

Jessica C. Robbins (2021)

Aging Nationally in Contemporary Poland: Memory, Kinship, and Personhood

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Active aging programs that encourage older adults to practice health-promoting behaviors are proliferating worldwide. In Poland, the meanings and ideals of these programs have become caught up in the sociocultural and political-economic changes that have occurred during the lifetimes of the oldest generations—most visibly, the transition from socialism to capitalism. Yet practices of active aging resonate with older forms of activity in late life in ways that exceed these narratives of progress. Moreover, some older Poles come to live valued, meaningful lives in old age despite threats to respect and dignity posed by illness and debility. Through intimate portrayals of a wide range of experiences of aging in Poland, Jessica C. Robbins shows that everyday practices of remembering and relatedness shape how older Poles come to be seen by themselves and by others as living worthy, valued lives. In *Aging Nationally in Contemporary Poland*, we see how memories and understandings of the Polish nation intersect with ideals and experiences of late life to produce forms of life that are not reducible to binary categories of health or illness, independence or dependence, or socialism or capitalism.