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Love in the time of El Generalísimo: Debates about the pill before and after *Humanae Vitae*

Introduction

In 1939, after General Francisco Franco's military victory over the Republican State, Catholicism became the political religion of Spain.[1] During the Civil War (1936-39), the Spanish clergy and lay Catholics supported the military insurrection, a support manifested even before the hierarchy pronounced itself in favour of the soon to-be dictator. The official positioning of the church was manifested less than three months after the start of the rebellion, in September 1939, when the Bishop of Salamanca, Enrique Plá y Deniel, published his pastoral letter *Las Dos Cuidades* [On Two Cities], in which he legitimized the war as a Crusade of Good (Catholic Spain, identified with the rebels) against Evil (the laicizing Republic).[2] After the Civil War ended, the Catholic church played a key role in promoting Spain as a sacralized nation and mobilizing the masses towards the support of the new, confessional state. The victory celebrations merged with religious rituals, thereby creating a new state liturgy.[3] The mottos of the regime – unity, harmony, discipline, order, hierarchy[4] – converged with those of the Catholic church, which collaborated (but also competed) with other institutions (such as the *Falange* fascist political party and its *Sección Femenina* – Women's Section) to support and legitimize the social and moral rule of National Catholicism, the dictatorship's ideological identity.[5] Additional to this internal legitimization of the dictatorship the Catholic church, through the Concordat signed with Vatican in 1953, also contributed to the international recognition of the regime.[6] The agreement with the Holy See preceded, by just one

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month, the signing of a pact with the USA which ended more than a decade of isolation following the Spanish Civil War.[7]

The introduction of the pill onto the Spanish market in at the beginning of the 1960s ushered in a new, disturbing element into the moral and penal system which, as the dictator and his regime aged, went into crisis on many levels. This chapter argues that the plurality and openness of debates on responsible parenthood and contraception in Spain in the 1960s and 1970s is emblematic of the fracture within the Spanish Catholic community at the time of a progressive disconnection and decoupling of the church from Franco's regime.

Yet, these debates have so far eluded sustained exploration in the existing literature on church-state relations during the 1960s and early 1970s – a period which could be considered a prelude to the democratic transition.[8] This scholarship has primarily focused on exploring the dynamics of change and continuity in the Catholic hierarchy's and lay Catholics' relationships with and attitudes towards the dictatorship, but paid only limited and quite cursory attention to discussions around *Humanae Vitae* and contraception in these dynamics.[9] This chapter bridges this gap by including the perspectives from the flourishing historiography on the history of contraception and family planning in Spain during Franco's regime and the democratic transition.[10]

Moreover, for the coverage of the debates on the pill and responsible parenthood in Catholic magazines, I rely on Carmen Sánchez Carazo's unpublished PhD dissertation from nearly twenty years ago on social, religious and medical aspects of the pill in the

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Spanish 1960s.[11] I extend upon and expand on her pioneering work by analyzing a variety of articles published about oral contraception in the Spanish print media between 1960 and 1970, including the conservative, pro-monarchy daily newspaper *ABC*, general interest magazines (progressive *Triunfo* and *Cuadernos para el Diálogo* and conservative *Blanco y Negro*), traditionalist magazines for women (*Ama*, *Telva*), and a range of medical journals, collected for my PhD dissertation on the circulation the pill in the Spanish 1960s and 1970s from a comparative perspective.[12]

In what follows, I first navigate through the importance of Vatican II for the changing status of the Catholic church in Franco's Spain during the 1960s, to later discuss the anti-contraception policies of the dictatorship and ways they were challenged by the pill after it appeared on the Spanish market at the beginning of the decade. Then I examine the debates around oral contraceptives, responsible parenthood and *HV* which arose in the country between the late 1950s and the late 1970s.

