives in Spain and Poland (1960s-1970s)', in Gembris and Theuke, *op. cit.* (note 6).

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contraceptive products were available.’⁶³ Although later superseded by a more organisational role, the training of doctors in family planning advice had been the Society’s first task. Over the following years the Society’s regional authorities had visited the public well-woman clinics to supervise their family planning provision. This did not always go down well with local doctors, or healthcare inspectors, who deemed family planning a minor issue compared to other problems the public healthcare system had to face.⁶⁴

Reports on the activities of *Poradnie K* published in medical journals and by the Society suggest that despite the legal obligation to provide contraceptive advice and products, compliance varied according to the motivations of local staff, a situation that appears to have endured throughout the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. ‘Some *Poradnie K* can be proud of their high sales. In others, the results are modest’, wrote physician Zbigniew Tarnawski in 1967 in an article published in the foremost Polish journal for gynaecology and obstetrics, *Ginekologia Polska*.⁶⁵ Several reports by the Cracow branch of the Society, published four years earlier, had highlighted a lack of interest among local doctors in providing contraceptive training, and the fact that some midwives, rather than promoting the more effective but complicated to fit diaphragms and cervical caps, were recommending easy to use but less reliable spermicides.⁶⁶ One of the six *Poradnie K* located in smaller towns that Society

⁶³ Towarzystwo Planowania Rodziny, *XV Lat Towarzystwa Planowania Rodziny 1957-1972* (Warszawa: Państwowy Zakład Wydawnictw Lekarskich, 1972), 8.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 8; the report mentioned a particular doctor who run a *Poradnia K* in Lodz, and in 1961 explicitly rejected the Society’s control as ‘unauthorized intromission’; ‘Kilka uwag o poradnictwie antykoncepcyjnym’, *Problemy Rodziny*, 9, 1 (1963), 26.

⁶⁵ Zygmunt Tarnawski, ‘Zagadnienia przerwania ciąży na terenie m. st. Warszawy w latach 1963-1965’, *Ginekologia Polska*, 38, 3 (1967), 313-16.

⁶⁶ ‘Perspektywiczny plan pracy dla oddziału wojewódzkiego TSM w Krakowie (1963)’, 3 ‘Kilka miesięcy działalności Wojewódzkiej Poradni TSM w Krakowie, 4.10.1963’, 5-6, in *Sprawozdania i protokoły z posiedzeń Zarządu 1962-1963*, SFDC - NAC, 29/1435/13.

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activists visited in 1963 had not established a contraceptive vending point, apparently this was ‘due to a lack of patient interest’: however, as the Society report explained, the local midwife was ‘hostile towards contraceptive propaganda’. In two of the other *Poradnie K* clinics, doctors were fitting patients with diaphragms, and one devoted every Saturday to family planning consultation.⁶⁷

Similar discrepancies were also noted in Poznań. A 1970 report highlighted disparities between *Poradnie K* clinics in contraceptive sales: while some failed to establish the service, others were selling dozens of thousand złotych’ worth of contraceptives.⁶⁸ A possible reason for this, a local branch activist argued, could be overburdened midwives: also expected to become involved in STD prevention, they had little time left to deal with contraceptive advice.⁶⁹ Other midwives, however, saw running vending points as an opportunity to increase their income, as they received commission from the sales of contraceptive products, books and booklets.⁷⁰

A recurrent trend that Society activists noted in their reports on family planning advice during the 1960s was voivodeship ‘conscious motherhood’ facilities taking over the contraceptive role previously carried out by well-woman clinics. Faced with reluctant *Poradnie K* doctors and midwives, patients increasingly sought contraceptive advice at the

⁶⁷ ‘Sprawozdanie za III Kwartał 1963’, SFDC - NAC, 29/1435/13, f.2.

⁶⁸ ‘Punkt widzenia sekretarza i zarządu oddziału wojewódzkiego Towarzystwa Planowania Rodziny na analizę stanu poradnictwa planowania rodziny na terenie województwa poznańskiego (1970)’, Society for Family Development in Poznań, National Archives in Poznań (henceforth SFDP – NAP), 54/4809/18, f.12

⁶⁹ ‘Protokół nr 2 z posiedzenia Zarządu Oddziału Wojewódzkiego TPR w Poznaniu, odbytego w dniu 27 października 1970 r.’, SFDP - NAP 54/4809/18, f.4.

⁷⁰ MUB2K, retired midwife. Born in 1946. Between late 1960 and late 1980s she worked in a provincial hospitals in two small towns in Silesia, combining it with part-time work in *Poradnie K* where she run a vending point. She expedited condoms, diaphragms, spermicides, and, upon prescription, the pill and IUDs. Interview by Agata Ignaciuk, in Piotrków Trybunalski on 22 June 2018. For a similar occurrence, as described in the text, in the United States, see: Holz, op. cit. (note 8)

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voivodeship centres: these were often run by Society members who were far more likely to prescribe the most effective barrier contraceptives (the contraceptive pill and the IUDs became available to a larger extent from late 1960s onwards).⁷¹ As Society member Leokadia Grabowiecka pointed out, not only were women seeking birth control advice being provided with reliable products and devices, this could contribute to a further demobilisation of those gynaecologists reluctant to offer contraception.⁷²

One of the reasons for disparities and problems with contraceptive advice in outpatient women's clinics may have been the apparent lack of systematic supervision by the Ministry of Health and Social Assistance. It is doubtful the MHSA insisted the regulations concerning family planning advice were being put into practice, or even collected data on whether contraception was being offered in public clinics. Ministry reports on the activities of these clinics, covering the period between 1959 and 1988 and located in the Central Archive of Modern Records in Warsaw, only include the provision of contraceptive advice twice: in the 1962 and 1963 reports, both in relation to consultations with pregnant women. According to these reports, 350,000 and 400,000 patients respectively received birth control advice, amounting to around thirty per cent of the pregnant women seeking prenatal care in these clinics.⁷³ The evident paucity of contraceptive advice in outpatient women's clinics and the MHSA's lack of interest in encouraging family planning advice in such amenities may have

⁷¹ 'Próba oceny usług w zakresie zapobiegania ciąży w poradniach Gdańska,' *Problemy Rodziny*, 22, 2 (1965), 60; Berta Szaykowska, 'Jak pracuje wojewódzki oddział TSM w Białymstoku,' *Problemy Rodziny*, 15, 1 (1964), 60. On the introduction of the contraceptive pill in Poland: Ignaciuk, 'Clueless about Contraception', *op. cit.* (note 18).

⁷² Leokadia Grabowiecka, 'Próba oceny działalności wojewódzkich Poradni Świadomego Macierzyństwa,' *Problemy Rodziny*, 19, 5 (1964), 31-34.

⁷³ 'Dodatkowe dane o kobietach ciężarnych za rok 1962' and 'Dodatkowe dane o kobietach ciężarnych za rok 1963', in *Sprawozdania zbiorcze z zakresu działalności poradni dla kobiet za lata 1959-1974*, MHS AW – CAMR 2/1939/0/19/925, f.16 and 25.

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contributed to the expansion of Society facilities during the 1970s, a development that will be discussed later in this paper.

The Society's clinics established at the turn of the 1960s provided a wide range of advice on reproductive health. It is likely the Society was influenced to adopt such a holistic approach to sexuality and reproduction by the 'trainer' of Society doctors and lay activists: the British Family Planning Association.⁷⁴ As was common practice in England, as well as contraceptive advice the Cracow and Warsaw Society clinics provided pre-marital, marital and family advice, sexual education, infertility treatment and access to a trained sexologist, a lawyer and an educator. Moreover, Society clinic doctors could conduct check-ups, run laboratory tests for their female patients and treat minor gynaecological ailments.⁷⁵ The affordability of these services drew a sizeable number of patients, and at the Cracow clinic, demand for family planning information had been overtaken by requests for other types of advice by the mid-1960s (figure 1).

⁷⁴ Leathard, *op. cit.* (note 9); see also: Caroline Rusterholz, 'English Women Doctors, Contraception and Family Planning in Transnational Perspective (1930-1970)', *Medical History*, 63, 2 (2019), 152-72. Poland's situation was here parallel with France as the FPA also influenced the French family planning movement.

⁷⁵ 'Informacja o działalności Towarzystwa Świadomego Macierzyństwa', SFDC – NAC, 29/1435/0/13, f.3; 'Sprawozdanie z działalności wojewódzkiego oddziału Towarzystwa Świadomego Macierzyństwa w Krakowie za okres od 29.10.1959 do dnia 16 stycznia 1965 wraz z kroniką', SFPC – NAC, 29/1435/0/13, f.16-19.

