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The Politics of Morality. The Church, the State, and Reproductive Rights in Postsocialist Poland

Published: 04.09.2015

Recommended by Redakcja Pol-Int

(Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press), 272

ISBN: 978-0-8214-2139-0

Gender Studies, Political Sciences, Social Sciences

English

After the fall of the state socialist regime and the end of martial law in 1989, Polish society experienced both a sense of relief from the tyranny of Soviet control and an expectation that democracy would bring freedom. After this initial wave of enthusiasm, however, political forces that had lain concealed during the state socialist era began to emerge and establish a new religious-nationalist orthodoxy. While Solidarity garnered most of the credit for democratization in Poland, it had worked quietly with the Catholic Church, to which a large majority of Poles at least nominally adhered. As the church emerged as a political force in the Polish Sejm and Senate, it precipitated a rapid erosion of women's reproductive rights, especially the right to abortion, which had been relatively well established under the former regime.

The Politics of Morality is an anthropological study of this expansion of power by the religious right and its effects on individual rights and social mores. It explores the contradictions of postsocialist democratization in Poland: an emerging democracy on one hand, and a declining tolerance for reproductive rights, women's rights, and political and religious pluralism on the other. Yet, as this thoroughly researched study shows, women resist these strictures by pursuing abortion illegally, defying religious prohibitions on contraception, and organizing into advocacy groups. As struggles around reproductive rights continue in Poland, these resistances and unofficial practices reveal the sharp limits of religious form of governance.

(From the publisher's website)

<https://www.pol-int.org/en/publications/politics-morality-church-state-and-reproductive-rights?j5Q6rewycZ5HtUDXTWpx7UZE=1>