The church and Vatican II in 1960s Spain

During the 1960s, a time of social change that laid foundations for the rapid and peaceful transition to democracy after the dictator's death in 1975, Spain was undergoing deep social and economic transformations which also affected the Spanish Catholic church, for whom the Second Vatican Council and its engagement with human and civil rights marked a gradual shift towards disengagement from Franco's regime.[13] The end of autarchy and the beginning of the new direction in economic policy, initiated in 1959 and known as *desarrollismo* [developmentalism], meant opening the Spanish economy to foreign investment and its integration into the international neoliberal capitalist system.[14]

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The 'Spanish economic miracle', or a period of economic boom that followed, entailed unequal growth, leaving rural regions of the central and southern Spain largely underdeveloped.[15] What this meant for many was increased social mobility, with the beginning of Spaniards' exodus towards the developing cities and immigration to countries such as Germany, Switzerland or France,[16] and massive influx of Western European tourists to the Spanish coasts.[17] This mobility facilitated and conveyed a rapid exchange and circulation of ideas.

The Second Vatican Council added to the turbulence of the decade by fueling fissures between a more static hierarchy, and younger clergy with an appetite for change, backed by progressive theologians and many lay Catholics. They expressed their views in newly funded, independent opinion magazines such as *Cuadernos para el Diálogo*, founded in 1963 by Joaquín RuizGiménez, Catholic ex-minister of Education and observer at Vatican II, which soon became an important forum for Catholic intellectuals, many of them members of the self-criticism movement which started developing in the Spanish Catholic church in the 1950s.[18] The Conciliar emphasis on human dignity and religious liberty[19] and the independence of the Catholic church from the political powers worried the Spanish hierarchy, as Vatican II's discussions and agreed documents questioned the very base of National Catholicism. At its root, the Council implicitly critiqued the Iberian symbiosis between church and authoritarian state, questioning Catholicism's privileged position in a confessional regime which greatly limited social and religious liberties. The Council's impact in Spain was thus as potentially destabilizing as it was in Portugal, as Pires Marques explored in an earlier chapter, precisely because

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of the local church's alliance with the dictatorship.[20] Indeed, while Spanish delegates to the Council voted in favour of both the *Dignitatis Humanae* Declaration and *Gaudium et Spes* Constitution in 1965,[21] these were not accepted without reservation and caused major internal conflict between the old guard bishops loyal to Franco, reformist hierarchies and the emerging generation of more progressive priests.[22]

The new language of social justice proposed by the Council offered this new generation of clergy and laity an alternative ideological framework of religious pluralism compatible with democracy.[23] As Audrey Brassloff has argued, grassroots groups of Christian Workers' movements (with organizations such as *Hermandades Obreras de Acción Católica* – Catholic Action Workers' Guild and *Juventud Obrera Católica* – Catholic Workers' Youth and others) passionately opposed the harsh social realities of the working class, victims of *desarrollismo*.[24] Along the same lines, 'red priests' such as José María de Llanos or Francisco García Salve became active preachers of liberation theology in the emerging working class neighborhoods of Madrid.[25] The social impact of 'red priests' was also intense in rural zones neglected by economic development,[26] some of whom openly criticized the regime during sermons and were identified as dangerous and reported as such in police records.[27]

While initially such open opposition towards the dictatorship in the Spanish Catholic community was an exceptional occurrence, Vatican II increasingly facilitated lines of critical reflection on the political foundations of National Catholicism. It also indirectly influenced some pivotal changes in the legal organization of the dictatorship which, although they did not bring about major immediate liberalization, contributed to

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the slow but wholesale dismantlement of the regime. The 1967 Law on Religious Freedom, while it sanctioned religious liberty and diversity in merely limited terms, was a step forward towards the de-establishment of the Spanish Catholic church. The 1966 Press Law, in consequence, relaxed the censorship of print media. Preventive censorship, which meant publishers had to get their publications pre-approved before their release and which was in force since 1938, was substituted by voluntary consultation – publishers could, but were not obliged to submit materials for pre-publication approval of censorship. While the new press law did not result in an immediate liberalization of the media in Spain, it did contribute to diversification of the press market and the development of alternative content, which proliferated on the pages of the already mentioned democratic opinion magazines critical of the regime, such as *Cuadernos para el Diálogo* or *Triunfo*, which in 1962 changed from a cinema magazine into a progressive social and cultural periodical.[28]