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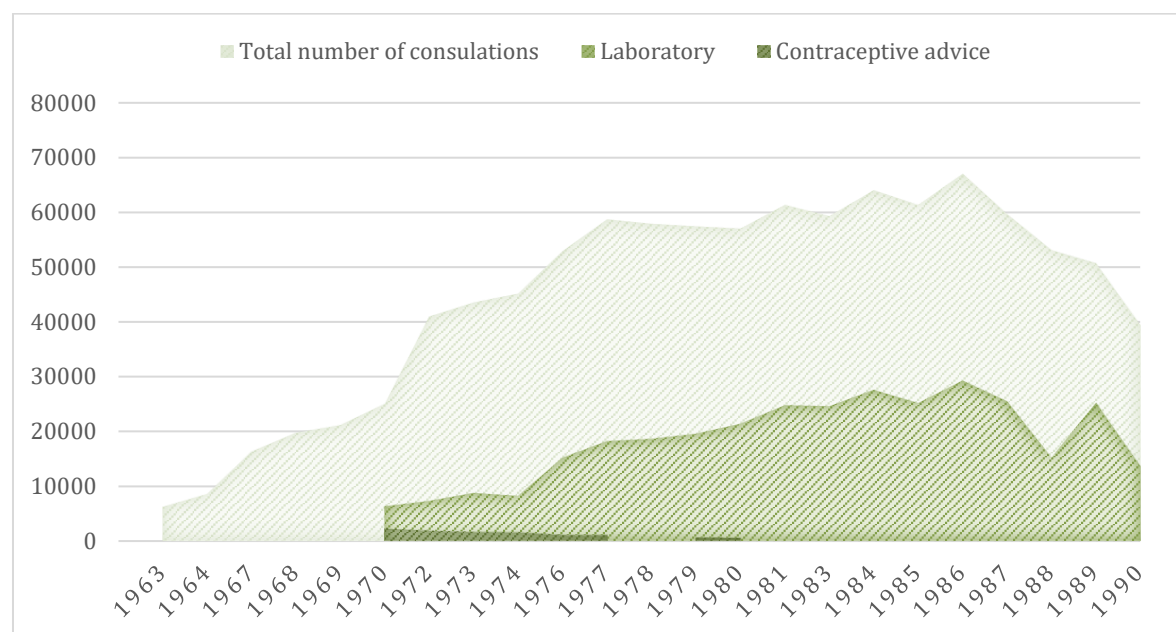


Figure 1. Consultations in Doctor's Specialist Clinic in Cracow, 1963-1990. Data from SFPC – NAC 29/1435/0/20; 29/1435/0/31; 29/1435/0/34-41; 29/1435/0/44-47; 29/1435/0/50-51

This trend, particularly visible during the 1970s and 1980s, may have resulted from several discrepant factors. First and foremost, it manifested a diminishing emphasis on 'conscious motherhood' and a growing concern with family-related matters, emblematised by the many changes in the association's name. Functioning since 1970 as the Society for Family Planning and since 1979 as the Society for Family Development, the organisation opened several new clinics during the 1970s. A number of these provided highly specialised and comprehensive medical advice from gynaecologists, sexologists and psychologists and thus mirrored the profile of the Cracow and Warsaw clinics. For a fee, the new facilities advised patients on contraception, infertility, gynaecological ailments and sexual dysfunctions. Six of these dispensaries, along with the Warsaw and Cracow facilities, were termed 'Doctors' Specialist Clinics' (Lekarskie Przychodnie Specjalistyczne). Some had been developed from earlier voivodeship 'conscious motherhood' clinics, such as the facility in Poznan, which

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continued its earlier initiatives under the Society, providing contraceptive advice over the phone and in cooperation with a local newspaper.⁷⁶ All the new clinics were set up in voivodeship capital cities and continued functioning until the early 1990s.⁷⁷

The Society was now placing more emphasis on pre-marital and family clinics as well as youth counselling. In the 1970s and 1980s they initiated twenty-five such facilities in large cities and mid-sized towns.⁷⁸ The clinics provided sexual and psychological advice free of charge; the sexologist at the Warsaw youth counselling facility provided information and instruction over the phone and by post, answering letters sent by young people throughout Poland.⁷⁹ The Society's pre-marital and youth counselling clinics offered contraceptive advice but this was only a small part of the information provided: around twenty per cent for the Poznan clinic.⁸⁰ Undeniably, the opening of new clinics significantly expanded the Society's activism and facilitated outreach to new patients, with numbers reaching around 250,000 a year.⁸¹ When Martial Law was imposed towards the end of 1981, state authorities planned a further increase in premarital and family counselling clinics, reserving a sizeable sum of

⁷⁶ 'Pismo OW TRR Poznań do ZG TRR Warszawa, Sekr. Generalny mgr. J. Witeczak, 12 listopada 1986', SFDP – NAP, 54/4809/20, f. 32; 'Sprawozdanie z działalności Lekarskiej Przychodni Specjalistycznej TRR w Poznaniu za 1989', SFDP – NAP, 54/4809/20, f.32 and 60.

⁷⁷ 'Towarzystwo Rozwoju Rodziny', SFDC-NAP, 54/4809/13; 'Skrócone sprawozdanie z działalności Towarzystwa Rozwoju Rodziny w 1992 r.', SFDC – NAC, 29/1435/0/55; the SFP/SFD Doctors' Specialist Clinics offered contraceptive advice in: Bydgoszcz, Konin, Kraków, Lublin, Poznań, Tarnów, Warszawa, and Włocławek.

⁷⁸ 'Towarzystwo Rozwoju Rodziny', SFDC-NAP, 54/4809/13; the pre-marital and family clinics were set up in Cieszyn, Elbląg, Katowice, two in Cracow (including one in an industrial part of the city Nowa Huta), Kalisz, Lomza, Nisko, Myslenice, Opole, Ostrow Wielkopolski, Pila, Pulawy, Radom, Ruda Śląska, Sosnowiec, Starachowice, Ustrów, two in Warsaw, Wrocław, Zamosc; the youth counselling clinics were established in Cracow, Poznan and Warsaw; Towarzystwo Rozwoju Rodziny, *Informator* (Warszawa: Zarząd Główny TRR, 1981), 16; *Vademecum regulacji urodzeń* (Warszawa: Państwowy Zakład Wydawnictw Lekarskich, 1984).

⁷⁹ Agnieszka Kościańska and Wiesław Sokoluk, *Instruktaż nadmierny: Historia pewnej przygody seksualnej* (Wołowiec: Czarne, 2018), 70-71.

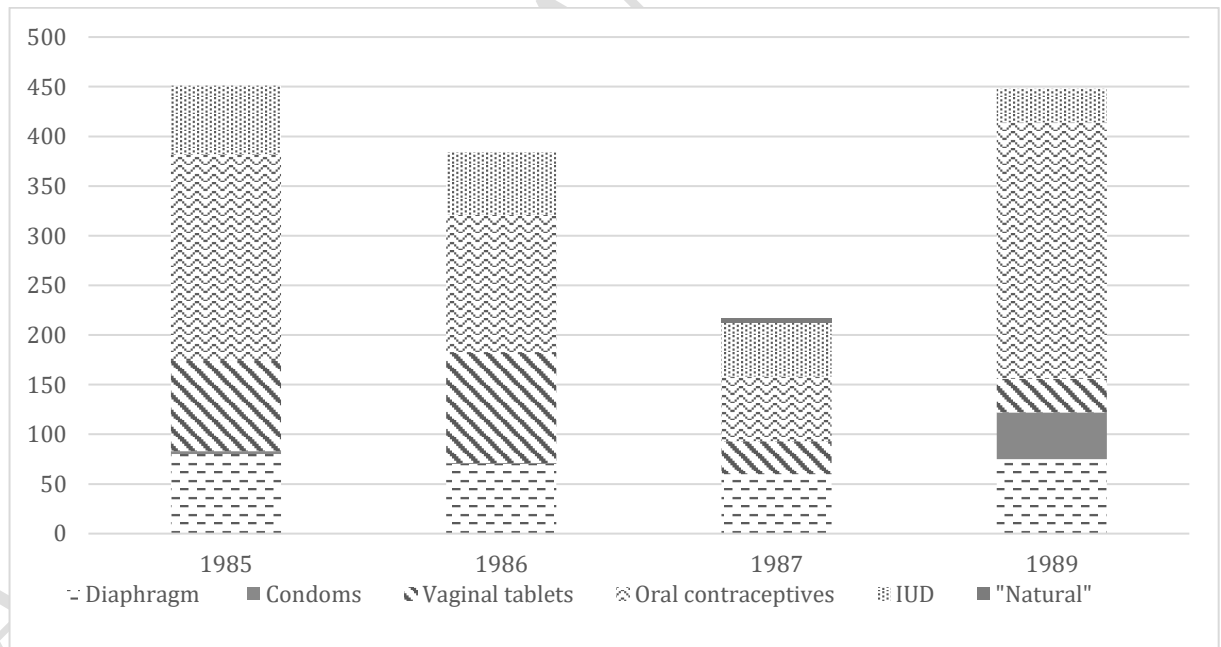
⁸⁰ 'Sprawozdanie z działalności Poradni Młodzieżowej w 1985', SFDP – NAP, 54/4809/20.