Birth control in Spain under Franco and during the democratic transition

The introduction of the pill onto the Spanish market in the early 1960s was another element in this decade of social change insofar as it played a role in eroding the anti-contraception policy of the regime, informed by its intimate relationship with the Spanish Catholic church during the postwar period. One of the regime's earliest laws which exemplified this church-state coherence was the total ban of abortion and the prohibition of the sale and advertisement of all contraceptive methods, first proposed in 1939 and enacted as a law in January 1941.[29] In the text of the 1941 Law for the Protection of Natality, against Abortion and Contraceptive Propaganda, and in subsequent Penal Codes

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issued during Franco's rule, efforts to prevent and terminate an unwanted pregnancy were placed within sections dealing with 'crimes against persons' and considered serious offences to be penalized with fines and imprisonment.[30] Evidence exists about legal persecution of both abortion providers and their clients throughout the dictatorship, especially when termination caused injuries which required hospitalization.[31] Yet, provision and use of contraception, while formally illegal until 1978 when ban on contraceptive propaganda was lifted, was not persecuted as vigorously as clandestine terminations.

Franco's prohibitive birth control policy was paired with traditionalist discourses on sexuality (especially female sexuality) as primarily or exclusively oriented towards reproduction.[32] This pronatalist orientation hindered research into women's contraceptive practices and preferences, which became explicit object of sociological and demographic study only in the 1970s. Yet, historians have argued that even during the most repressive phase of the dictatorship (the 1940s and 50s), Spanish women and couples continued to resort to birth control techniques such as the rhythm method or withdrawal[33] and to clandestine abortion, with an estimate of at least 125,000 terminations per year which would equal an estimated total of 4.5 million illegal abortions performed in Spain during Franco's dictatorship (1939–1975).[34] Another several hundred thousand women travelled for abortions abroad, with such a trend intensifying from the late 1960s onwards.[35] One of the most popular destinations for such travel was Britain, whose liberalized abortion law (1967) attracted women from Europe and North America who could not obtain terminations at home. By 1975, almost 10,000 Spanish women travelled to the UK for abortions,[36] and several hundred thousands were using oral

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contraceptives.[37] The first pill brands to appear on the Spanish market were Enovid and Ortho Novum (major brands offered by the US pharmaceutical companies Searle and Ortho), Lyndiol (manufactured by the Dutch pharmaceutical company Organon) and Anovlar, owned by West German Schering AG, leading European manufacturer of oral contraceptives. The same brands that were commercialized the UK, United States or West Germany as oral contraceptives,[38] officially circulated in Spain as *anovulatorios* or anti-ovulation drugs. In line with the persistent ban on contraceptive propaganda, they were officially commercialized as therapeutic pharmaceuticals for the treatment of a range of gynecological disorders and sterility. Earliest reported small-scale clinical trials conducted in Spain by gynecologists Pere Pujol Amat and Victor Conill Serra (at the Santa Cruz y San Pablo hospital in Barcelona) with Enovid, Anovlar and Lyndiol in the early 1960s focused precisely on these drugs' therapeutic properties.[39] So did the early adverts for *anovulatorios* in Spanish medical journals, which emphasized their usefulness in regulating menstrual cycles and treating painful menstruation.[40]

The spectacular growth of the market of *anovulatorios* suggests that they were commonly used not only for therapy, but also for family planning purposes. Their sales skyrocketed 48-fold between mid-1960s and the end of the decade: while approximately 35,000 blisters were sold in 1964, in 1969 *anovulatorios*' sales reached 1,739,544. In 1978, the year ban on contraceptive propaganda was lifted, sales reached almost 10 million blisters.[41] The pill was routinely obtained through a medical prescription, with conservative doctors often rejecting women's demands for the drug, especially if they were single or childless. Wealthier, urban women could circumvent the doctors' veto by resorting to private gynecological practices. Some urban pharmacies also dispensed oral

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contraceptives without prescription, while other women could obtain the pills smuggled in from France or the UK.[42] In a context of very limited circulation of female barrier methods, spermicides and IUDs until the second half of the 1970s,[43] the pill was consolidated as the most effective birth control method at disposal of women and an attractive alternative to popular unmedicalized couple or male-centered family planning techniques, including the rhythm method, withdrawal and, on a more limited scale, condoms. The Spanish Fertility Survey of 1977, the first study to ask Spanish married women directly about their contraceptive practices, reported that the pill was the second most popular contraceptive method (17%), surpassed by coitus interruptus (31%) but exceeding the use of the rhythm method (13%) and condom (7%).[44] In contrast to diaphragms and spermicides, whose circulation was minimal till the mid-1970s and relied mostly on these products being brought in from abroad, the undercover sale condoms took place in Spanish pharmacies, newsagents' kiosks and on local markets.[45] As suggested above, the commercialization of the pill in the Spanish legal context was possible because it was officially introduced not as a contraceptive but as a drug to treat a range of gynecological disorders. The circulation of condoms, while not officially sanctioned, was somewhat tolerated by the authorities as a preventive measure against sexually transmitted diseases —for instance for men having sexual relations with prostitutes.[46] Such tacit tolerance, which also happened in contemporary Portugal, is another example of gender-impregnated official and unofficial anti-contraceptive policies fueled by Franco's dictatorship official discourse about sexuality, centred on the double standard and a construction of female sexuality as confined to its reproductive function.[47]

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This discourse converged with traditional Catholic ideas about sex, but in the 1960s was to become more diversified through the Second Vatican Council's discussions about responsible parenthood.

Debates about oral contraceptives, responsible parenthood and *Humanae Vitae* in Spain (1958-1978)

Together with the debates about the place of the Catholic church in Franco's dictatorship, the Second Vatican Council's discussions (and conclusions) about responsible parenthood – as necessarily generous but also shaped by the parents' right to bring into the world the number of children they can raise given their particular personal and economic circumstances[48] – stimulated broader discussions about contraception within the Spanish Catholic community. These discussions also contributed to the dissemination of knowledge about oral contraceptives in the country as had occurred, according to Carmen Sánchez Carazo, with the circulation of information about the rhythm method during the 1940s and 1950s.[49] In fact, Catholic magazines *Ilustración de Clero* and *Ecclesia*, both with wide circulations and distributed among the clergy throughout the country, including small rural parishes, informed their readers about the existence of oral contraceptives as early as in autumn 1958, at the same time as these new drugs which inhibited ovulation began to be discussed in Spanish medical journals.[50] In September 1958, *Ecclessia*, a weekly magazine edited by *Acción Católica* and considered a semi-official church's paper, [51] reproduced the Pope Pius XII's address to International Hematological Congress in Rome in which he sanctioned the incidental 'indirect sterilization' caused by the pill (when it was used for therapeutic purposes and its contraceptive effect was a mere side effect of treatment) but rejected the 'direct',

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intentional use when the contraceptive effect motivated use of the drug.[52] Meanwhile *Ilustración del Clero*, a pastoral magazine edited by Missionary Sons of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, featured an article by Santiago Navarro who briefly discussed the pill's possible side effects and reminded readers of the Pope's disapproval of these new drugs. A month later, Navarro published a second article in the same magazine, in which he positioned himself against 'direct mutilation (…) which exceeds the man's [sic] right to his body', but supported using the pill during the postpartum, for a 'more prefect regulation of menstruation (….), to sustain breastfeeding and help the mother regain strength and be prepared for a new pregnancy, something that will not happen if the new pregnancy happens too soon'.[53] Carmen Sánchez Carazo states that after this article, no further discussion took place in the Spanish Catholic media until 1960.[54]

When the debate was resumed during 1960s, Pope Pius XII's guidelines would be mobilized in many of the debates regarding the admissibility of the pill for married Spanish Catholics. The hierarchy's position against this new birth control technology was shared by a number of prominent theologians and members of the clergy, such as the Jesuit Marcelino Zalba, member of the Pontifical Commission on Birth Control and signatory of its so-called 'minority report' working paper rejecting the change in the Church's position on contraception.[55] Yet a number of secular theologians and members of the clergy also wrote openly in favour of the pill. Their support for the drug was often framed in terms of delimiting special circumstances in which it could be morally admissible. Articles aiming at the definition and defense of the pill's use in cases such as breastfeeding, woman's pre-existing illness, risk of sexual assault, a forthcoming trip or