⁸¹ '30 lat działalności Towarzystwa Rozwoju Rodziny', SFDC – NAC, 29/1435/0/55, f.8-9.

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money in the state budget for twenty new facilities.⁸² This initiative did not materialise, however, foreshadowing the stagnation and ultimate demise of the Society's clinics during the 1980s.

The decreasing importance of birth control advice in the Cracow clinic may also have related to the fluctuating availability of contraceptive products in the centrally-planned economy. At times, the Society's clinics were able to offer clients modern contraceptives that were often unavailable elsewhere. From the late 1960s onwards the 'Grey House' clinic was one of the first places to prescribe the Lippes Loop IUD.⁸³ At the Poznan Doctors' Specialist Clinic, the pill was the most frequently prescribed birth control method during the 1980s (figure 2).



⁸² 'List ZG TRR (przewodniczący dr Bolesław Górnicki) do przewodniczącego TRR w Poznaniu z 21 stycznia 1982 r.', SFDP - NAP 54/4809/18, f.6-7.

⁸³ 'Towarzystwo Planowania Rodziny. Tradycje – Działalność – Perspektywy (Kraków 1977)', SFDC – NAC, 29/1435/0/55, f.20-21.

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Figure 2. Contraceptive methods recommended in SFD Doctors' Specialist Clinic in Poznan during the late 1980s. Data from SFPC – NAP, 54/4809/20.

By providing IUDs and the pill, the Society's clinics were often viewed as attractive and more affordable alternatives to private gynaecology practices, the small number of university clinics or the chain of hard currency shops (Pewex) that supplied goods otherwise unobtainable on the Polish market.⁸⁴ More often, however, clinic personnel complained about shortages of contraceptive products and devices. A 1975 report penned by doctors at Cracow linked the small amount of family planning advice carried out at the clinic to the scarcity of condoms, diaphragms and IUDs. The Society's doctors and activists also consistently complained about the quality of barrier contraceptives (1960s onwards) and IUDs (1970s onwards) manufactured in Poland.⁸⁵

In the last decade of state socialism in Poland, the Society and their clinics reached crisis point. Following the 'Solidarity' revolution, the Society lost one-third of its members and was, as Andrzej Kulczycki has stated, 'neglected by the socialist state'.⁸⁶ Several obstacles faced during the 1980s significantly decreased the number of clinics providing advice.⁸⁷ The Cracow facility suffered not only due to a lack of space, personnel and contraceptives, but also from an antique building requiring constant renovation.⁸⁸ At least since the late 1980s the Cracow clinic had competed for patients with a Catholic family

⁸⁴ Jadwiga Żywusko, 'Jak zapobiegać...', in Jadwiga Żywusko, Irmina Petryka and Wiesław Sokoluk, *Jak zapobiegać niepożądaney ciąży* (Łódź: Państwowa Agencja Reklamowa, 1984), 17-18, 28.

⁸⁵ 'Sprawozdanie za pierwszy kwartał 1962', SFDC – NAC, 29/1435/0/35; 'Sprawozdanie z działalności Specjalistycznej Przychodni Lekarskiej TRR w Krakowie za rok 1975', SFDC – NAC, 29/1435/0/35, f.2.

⁸⁶ Kulczycki, *The Abortion Debate*, op. cit. (note 1), 21; '30 lat działalności Towarzystwa Rozwoju Rodziny', SFDC – NAC, 29/1435/0/55.

⁸⁷ Kulczycki, *The Abortion Debate*, op. cit. (note 1), 21.

⁸⁸ Eg. 'Analiza ekonomiczna LPS TRR w Krakowie za rok 1990', SFDC – NAC, 29/1435/0/51.

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planning service, provided daily in the nearby St. Mary's Basilica.⁸⁹ This competition is emblematic of the 1980s, when the Catholic Church's teachings on family planning became increasingly mainstreamed as Church and state population policies became aligned.

Rivalry with Catholic advice may be one of the reasons the Society's teachings on contraception were re-oriented. At the Society's conventions during the 1980s, attendees emphasised the need to acknowledge the Catholic affiliation of the majority of their potential patients.⁹⁰ Over the previous decades, the Society's attitude towards church-approved 'natural family planning' had been largely critical, despite one of the founders, Jan Lesiński, praising the rhythm method as 'the most ethical and moral birth control method' back in 1959. In the following decades the Society produced material for a general audience describing the principles of the rhythm method, encouraging women to learn to understand their menstrual cycle, their fertile and infertile periods. At the same time, this literature discouraged women from relying on the rhythm whatsoever or recommended adding an additional contraceptive – such as a barrier and spermicide – around the expected ovulation date.⁹¹ Through the 1980s, the Society's clinics increasingly began to provide instructions in 'natural family planning methods', such as the Billings ovulation method, based on observation of changes in cervical

⁸⁹ 'Duszpasterskie porady specjalistyczne (c. 1980s),' the Department of the monlinity of Families, Cracow Metropolitan Curia Archive (henceforth DCF – CMCA). Files in the CMCA are not catalogued; 'Dyżury katolickich poradni dla małżeństw w Krakowie (1987)', DCF – CMCA.

⁹⁰ 'VII Zjazd Krajowy TRR, 28-29.04.1988,' SFDC – NAC, 29/1455/0/28, f.61.

⁹¹ Jadwiga Beaupre, *Jak zapobiegać ciąży?*, 1st ed. (Warszawa: Państwowy Zakład Wydawnictw Lekarskich, 1958), 30-5; *Zastanów się i ty* (Warszawa: Państwowy Zakład Wydawnictw Lekarskich, 1959), 11; Zygmunt Janczewski, *Wielkie i małe sprawy małżeństwa*, 2 ed. (Warszawa: Państwowy Zakład Wydawnictw Lekarskich, 1968), 71; Barbara Trębicka-Kwiatkowska, *Świadome czy nieświadome macierzyństwo* (Warszawa: Państwowy Zakład Wydawnictw Lekarskich, 1971), 29.

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mucus.⁹² The Society's approach to 'natural family planning' however differed significantly from the one of the Catholic advice with its stress on 'natural family planning methods' being a part of a larger holistic philosophy of a Catholic life style. During the democratic transition, when the Catholic Church's influence on reproductive matters considerably expanded,⁹³ the Cracow clinic personnel deemed the Billings method to be 'particularly suitable for young women'.⁹⁴

The problems with contraceptive provision the Society faced during the last decades of its activities also complicate evaluation of its functioning within the International Federation for Planned Parenthood. Although admitted to the IPPF as a voluntary association, throughout the 1970s and 1980s the Society depended on the fluctuating support of the state that in the 1970s adopted a more pro-natalist policy and in the 1980s acted under the growing pressure of Solidarity movement. Despite official endorsement of family planning, the limited and erratic availability of contraception show this was not a government priority.⁹⁵ Therefore, Poland did not fulfil the 1970s and 1980s principles of the international planned parenthood movement, which with its 'human rights model' emphasised universal access to family planning advice and contraception.⁹⁶ Financial aid and subsidised contraceptives from the IPPF mitigated the Society's crisis during the 1980s to a certain degree.⁹⁷ At the turn of the

⁹² 'Sprawozdanie z działalności LPS TRR w Poznaniu za 1986 rok', SFDC – NAP, 54/4809/20, f.44; 'Sprawozdanie z działalności Lekarskiej Przychodni Specjalistycznej TRR w Poznaniu za 1987', SFDC – NAP, 54/4809/20, f. 47.