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sports' competition or irregular menstrual cycles proliferated in the Catholic media after 1963, and flourished especially after the Council ended in 1965.[56] A number of theologians, including Adolfo Fernández Díaz Nava, José Aldunate, José Luis Albizu, and Alfredo Mondria[57] published articles in the Catholic press advocating the use of oral contraceptives in some or all of the above mentioned circumstances. Discussion of such circumstances was also a commonplace in contemporary Spanish medical journals, in which theologians and doctors likewise expressed a variety of opinions – from unconditional rejection of oral contraceptives, to emphasizing the role of doctor as advisor in the realm of family planning who should not impose his own religious views on patients.[58] Individual responsibility, conscience and the couple's agency was used as an argument in favour of the pill in a number of books published shortly before the promulgation of the *HV*. For example, in a book on Catholic marriage published in 1967 and approved by the Archbishop of Seville, Professor of Theology Francisco Gil Delgado concluded that the pill can legitimately be used by the Catholic spouses. He argued that the rhythm method, used in line with the principles of responsible parenthood, was limited and contingent while the pill 'if considered licit, is the most humane method, as it best connects love and responsible regulation of births.'[59] A year later, priest José Luis Larrabe's book on the same topic emphasized personal conscience and the responsibility of spouses in choosing the best mechanisms for practicing 'responsible parenthood', thus indirectly supporting the pill.[60]

In Spanish mainstream press and opinion magazines before the promulgation of *HV*, articles supporting the legitimacy of the pill echoed arguments raised by the pill's

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defenders in Catholic magazines. In the conservative, pro-monarchy daily newspaper *ABC*, the coverage on oral contraceptives concentrated in news pieces on the pill's side effects.[61] However in June 1968, shortly before the publication of the encyclical, the newspaper featured a roundtable debate dedicated to the pill. One of the invited experts was José Luis Martín Descalzo, a distinguished writer and priest, who, echoing Larrabe's arguments, insisted that responsible parenthood was about the quality of religious socialization and childrearing rather than the quantity of children a couple produced. [62] Enrique Miret Magdalena, a secular revolutionary theologian, professor of Ethics at the Comillas Pontifical University and journalist wrote about the pill on the pages of *Triunfo* opinion magazine (which was critical of the regime) on numerous occasions before the publication of *HV*.[63] While also emphasizing the parents' right to decide responsibly on the number of children they would have, his main argument, centered on accepting the pill as a 'natural' birth control method, juxtaposed with the rhythm method which Miret Magdalena characterized as mutilating and contributing to the objectification of women.[64] In the mid-1960s, *Cuadernos para el Diálogo* magazine, featuring the writings of lay progressive Catholics such as Lili Álvarez and Eduardo Cierco, advocated recognition of this time as a 'splendid time' for the Church in which the rights and equal status of women was acknowledged and the acceptance of a dignified and at the same time effective contraceptive method was underway. [65] In 1966, the magazine reiterated its characterization of the rhythm method as harmful through an article signed by a renowned professor of medicine, José Peláez Redondo, who simultaneously published a similar paper in a popular medical journal, *Gazeta Médica Española*. [66] Peláez Redondo castigated the rhythm method as 'not secure and, according to its users, quite distressing'

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and claimed abstinence was 'heroic and only applicable to exceptional situations.'[67] In 1967, another key medical authority, conservative gynecologist and Rector of the Complutense University of Madrid between 1968 and 1972, José Botella Llusiá, discussed the advantages and drawbacks of the pill while recommending that Catholic readers should be patient because of the imminent publication of the encyclical on the topic.[68] By then, two Spanish publishers had printed the leaked working papers of the Pontifical Commission on Birth Control, one of them co-edited by the already mentioned José Luis Martín Descalzo, which concluded that the majority of clergy and medical experts endorsed the use of the pill within the aims of responsible parenthood.[69]

HV was officially presented to the Spanish press on 29 July 1968[70] and its text was disseminated across all media, including magazines for women. Opus-Dei sponsored *Telva* and *Ama* reproduced and commented on it just two weeks later, praising it as the 'Encyclical of love and women's dignity'[71] which, rather than being summarized as 'no to the pill', should instead be considered a 'yes to human love, women's dignity, transmission of life, God's creative intention, marital fidelity and the triumph of true freedom.'[72] The presentation of the encyclical in *Telva* was accompanied with comments from José Luis Saura, a parish priest from Vallecas (a working class neighborhood in Madrid) and Casimiro Morcillo, Archbishop of the Spanish capital and Vice-President of the Episcopal Conference, who both insisted on a rigid interpretation of the encyclical. Saura, with no reference whatsoever to the difficult living conditions of his parishioners, expressed relief that *HV* would eliminate confusion within the Catholic community caused by the teaching of 'those influenced by hedonism and false humanism which

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nourishes egoism and personal commodity,' meaning theologians advocating the value of personal consciousness above the norms set by the *HV*. Morcillo, known for his reactionary mindset,[73] predicted that, as a consequence of the encyclical, 'in the near future, women will be more respected in their dignity, Christian spouses and their families will be more united in love and work, and poor countries and families will receive more help.'[74]

These comments anticipated the official position of the Spanish Catholic hierarchy in regards to the encyclical. In September 1968, the Commission of Faith published a note of support for the *HV*. The note, which according to Carmen Sánchez Carazo, was re-printed in a number of daily newspapers and magazines, both Catholic and secular, stated that:

> Certain media have reproduced opinions in disagreement with the teachings of His Holiness Pope Paul VI in his Encyclical *Humanae Vitae*. The Commission of Faith of the Spanish Episcopal Conference considers its duty to express deep distress with such publications, which oppose to the position of the Episcopate as well as that of the immense majority of the Spanish press and Spanish Catholic community.[75]

Two months later, the episcopate issued an official statement declaring its full and unconditional support to Pope Paul VI's document.[76] The statement, published in *Ecclesia*, asserted that *HV* was 'based on immutable rules of the natural laws regarding marriage' and clearly was a product of Divine illumination.[77] Most Spanish bishops

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supported the declaration of the Conference and those who recognized the challenges the encyclical posed to the laity were the exception rather than norm. This was the case with Marcelo González Martín, at the time archbishop of Barcelona, who noted that *HV* was not easy for Catholics to follow and emphasized the need for the church to understand and help spouses rather than marginalizing those who acted according to their own consciousness in contravention of the encyclical.[78]

The initial reactions of Catholic magazines such as *Ecclesia* were supportive of the papal determination and denunciatory of theories of freedom of conscience of the spouses in the matter of family planning.[79] Such arguments proliferated also in the already mentioned conservative magazines for women – for example on March 1969, *Ama's* popular readers' correspondence section featured a letter from a woman, disquieted by friends who argued *HV* did not have to be followed to the letter:

> Yesterday during a social meeting with some other married couples I had a hard time. People started discussing *Humanae Vitae* and someone of high culture and an important profession, who deserves credibility, said this Encyclical, as any other, is subjected to personal interpretations according to each person's consciousness (….). Opinions of theologians —according to them, important ones— were quoted to defend this theory. (…) I felt uncomfortable, I realized things were not like that, that we are children of the Church and must obey anything the Pope says (…)". [80]

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Carmen del Cid, the Agony Aunt of the magazine, responded praising the reader and quoting a list of papal documents to support the thesis that 'personal interpretation' of encyclicals' guidelines was not allowed. In contrast, such personal interpretation lay at the foundation of the already mentioned progressive theologian Enrique Miret Magdalena's early comments on the *HV* in *Triunfo*, in which he placed emphasis on how the encyclical insisted in martial love and the spouses' agency.[81]

During the months that followed the publication of *HV*, the minority of priests and theologians who defended the pill, did not challenge the encyclical openly. Rather, they sought linguistic and moral formulas that would demonstrate the possibility of it being compatible with the use of the pill in certain circumstances.[82] This was the case of Juan de Castro, Professor of Moral Theology at Comillas Pontifical University in Madrid, who expressed such views in *Teología y Vida* magazine.[83] Other Catholic magazines, while positioning themselves in line with the encyclical, nevertheless opened their pages to foreign authors who defended both the encyclical and the pill, such as the French philosopher Jean Guitton. In an article published in *Ecclesia*, Guitton affirmed that:

> If a person has legitimate reasons to space births or give up on having children whatsoever, [for example] in case these would put the mother's health in danger, they should [not be forced to] give up on the act (…) that has a psychical and moral function in the marriage and for love."[84]

Another widely cited foreign author was the liberal German theologian Karl Rahner whose books, published in Spain after the introduction of the new Press Law in 1966,

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became main street bestsellers.[85] In *Reflexiónes en torno a Humanae Vitae*, published in Madrid in 1968, Rahner criticized the argumentation of the *HV* as ineffective, and predicted that neither its 'theory' nor 'practice' would be followed by the Catholic community.[86]

With increasing momentum in the latter months of 1968, a growing number of theologians, priests and members of religious orders (especially the Jesuits, in a position ideologically opposed to their brother religious Marcelino Zalba)[87] openly challenged the encyclical and, thus, the hierarchy by continuing to advocate for a more complex approach to birth control and an emphasis on individual agency in contraceptive decision-making guided by 'responsible parenthood'. The criticism spread amongst the Spanish Jesuits to such an extent that their Superior General, Pedro Arrupe, wrote a letter aimed at the Order and published in *Ecclesia*, in which he asserted that:

> To obey [the Encyclical] does not imply stopping to think and repeating slavishly and literally its text. We cannot say that this particular teaching of the Pope has nothing to do with our faith, because the essential part of this teaching refers directly to law and human and divine dignity of men.[88]

Other Catholic magazines such as *Apostolado Sacerdotal*, *Hechos y Dichos*, and *Ilustración del Clero* became spaces for a more open, pluralist debate, where arguments about the adaptability of the Papal dictum to personal circumstances and the primacy of conscience were formulated by both foreign and Spanish authors.[89] Others continued to appeal to special cases in which oral contraceptives could be legitimately used by

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Catholics, including a menstrual cycle irregular enough to make the rhythm method impossible. This was the case of the Jesuit Eduardo Fernández Regatillo, who in 1969 who, despite the calls of the Arrupe to desist, expressed such views in response to readers' questions to the magazine *Sal Terrae*. [90]

The debate on *HV* continued to excite and divide beyond the end of the decade. A leading article published in *Sal Terrae* in 1970 acknowledged the ongoing existence of two positions within the international and Spanish Catholic community: the outright rejection of oral contraceptives compared with their approval in specific circumstances.[91] As the decade progressed, these two positions coalesced. For some magazines, this meant an increased openness to discussing contraception and sexuality in more diversified terms. This process can be exemplified by the conservative magazine for women, *Ama*. Just three years before, *Ama* had insisted upon a rigid interpretation of Paul VI's teachings, but by 1971, the magazine published a call to young readers to send the magazine their opinions about a variety of topics, including 'contraceptive measurements'. While some readers considered them 'cowardly', others confessed using them at the time.[92]

In *Triunfo*, Enrique Miret Magdalena continued to prioritize the decision making of spouses over fixating on 'practical details', which should be adjusted on a case-by-case basis:

> Now that some time has passed after the publication of the Pope's Encyclical and the theological discussions surrounding it, the majority of Catholics have reached

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> a serene conclusion (…) that the fundamental teachings about love, such as the essence of the marital union and the humanely personal sense of marriage and its aims, was at the basis of Paul VI teaching. Practical details, on the other hand, are much less mandatory, and have to be flexibly adjusted instead of being simply adapted to an idea that can be, in certain cases, inhumane, because we need to save love and the human being, as almost all Episcopates all over the world have made clear.[93]