⁹³ Joanna Mishtal, *The Politics of Morality: The Church, the State, and Reproductive Rights in Postsocialist Poland* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2015).

⁹⁴ 'Sprawozdanie z działalności Lekarskiej Przychodni Specjalistycznej w Krakowie z okazji 30-lecia Towarzystwa', SFDC – NAC, 29/1455/0/55, f.2.

⁹⁵ Ignaciuk, 'Clueless about Contraception', *op. cit.* (note 18); Ignaciuk, 'Paradox of the Pill', *op. cit.* (note 62)

⁹⁶ Meredith and Thomas, *op. cit.* (note 4), 2.

⁹⁷ '30 lat Działalności Towarzystwa Rozwoju Rodziny', SFDC – NAC, 29/1455/0/55.

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1990s, however, as Kulczycki has stated, the Society was a ‘marginalised and almost bankrupt organisation’, the ‘low profile and ineffectiveness’ of which prompted the IPPF to switch affiliation to the newly established Federation for Women and Family Planning.⁹⁸ At the same time, since the mid-1970s and throughout the 1980s the Society was involved in sex education programs introduced to public schools that became an alternative channel of spreading contraceptive advice. A systematic study of this effort is still awaiting research.

Catholic preparation for marriage in state-socialist Poland

In this section, we discuss some early initiatives in family and ‘responsible parenthood’ counselling provided by Catholic doctors and other medical professionals during the late 1950s and early 1960s. We then analyse the ideas and strategies presented by the Catholic hierarchy intended to mainstream ‘Catholic preparation for marriage’ from the late 1960s onwards. We discuss local implementations of these ideas and strategies, paying particular attention to Cracow and Warsaw. Finally, we discuss ways in which Catholic family planning literature was in dialogue with Society experts.

Initiatives by the Polish Catholic Church’s hierarchy providing theoretical and practical support for Catholic spouses exercising their rights and obligations in relation to what Vatican II had established as ‘responsible parenthood’,⁹⁹ started to blossom from the early to mid-1960s. This was when the Polish Episcopate and local curiae intensified their

⁹⁸ Kulczycki, *The Abortion Debate*, *op. cit.* (note 1), 21.

⁹⁹ Alana Harris, ‘Introduction: The Summer of ’68 – Beyond the Secularization Thesis’, in Harris, *op. cit.* (note 20), 5.

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efforts towards the creation of specific institutions for the purpose and published instructions intended to mainstream Catholic preparation for marriage in Poland.

This explosion of activities, which we will discuss in more detail in what follows, was preceded from 1956 onwards by radical opposition of Catholic hierarchy towards the legalisation of abortion and campaigns popularising contraception: both identified as major threats to Catholic families and the entire community.¹⁰⁰ A number of priests, including Tadeusz Rylke, whose writings from the late 1950s are held in the Chaplaincy of Families' Section of the Archives of the Metropolitan Curia in Cracow, labelled the Society and its 'neo-Malthusian' campaign' as 'anti-Church', the complete anti-thesis of Catholic values and a direct attack on Catholicism in Poland.¹⁰¹ Others, such as Andrzej Bardecki, a long-term contributor to *Tygodnik Powszechny* [*Catholic Weekly*], the country's foremost Catholic magazine, and one of the key disseminators of Vatican II ideology within Poland,¹⁰² called for an urgent organisation of doctor-run Catholic Family Counselling services to counteract state birth control campaigning and help fight abortion. In Cracow during the late 1950s, Bardecki claimed that such a counselling service was being run successfully by a group of four doctors.¹⁰³ We have found no further record of this service in the DCF archives, however, which leads us to believe this must have been a short-term venture.

¹⁰⁰ Ignaciuk, 'No Man's Land?' *op. cit.* (note 30); Jarkiewicz, "'W obronie życia nienarodzonych'", *op. cit.* (note 21); Jarkiewicz, 'Primum non nocere', *op. cit.* (note 21); Zok, 'Wider die "angeborene und nationale Mission der Frau"?' , *op. cit.* (note 18); Majdański, *Ocalić prawdę*, *op. cit.* (note 22), 26; Skreczko, *Troska Kościoła katolickiego*, *op. cit.* (note 22), 354-8.

¹⁰¹ Tadeusz Rylke, 'Organizacja poradnictwa małżeńskiego, c. 1958', DCF – CMCA; Duszpasterstwo rodzin Archidiecezji krakowskiej, 'Zasady ochrony życia dziecka poczętego, c. 1960,' DCF – CMCA. On the Catholic Church's opposition towards the Society, also Buxakowski, 'Początki duszpasterstwa rodzin w Polsce (1956-1980)', in Buxakowski, *Wprowadzenie do teologii*, *op. cit.* (note 22), 348, 351-2.

¹⁰² Andrzej Bardecki, *Kościół epoki dialogu* (Kraków: Znak, 1966).

¹⁰³ Andrzej Bardecki, 'Organizacja Poradnictwa Małżeńskiego, c1958,' DCF – CMCA.

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Other local initiatives around ‘responsible parenthood’ run by Catholic doctors in Polish cities during the late 1950s and early 1960s were also short-lived, such as one by the Catholic medical cooperative *Ognisko* [Bonfire], which established an interdisciplinary clinic in Warsaw during 1958 to deliver medical and psychological advice on ‘marital and sexual ethics in accordance with the Catholic Church’s teaching’. Amongst the medical professionals involved, historian Katarzyna Jarkiewicz has identified the female dentist Janina Cyranowa, who presided over the Polish Catholic Doctors’ Association, the feldsher (auxiliary health professional) and fertility awareness instructor Teresa Strzembosz, and gynaecologist Joanna Massalska, who openly opposed the 1956 liberalisation of abortion law¹⁰⁴. The Catholic association PAX also opened similar clinics in smaller towns including Oświęcim, Giżycko and Iława.¹⁰⁵ All of these clinics were short-lived: the PAX ones closed their doors after a few months, and the *Ognisko* venture only lasted to 1963.¹⁰⁶ According to Jarkiewicz, the main reason for this was a lack of finances, while historian Natalia Jarska, argues *Ognisko* was shut down upon explicit instructions from the communist authorities, who considered it promoted the Church’s anti-abortion campaign.¹⁰⁷

In order to support anti-abortion medical professionals, the Episcopate established specific Chaplaincy of Healthcare in 1957.¹⁰⁸ Its aim, according to priest (later archbishop) Kazimierz Majdański, one of its principal organisers, was to inform and convince doctors and other healthcare professionals about the dangers of contraception and ‘about the fact that no

¹⁰⁴ On *Ognisko*, also see Skreczko, *Troska Kościoła katolickiego*, *op. cit.* (note 22), 377.

¹⁰⁵ Jarkiewicz, ‘Primum non nocere’, *op. cit.* (note 21), 158.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 158-159; Kuźma-Markowska, ‘Walka z „babkami”’, *op. cit.* (note 18).

¹⁰⁷ Natalia Jarska, ‘Modern Marriage and the Culture of Sexuality: Experts between the State and the Church in Poland, 1956-1970’, *European Historical Quarterly*, 49, 3 (2019), 467-90 (486).

¹⁰⁸ Buxakowski, ‘Początki duszpasterstwa rodzin’, *op. cit.* (note 101), 349.

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circumstances can justify abortion and that, according to modern medicine, there were no “medical” grounds to kill a child’ (foetus: authors).¹⁰⁹ The Chaplaincy of Healthcare, according to Majdański, was also to provide counselling as well as gather scientific and pastoral literature on (or rather, against) contraception and raise fertility awareness. It is possible that this strategy had not proven sufficiently effective, prompting a shift towards – or prioritising of – another strategy, which prioritized the dissemination of Catholic ‘regulation of conceptions’ through parishes and lay female counsellors, rather than clinics staffed by medical doctors.

This strategy became more explicit from mid to late 1960s onwards, with specific institutions created to this aim, such as the Sub-Commission (later Commission) of the Polish Episcopate for the Chaplaincy of Families, created in 1965. The (Sub)Commission defined this strategy as move from ‘intervention’ through Catholic healthcare providers towards mainstream ‘prevention’, by ‘popularising a family model that recognises its role in God’s plan.’¹¹⁰ Catholic doctors, as well as nurses and midwives, continued to be targeted as experts that priests could refer their parishioners to for advanced training in fertility awareness. However, a number of Catholic commentators considered placing doctors at the centre of Catholic family planning as counterproductive, as they were too busy, not sufficiently trained in the realm of ‘natural’ family planning or discouraged ‘patients’ with excessively complex language. Such ideas were presented in the widely circulated brochure *Co każdy ksiądz wiedzieć powinien o naturalnej regulacji poczęć* [*What Every Priest Should Know about the*

¹⁰⁹ Majdański, *Ocalić prawdę*, *op. cit.* (note 22), 28.

¹¹⁰ Biuro Prasowe Sekretariatu Episkopatu Polski, *Duszpasterstwo Rodzin w Polsce. 1979*, Catholic Intelligentsia Club Archive, Central Archives of Modern Records (henceforth CIC – CAMR) 2/2212/274, f.15.

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Natural Regulation of Conceptions] (probably first edited in the late 1950s, and re-edited at least four times) and were also formulated by the Catholic psychiatrist Wanda Póltawska, personal friend of Karol Wojtyła (later Pope John Paul II) and one of the main intellectual and medical authorities in the realm of Catholic preparation for marriage from the late 1950s onward.¹¹¹

In materials produced by the Catholic hierarchy throughout the period covered in this paper, periodic abstinence was presented as the only ethical method of birth control. Elicited by commercialisation of the oral contraceptive pill, publication of the encyclical *Humanae Vitae* in August 1968 – a watershed in the Catholic world, as it affirmed the rejection of ‘artificial’ contraception after almost a decade of deliberation, and was contested by hierarchies and theologians across the globe¹¹² – had little effect on the Polish hierarchy’s discourse on contraception. As priest Jerzy Buxakowski, head of the Chaplaincy of Healthcare (1966–1977) and secretary of the Episcopal Commission on Chaplaincy of Families (nominated in 1966) noted, the Encyclical merely reaffirmed the Polish Church’s position, which struggled from a ‘lack of support’ by Western Churches’.¹¹³ It was therefore no surprise that the Polish Episcopate unquestionably adhered to *Humanae Vitae*, which was utilised in the intensification of efforts to mainstream Catholic marriage and ‘family planning’ ethics in Poland during the late 1960s.¹¹⁴

¹¹¹ Eg. Father (Leon) Mońko, *Co każdy ksiądz wiedzieć powinien o naturalnej regulacji poczęć*, 56, DCF – CMCA; Wanda Póltawska, ‘Wstrzemięźliwość okresowa, 42, *Duszpasterstwo Rodzin*, 1 (1967), 42, DCF – CMCA. On Póltawska’s influence on Wojtyła: Kościańska, ‘*Humanae Vitae*’, *op. cit.* (note 20), 193.

¹¹² Harris, *The Schism of '68*, *op. cit.* (note 20).

¹¹³ Buxakowski, ‘Początki duszpasterstwa rodzin’, *op. cit.* (note 101), 356-7.

¹¹⁴ Kościańska, ‘*Humanae Vitae*’, *op. cit.* (note 20); Jarkiewicz, ‘“W obronie życia nienarodzonych”’, *op. cit.* (note 21), 143-144. Also Majdański, *Ocalić prawdę*, *op. cit.* (note 22), 38.

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This intensification led the Polish Episcopate to release the ‘Instruction to Priests on the Preparation of the Laity for the Sacrament of Marriage and on Chaplaincy of Families’ in February 1969, which emphasised the need for Catholic education to focus on marriage preparation.¹¹⁵ As the Instruction specified (and the second Instruction, published in 1975, reiterated)¹¹⁶ this should cover long-term preparation for marriage, aimed at children and teenagers, as well as ‘immediate’ preparation for fiancées, for whom it became mandatory to attend marriage preparation courses.¹¹⁷

After publication of the Instruction and during the 1970s in particular, local dioceses and lay Catholic intellectuals continued to elaborate scripts and programmes for ‘long-term’ and ‘immediate’ marriage preparation to guide and support priests and lay instructors.¹¹⁸ This material showcases multi-disciplinary aspirations for such preparation, with a broad range of topics covered, including choosing a partner, ‘natural’ gender differences and their role in marriage, conflict management, and guidance for raising children. ‘Fertility regulation’ is extensively described for those engaged in ‘immediate’ marriage preparation, and is inscribed into ‘marital ethics’, intertwined with a strong anti-abortion and anti-contraception stance.

¹¹⁵ Buxakowski, ‘Początki duszpasterstwa rodzin’, *op. cit.* (note 101), 358; Episkopat Polski, ‘Instrukcja Episkopatu Polski dla duchowieństwa o przygotowaniu wiernych do sakramentu małżeństwa i o duszpasterstwie rodzin. 1969’, in *Konferencje dla nupturientów. Kuria Biskupia w Łodzi, 1972, 2*, CIC – CAMR, 2/2212/547.

¹¹⁶ Episkopat Polski, ‘Druga instrukcja Episkopatu Polski dotycząca przygotowania do małżeństwa i życia rodzinnego oraz wprowadzenia nowego obrzędu sakramentu małżeństwa, 1975’, reproduced in Buxakowski, *Wprowadzenie do teologii, op. cit.* (note 22), 380-92.

¹¹⁷ Majdański, *Ocalić prawdę, op. cit.* (note 22), 39; ‘Materiały na kurs przedmałżeński [Gorzów Wielkopolski], 1970’, CIC – CAMR, 2/2212/383, f.3. Skreczko also mentioned a foregoing episcopal Order on the Sacrament of Marriage (1962), which obliged each parish to run marriage preparation courses; Skreczko, *Troska Kościoła katolickiego, op. cit.* (note 22), 367.

¹¹⁸ Eg. ‘Materiały na kurs przedmałżeński’, CIC – CAMR, 2/2212/396; ‘Konferencje dla nupturientów’, CIC – CAMR, 2/2212/396; ‘Konferencje dla narzeczonych’, CIC – CAMR, 2/2212/396; Współpracownicy duszpasterstwa rodzin, ‘Problem rodziny i małżeństwa w wychowaniu i katechizacji. Konferencje dla rodziców i pogadanki dla dzieci, Poznań 1974,’ CIC – CAMR, 2/2212/396.

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As well as multi-disciplinary, Catholic preparation for marriage was also conceived as multi-site and multi-level: it involved both the clergy and laity, and would be developed through different methodological tools, including age-specific talks, sermons, confessions, and individual and group consultations with lay counsellors. Priests and (female) lay instructors were to work in ‘collaborative symbiosis’.¹¹⁹ In 1965 and 1971, the clergy received specific instructions on how to intervene in the laity’s family planning practices. Priests were reminded about their obligation to play a proactive role in helping penitents realise that artificial contraception and *coitus interruptus* were sins. These instructions were accompanied by a short text providing basic training in the ‘natural regulation of conception’,¹²⁰ but priests were encouraged to refer spouses to parochial instructors for specific training. Lay counsellors were to receive detailed training and hold regular – if often short – parish office hours,¹²¹ as well as deliver talks on the ‘natural regulation of conceptions’ during premarital courses for fiancées.¹²² In contrast to priests, their role was to cover the biological, rather than moral aspects of Catholic family planning.¹²³

Actual implementation of these recommendations varied according to the local setting. In Cracow Archdioceses, Wojtyła’s influence and personal interests led to substantial investment in family counselling, making the city an important training centre with a dense network of instructors. Facilities operated regularly on various levels, including parishes,

¹¹⁹ Buxakowski, ‘Początki duszpasterstwa rodzin’, *op. cit.* (note 101), 359.

¹²⁰ ‘Wskazania dla spowiedników w zakresie spowiedzi małżonków zlecone przez Episkopat Polski w dniu 23 czerwca 1965’, DCF – CMCA; ‘Wskazania dla spowiedników w zakresie spowiedzi małżonków zalecone przez Episkopat Polski w dniu 26 stycznia 1971’, DCF – CMCA.

¹²¹ ‘Parafie, w których rozpoczęto pracę w dziedzinie poradnictwa, c1968’, DCF – CMCA.

¹²² Eg. Duszpasterstwo Rodzin Archidiecezji Krakowskiej, ‘Konferencje dla narzeczonych, Kraków 1975, 3’, DCF – CMCA.

¹²³ ‘Materiały na kurs przedmałżeński’, CIC – CAMR, 2/2212/396.