Other print media, on the other hand, continued to insist upon the emphatic nature of the ban on artificial contraception formulated by the encyclical, and the duty to obey it under all circumstances. Such assertions were formulated, for instance, by Opus Dei-affiliated female doctor, Ana María Álvarez Silván, on the pages on *Actividades de la Asociación Española de Mujeres Médico*. This was a journal edited by the Spanish Medical Women's Association - one of the rare sources available that enable excavation of Spanish medical women's discourses on contraception in the early 1970s. In an article published in 1971, Álvarez Silván, apart from elevating *HV* as the foremost and definitive statement of moral rectitude, accused the pill of objectifying women while bringing huge benefits to the pharmaceutical industry.[94] Interpretations of *HV* as a synonymous with an non-negotiable ban on artificial contraception as also endured in *Telva* magazine for women well into the 1970s, and even beyond the end of Franco's dictatorship in 1975.[95] Similarly, in *La Vanguardia*, a daily newspaper published in Barcelona, a conservative tenor of discussion on contraception monopolized debates throughout the 1970s, with a recurrent, firm reprimand on all 'artificial' birth control methods.[96]

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For doctors who supportive of family planning and became involved in early, semi-clandestine outpatient birth control clinics, *HV* was, in contrast, largely irrelevant. The first of such clinics were funded in some of the key university hospitals of Spain largest cities (Madrid, Barcelona, Bilbao) between the late 1960s and early 1970s. Under names that would not attract attention to their birth control activity (e.g. 'a puerperal clinic', funded in 1972 in La Paz Hospital in Madrid), their original aim was to provide contraceptive counselling and methods (mainly the pill) to women with health problems who had given birth in the hospital.[97] By mid 1970s, such clinics spread to smaller cities across the country, including Granada, Zaragoza Valladolid, and Seville. Their clientele also expanded beyond women patients who needed contraception for health reasons to include female staff of the hospital. Eventually, they became open to all women, who attended them in search for contraceptive advice given in a respectful, non-condescending manner.[98] Doctors José María Usandizaga and Miguel López Valverde, both involved in one of the earliest of such clinics in Bilbao around 1969, pointed to *HV* as disconnected from social reality and its limited impact on Catholics' contraceptive practices.[99] Vicente Salvatierra, Professor of Gynecology and Obstetrics at the University of Granada and promoter of a family planning service in Granada's *San Cecilio* Clinical Hospital, funded in 1975 under the name of 'sterility clinic,'[100] purposefully omitted the encyclical when he discussed birth control in a gynecology manual aimed at medical students published in 1973. Instead, he referred to Pius XII's 'encyclical to the midwives' which, he claimed, authorized family planning for Catholic couples.[101]

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These arguments illustrate the shifts in social debates about the pill in Spain during the last years of the dictatorship and throughout the democratic transition initiated after Franco's death in 1975. Fertilized by the ongoing controversy within the domestic and international Catholic community during the 1960s, the media moved from discussions about oral contraceptives confined to the terms of responsible parenthood, towards using the pill as pretext for reclaiming family planning as women's and a couple's human right.[102]

Conclusions

Between the late 1950s and late 1970s, the Spanish Catholic church was engaged in a process of internal deliberation and major redefinition of its relationship with the state. From the first half of the 1960s onwards, the church's privileged status within a dictatorial regime became increasingly unjustifiable in the light of the spirit of Vatican II. Moreover, the Council's emphasis on responsible parenthood, which coincided with the new availability of oral contraceptives, stimulated discussion on family planning amongst Spanish Catholics and within the general media. The plurality and openness of these debates marked out a 'splendid time' of growing plurality within the Catholic community, increasing sloughing off the doctrinal rigidities of 'national Catholicism' in the dying days of the Francoist regime, but also a growing fracture between the hierarchy, parts of the clergy and secular Catholics which would erupt on many levels during the 1960s and 1970s. In the context of the enduring ban on contraceptive propaganda, lifted only in 1978, such debates had the effect of moralizing, sanitizing (due to the participation of medical professionals in these discussions) and eventually legitimizing wider social

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interest in birth control. These heterogeneous and rich debates did not cease with the publication of *HV*, despite the Spanish hierarchy's unwavering adhering to the encyclical without objections, and contributed to easing the social and cultural transformation triggered in late 1960s Spain and the 1970s Spain with the end of the reign of el Generalísimo.

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