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local Academic Ministries ([*Duszpasterstwo Akademickie*], henceforth AM) intended to support spirituality among university students,¹²⁴ and a specialised research and teaching centre, the Institute of Families.¹²⁵ Founded between 1967 and 1969 and directed by Półtawska, the Institute provided training and reference materials on topics relating to marriage, sexuality and fertility regulation for priests and secular instructors from across Poland. In 1975, it became affiliated to the Pontifical Academy of Theology.¹²⁶

Establishing the Institute of Families was inscribed into a wider programme of investment in expanding the organisational structure of family counselling in Cracow Archdioceses during the second half of the 1960s. Wojtyła aspired to develop and mainstream what he considered the ‘Polish model of pastoral care of families’, based on wide accessibility to teaching, the ethical ‘regulation of conception’ and unconditional adherence to the *Humanae Vitae*.¹²⁷ The year the Encyclical was published, Wojtyła promoted the creation of a separate Department of the Chaplaincy of Families in the Archdioceses to design the framework for local marriage preparation courses for fiancées, which were to include three meetings with a priest and a mandatory consultation regarding ‘ethical conception control’.¹²⁸ These consultations were to be carried out by secular instructors of fertility awareness, selected by the aforementioned Teresa Strzembosz.¹²⁹ Another element of what historian Katarzyna Jarkiewicz termed the ‘crash campaign’ of *Humanae Vitae*-based teaching on

¹²⁴ ‘Duszpasterstwo akademickie’, in *Kościół Katolicki w Polsce – Historia i Dzień Dzisiejszy. Materiały Biura Prasowego Sekretariatu Episkopatu Polski 1979*, CIC – CAMR, 2/2212/274, f.14.

¹²⁵ Wojtyła, ‘Zagrożenie chrześcijańskiej rodziny. Przemówienie wygłoszone do kapłanów 10 października 1976’, reproduced in Gasidło, *Duszpasterska troska*, op. cit. (note 22), 65.

¹²⁶ Gasidło, *ibid.*, 44; Sukiennik, ‘Rys historyczny’, op. cit. (note 22), 318.

¹²⁷ Gasidło, *ibid.*

¹²⁸ Jarkiewicz, *Duszpasterstwo akademickie Krakowa po II wojnie światowej* (Kraków: WAM, 2004), 295-296.

¹²⁹ Jarkiewicz, ‘W obronie życia nienarodzonych’, op. cit. (note 21), 146.

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marriage and procreation promoted by Wojtyła in Cracow¹³⁰ was the expansion of counselling centres in the Archdioceses, with 150 Catholic counselling centres funded between 1961 and 1968, a process that accelerated after Wojtyła became head of the Archdioceses in 1963 (figure 3).¹³¹

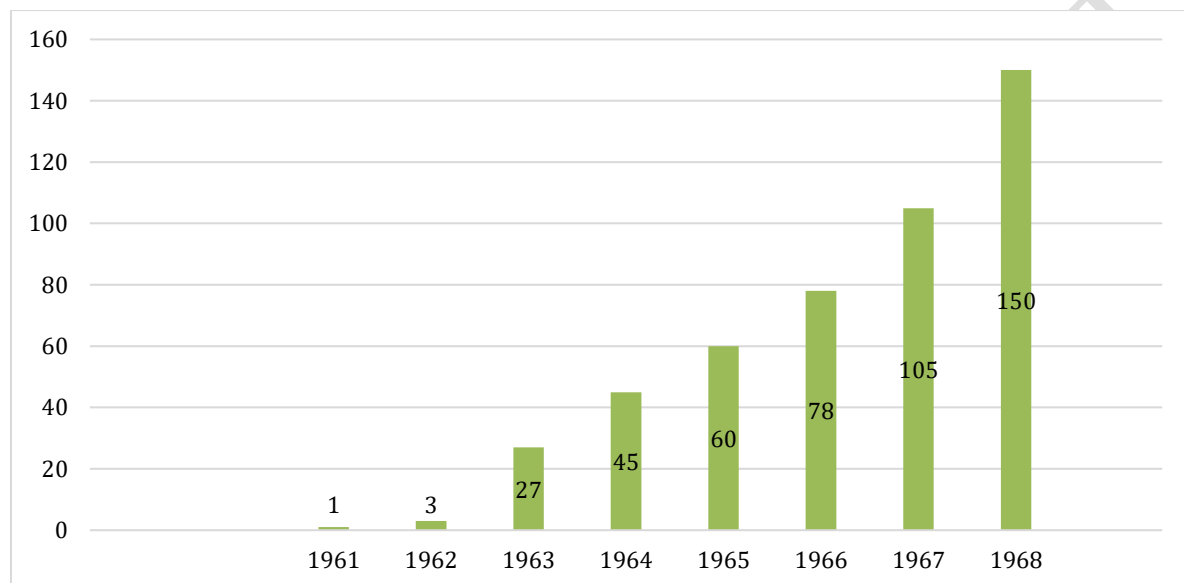


Figure 3. Catholic counselling centres in Cracow Archdioceses, 1961–1968. Data from ‘Parafie w Których Rozpoczęto Pracę...’, DCF – CMCA

Although the number of parishes providing counselling in Cracow Archdioceses systematically expanded, the majority of ‘counselling centres’ were actually the weekly office hours of a local female counsellor trained by archdiocesan instructors in fertility awareness. Only a small number of parishes provided full-time consultancy and, according to the priest Władysław Gasidło, head of the Department of the Chaplaincy of Families of Cracow Metropolitan Curia in 1973 and its avid chronicler, many such centres had opened in 1968

¹³⁰ Jarkiewicz, *Duszpasterstwa akademickie*, op. cit. (note 128), 296.

¹³¹ Gasidło, *Duszpasterska troska*, op. cit. (note 22), 7.

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and were short-lived.¹³² According to an internal report in the late 1960s in the DCF archive, the ‘fluctuation of the work in parishes’ was due to a number of reasons, such as the ‘impatience of some clergy’:

‘...which turns them against counselling, because they cannot see short-term results. Some female counsellors – even those deeply devoted to this work – get discouraged, too, because of lack of comprehension from priests, lack of understanding of the long-term nature of this work. They are sometimes bullied with mean comments’.¹³³

This extract reveals tensions between priests and female counsellors that merit further exploration beyond the scope of this article.

In Warsaw Archdioceses, the executive order to the aforementioned 1969 Instruction on marriage preparation issued by the Polish Episcopate was published in May 1970 and included the decision to offer two-year marriage preparation schemes for all over eighteens. The meetings were to be held at least twice a month and followed a programme of forty lectures, fifteen specifically covering ‘preparation for marriage and Catholic (family) life’. Upon completion, participants would receive certificates excusing them from attending intensive premarital courses for fiancés, which the Archdioceses also continued to provide.¹³⁴

The AMs and other pastoral activities established by clergy in a number of parishes to reach university students and the broader academic community, played an important role in

¹³² *Ibid.*, 22.

¹³³ ‘Parafie, w których rozpoczęto pracę w dziedzinie poradnictwa, c. 1968’, 2, DCF – CMCA.

¹³⁴ ‘Zarządzenie dotyczące wprowadzenia w archidiecezji warszawskiej I instrukcji Episkopatu o przygotowaniu do małżeństwa i duszpasterstwie rodzin, Warszawa, 14/05/1970’, CIC – CAMR, 2/2212/388.

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delivering these courses in Warsaw, as they did in Cracow, Lodz and other university cities. According to historian Milena Przybysz, the Lodz AM started marriage preparation seminars in 1972, and provided open discussion groups on Catholic ethics throughout the 1970s and 1980s, with abortion and euthanasia among the most popular topics.¹³⁵ Jarkiewicz reports that clergy involved in the Cracow AM established weekly pre-marital consultation sessions as early as 1962.¹³⁶ In Warsaw, the AM Church of Saint Anne hosted a regular seminar cycle, 'Marriage Upon Us'. During the academic year 1972 to 1973, these seminars took place every Thursday after evening mass. Topics included 'Partner Selection and Knowing Each Other', 'Correct Development of Sex Drive (Why Abstinence?)' or 'Marriage as a Source of New Life: The Problem of the Number of Children'.¹³⁷ Apart from these seminars for students and the academic community, Saint Anne's Church also held meetings for fiancées, which included specific retreats (*rekolekcje*) for each of their target groups.¹³⁸

The title of the 'Marriage Upon Us' seminar cycle was certainly no coincidence given the strong influence of the Catholic intellectual, Andrzej Wielowieyski, in Warsaw's *Klub Inteligencji Katolickiej* ([Catholic Intelligentsia Club] henceforth CIC) activities relating to Catholic marriage preparation. Wielowieyski was the author of *Przed nami małżeństwo* [*Marriage Upon Us*], a widely circulated advice book for preparation for Catholic marriage. The CIC, active in Warsaw and other Polish cities, was an organization of Catholic intellectuals independent from the hierarchy and the communist authorities. Cradle to many

¹³⁵ Milena Przybysz, *Wyspy wolności. Duszpasterstwo akademickie w Łodzi 1945-1989* (Łódź: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, 2008), 145.

¹³⁶ Jarkiewicz, *Duszpasterstwo akademickie, op. cit.* (note 128), 195; 300-301.

¹³⁷ Rektorat Kościoła akademickiego w Warszawie, ul. Krakowskie Przedmieście nr 68, 'Studium „Przed nami małżeństwo”', CIC – CAMR, 2/2212/393.

¹³⁸ Rektorat Kościoła akademickiego w Warszawie, ul. Krakowskie Przedmieście nr 68, 'Konwersatorium', CIC – CAMR, 2/2212/393.

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key oppositionists to the communist regime, the CIC was also an important agent for dissemination in Poland of the ideas of Vatican II, including those on contraception¹³⁹.

Throughout the 1970s, different forms of marriage preparation were mainstreamed through Warsaw parishes. A 1978 brochure, *Spotkania z narzeczonymi w punkcie poradnictwa rodzinnego* [*Meeting Fiancées in the Family Counselling Office*], produced by the Department of the Chaplaincy of the Warsaw Metropolitan Curia for use by family counsellors, provides a flavour of local training for fiancée's during the late 1970s. Although recommending counsellors be empathic and cordial, the authors insisted on fertility awareness training for all couples, including those already expecting: 'It depends on us whether after the baby is born, these people will start to use contraception or regulate [their fertility] naturally'. The brochure recommended holding three meetings with fiancées: the first discussing love and the transmission of life, in line with the encyclical *Humanae Vitae*, the second on 'sexual culture' (*kultura życia seksualnego*, a term popularized by Polish sexologists and Society experts from the late 1950s onwards, which bore direct relationship with Soviet notions of 'sexual moral education'¹⁴⁰) and the third on 'ethical and unethical means of controlling fertility'. The booklet advised counsellors to emphasise that using artificial contraception predisposed the couple to terminate any pregnancy ('homicide') if contraception failed. Among visual aids listed, the booklet mentions a set of photographs of a three-month-old

¹³⁹ For more information on *Marriage Upon Us* and CIC as disseminator of Vatican II, see Kościańska, 'Humanae Vitae', *op. cit.* (note 20).

¹⁴⁰ On Soviet sex education, Michele Rivkin-Fish, 'Sexuality Education in Russia: Defining Pleasure and Danger for a Fledging Democratic Society', *Social Science & Medicine*, 49, 6 (1999), 801-14. On 'culture of sexuality' in state-socialist Poland see Jarska, 'Modern Marriage', *op. cit.* (note 107) and Kościańska, *Zobaczyć losia. Historia polskiej edukacji seksualnej od pierwszej lekcji do internetu* (Wołowiec: Czarne, 2017).

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foetus given the name ‘*Jaś*’, thereby constructing anti-abortion discourse on foetal personhood while also underlining the dangers to women’s health.¹⁴¹

The booklet’s argument about abortion as both immoral and unhealthy was characteristic of Catholic family planning materials published in Poland from the 1950s onwards. Linking abortion to health problems and infertility was also a constant strategy in popular family planning literature produced by state-sponsored family planners.¹⁴² In fact, Catholic literature aimed at secular believers as well as instructor training materials quite consistently – and instrumentally – used Society expertise. This occurred more frequently in relation to abortion than contraception, as the attitudes of Catholic and Society activists to the latter differed greatly. As mentioned earlier, Catholic family planning literature and materials portrayed all contraceptive methods, devices and techniques as dangerous weapons with which the ‘antichurch’ promoted immoral and unhealthy practices. Even so, compilers of material for the marital preparation courses occasionally and selectively referred to the Society when emphasising the negative side effects of contraceptive methods. For instance, a pamphlet on ‘Dangerous Oral Contraceptives’ quoted *Problemy Rodziny* [*Family Issues*], the professional family planning journal edited by the Society, as a source of information to support their claims against the pill.¹⁴³ However, this reference did not originate from one of the research articles – in which the pill was generally described as a safe method when used

¹⁴¹ *Spotkania z narzeczonymi w punkcie poradnictwa rodzinnego* (Warszawa: Wydział Duszpasterstwa Kurii Metropolitalnej w Warszawie, 1978).

¹⁴² Ignaciuk, ‘Ten szkodliwy zabieg’, *op. cit.* (note 5), 75-97; Ignaciuk, ‘No Man’s Land?’ *op. cit.* (note 30).

¹⁴³ ‘Niebezpieczne antykoncepcyjne środki doustne’, DCF – CMCA.

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under medical supervision,¹⁴⁴ – but from the ‘News from Abroad’ section, where some heated international debates on the safety of the recently released drug had been described.

Catholic family planning literature and marriage preparation materials also referred to renowned gynaecologists and family planning activists linked with the Society who described the rhythm method favourably. The aforementioned gynaecologist Jan Lesiński was amongst the most frequently quoted in the Cracow Chaplaincy of Families material, especially during the 1960s.¹⁴⁵ In Wojtyła’s 1960 *Miłość i odpowiedzialność* [*Love and Responsibility*],¹⁴⁶ one of the key texts for Catholic marriage preparation, the future Pope recognised the Society doctor’s expertise by recommending the chapter on ‘Periodic Sexual Abstinence’ in Lesiński’s *Zarys zapobiegania ciąży dla lekarzy i studentów medycyny* [*Introduction to Birth Control for Doctors and Medical Students*] (1959)¹⁴⁷ in his bibliography on sexology. This recognition could, however, be due to the limited availability of Polish literature on the rhythm method at that time.

Another key manual for Catholic marriage preparation, *Katolik a planowanie rodziny* [*A Catholic and Family Planning*] (published in 1964 and re-edited four times before 1984), the authors of which were linked to the progressive Catholic magazine *Więź* [*Bond*], edited by the CIC, also quoted Lesiński’s *Introduction to Birth Control* to discuss the alleged dangers of abortion. A collection of scripts for the delivery of marriage preparation seminars for fiancées, prepared by the Cracow Chaplaincy of Families in 1975, extensively quoted the female doctor

¹⁴⁴ Agata Ignaciuk and Teresa Ortiz Gómez, *Anticoncepción, Mujeres y Género. La Píldora en España y Polonia* (Madrid: Los libros de la Catarata, 2016).

¹⁴⁵ ‘Metoda termiczna regulacji poczęć, Wrocław 1966’, DCF – CMCA; ‘O wielki krok naprzód w medycynie, c1960’, DCF – CMCA.

¹⁴⁶ More on this book in Kościańska, ‘*Humanae Vitae*’, *op. cit.* (note 20).

¹⁴⁷ Lesiński, *op. cit.* (note 37).

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and Society activist Barbara Trębicka-Kwiatkowska's pamphlet with the suggestive title *Zapobieganie czy przerywanie ciąży* [*To Terminate or to Prevent Pregnancy*],¹⁴⁸ dedicated specifically to possible complications resulting from abortions.¹⁴⁹ Ewa Czerwińska, author of the script, summarised (or exaggeratedly paraphrased) the gynaecologist, simplifying her argument to 'It is practically impossible for abortion not to cause damage',¹⁵⁰ an assertion Trębicka-Kwiatkowska had not in fact made.¹⁵¹

During the 1970s and 1980s, CIC marriage preparation materials often quoted – and at times literally reproduced – publications by experts linked to the Society, including those by long-term president Mikołaj Kozakiwicz in reference to preparation for parenthood.¹⁵² The already mentioned influential Catholic manual *Marriage Upon Us* by Wielowieyski dialogued with the works of sexologist Kazimierz Imieliński and with Kozakiewicz, whose two books on sex education were also included in the reference list of the aforementioned marriage manual, *A Catholic and Family Planning*.¹⁵³

This selective cross-referencing showcases two concurrent and seemingly mutually exclusive trends in Catholic marriage preparation materials. One was the push against 'birth control' language, which was mainstreamed in public discourse and propaganda when contraception became a public health project in state-socialist Poland after 1956. The

¹⁴⁸ On this and other brochures see Ignaciuk, 'No Man's Land?' *op. cit.* (note 30).

¹⁴⁹ Ewa Czerwińska, 'Odpowiedzialne rodzicielstwo', in *Konferencje dla Narzeczonych*, 53-8, CIC – CAMR, 2/2212/396.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 57.

¹⁵¹ Barbara Trębicka-Kwiatkowska, *Zapobieganie czy przerywanie ciąży* (Warszawa: Państwowy Zakład Wydawnictw Lekarskich, 1974).

¹⁵² 'Spis książek do dyspozycji zespołu prelegentów', CIC – CAMR, 2/2212/400, f.3; 'Materiały na kurs przedmałżeński 1970', CIC – CAMR, 2/2212/400, f. 37.

¹⁵³ Mikołaj Kozakiewicz, *O miłości prawie wszystko* (Warszawa: Ludowa Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza, 1962); Mikołaj Kozakiewicz, *U podstaw wychowania seksualnego* (Warszawa: Państwowy Zakład Wydawnictw Lekarskich, 1969).

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Chaplaincy of Families in Cracow compiled – and most probably also disseminated – numerous brochures and scripts from the late 1950s onwards calling on people to reject the Society in defence of the ‘conceived children’, murdered in the wombs of (and by) their mothers.¹⁵⁴

The large printed manuals of Catholic marital ethics, however, such as *Love and Responsibility*, *A Catholic and Family Planning*, and *Marriage Upon Us*, took a different strategy. Rather than definitively reject mainstream terms such as ‘family planning’, these manuals consciously embedded them in elaborate discourses, furnishing the terms with new meanings more aligned with the principles of *Humanae Vitae*. In *Love and Responsibility*, for instance, Wojtyła underlined that self-control was the key to ‘conscious motherhood’, which he defined as ‘the attempt to adequately grasp the relationship between marital cohabitation and the possibility of conception’, and must be accompanied by an ‘honest parental attitude’, meaning an overall willingness to become a parent.¹⁵⁵ With ‘conscious motherhood’ defined in this way, Wojtyła claimed periodic abstinence was the only technique that fulfilled its requirements.¹⁵⁶

A Catholic and Family Planning represented a more progressive stream of Catholic laity: the title reflected an attempt to re-signify ‘family planning’ and ‘conscious motherhood’ in Catholic terms. ‘Conscious motherhood’, according to the authors, meant ‘engaging consciousness and responsibility to fulfil the basic task a family has, which is bringing

¹⁵⁴ For instance, Duszpasterstwo rodzin Archidiecezji krakowskiej, ‘Zasady ochrony życia dziecka poczętego, c. 1960,’ DCF – CMCA.

¹⁵⁵ Karol Wojtyła, *Miłość i odpowiedzialność* (Lublin: Wydawnictwo Towarzystwa Naukowego KUL, 1960), 176-7, 185, 222; first English edition: *Love and Responsibility* (London: Collins, 1981).

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 224. More on the discussion on ‘artificial’ contraception in *Love and Responsibility* in Kościańska, ‘*Humanae Vitae*’, *op. cit.* (note 20), 195.

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children to the world'.¹⁵⁷ The authors emphasised similarities between secular and Catholic ideas, claiming the Church accepted family planning if 'reasonable' but not if it meant an 'egoistic rejection of children whatsoever'. The divergence in ideology lay in the Church's rejection of 'artificial' contraceptive methods and abortion. According to the authors of this book, secular family planning considered abortion a 'necessary evil'; for the Church it was an 'unacceptable evil'.¹⁵⁸ Similar ideas were put forward in Wielowieyski's *Marriage Upon Us*, first published in 1972, and re-edited in 1977 and 1988.

Marriage Upon Us, however, as anthropologist Agnieszka Kościańska has argued, was unique in its overt criticism of *Humanae Vitae*. Wielowieyski wrote about periodic abstinence as a method that strengthened mutual comprehension between spouses through discipline and sacrifice and did not interfere with the natural balance of the human body. However, he was also explicit about its drawbacks and compassionate towards couples who faced difficulties practicing it and opted in favour of other contraceptive methods or techniques. He was also unique in explicitly mentioning condoms (first edition, 1971) and later barrier methods in general (second edition, 1974) as 'artificial' methods which could perhaps be considered a 'lesser evil'.¹⁵⁹ As Kościańska noted, the 1974 edition of *Marriage Upon Us* was slightly modified: the result of direct intervention by Wojtyła, who criticised the book for not sufficiently adhering to the spirit of *Humanae Vitae*.¹⁶⁰

Conclusions

¹⁵⁷ *Katolik a planowanie rodziny* (Kraków: Towarzystwo Więź, 1964), 13.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 13-14.

¹⁵⁹ Andrzej Wielowieyski, *Przed nami małżeństwo* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Znak, 1972), 193.

¹⁶⁰ Kościańska, 'Humanae Vitae', *op. cit.* (note 20), 199.

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From 1956 onwards, the delivery of family planning advice became a priority for both the Polish Catholic Church and the party-state, especially its health authorities, which supported the foundation of the Society of Conscious Motherhood and aspired to mainstream birth control advice through the network of public well-woman clinics. As a consequence, two systems of family planning counselling emerged: the professional, secular family planning movement and Catholic premarital and marital counselling. These systems had different relationships with the party-state. Family planning activists and professionals aligned with the Society enjoyed state support, at least theoretically, while Catholic family planning counselling was carried out as a counteraction, especially during the late 1950s and 1960s. However, a shift in state population policies, initiated in the mid-1970s, triggered the mainstreaming of Catholic family planning principles in Poland. At this time, attempts by health authorities to channel family planning through the public healthcare system had been largely unsuccessful and the Society was obliged to play a greater role in family planning advice. However, without sufficient, systematic and on-going state support as well as investment in improving contraceptive provision, the Society was unable to fully develop their family planning services.

These two seemingly mutually exclusive systems of family planning advice openly clashed, especially during the late 1950s and 1960, but also communicated with each other, with documented mutual recognition of authority: medical knowledge was recognised by the Church, moral expertise by the Society. From the turn of the 1950s onwards, Catholic marriage preparation manuals and scripts cited the works of key Society activists such as Lesiński, Beaupre and Wisłocka, a number of whom also referred to Catholic ethics in their writings and consistently covered – but rarely recommend – the rhythm method. It must be

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emphasised, however, that this mutual recognition of authority was, in our view, subordinated to particular ideological goals, especially in the case of Catholic authors, who quoted Society-affiliated doctors on the negative health effects of abortion and contraception, but ignored those writings where doctors emphasised the safety and security of contraceptive methods.

Cycle-observation based family planning was the key locus of connection between the two systems. Fertility awareness and (periodic) abstinence lay at the very basis of the Catholic family planning. Health professionals and activists involved with the Society, on the other hand, considered fertility-observation-based contraception useful but unreliable. Their position changed during the 1980s, when some of the Society's clinics started to train clients in fertility awareness techniques such as the Billings ovulation method. This shift reflects not only the increasing standing of the Church, and its alignment with the party-state vision of marriage, family and fertility, but also the rocketing economic crisis, which deepened shortages in all consumer goods, including contraceptives. Teaching fertility awareness, which did not require any product or device, perhaps proved the most practical system in this complicated context.

The history of family planning in state-socialist Poland also provides ample ground for studying transnational movements for planned parenthood beyond the limiting 'First' – 'Third' world paradigms. In state-socialist Poland, both state-sponsored and Catholic family planning systems gained legitimisation from transnational links. The Society's connections with the British FPA and the IPPF were certainly a somewhat unexpected source of this legitimisation. Their support in terms of expertise and international – but also local – visibility, proved essential during the Society's infancy, and during its decline in the 1980s. For Catholic family planning in Poland – at least the version promoted by the national hierarchy and adhering

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ideologists – legitimisation was based on positioning itself starkly against trends in transnational Catholic debates during the 1960s on liberalisation of the contraception ban. Years before the encyclical *Humanae Vitae* was published, the hierarchy prided itself on proposing a vision of marriage, fertility and contraception – and family (planning) – that later materialised in this document. Following its publication, the hierarchy used the encyclical as the ideological basis for an entire marriage preparation system during the 1970s and 1980s, intended to permeate throughout Polish society. At this point in our research we can only speculate about its actual impact. With regard to transnationalism – and as a recommendation for further research – there is evident need to explore the Catholic family planning movement’s transnational relations and cooperation beyond *Humanae Vitae*, a milestone which has received by far the most academic attention. Such a transnational perspective, we believe, will be particularly fruitful in further charting the almost virgin terrain of the history of Catholic family planning in Poland.

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