

Cathorep

Catholicising Reproduction, Reproducing Catholicism: Activist Practices and Intimate Negotiations in Poland, 1930 - Present



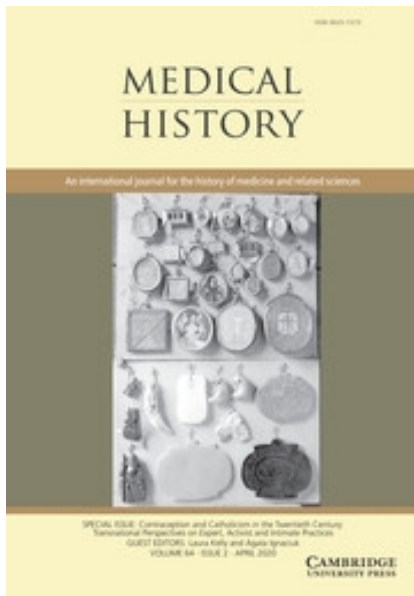
Przydatne informacje

Źródło Finansowania: [This research project is funded with an OPUS 17 scheme, National Science Center, Poland. More info in Polish/strona po polsku](#) [1]

News



Found in the archive (May 21, 2020): In the second half of the 1970s, “birth schools” [*szkoły rodzenia*] offering birth preparation courses mushroomed in Poland. These maps illustrate this process, depicting existing schools (white circles) and those that were expected to open soon (black circles). The 1975 map was published in *Ginekologia Polska*, the main Polish professional journal for gynaecology and obstetrics, in an article authored by Włodzisław Fijałkowski, the main proponent of psychoprophylaxis and preparation for birth in Poland. The 1979 map was published in a book entitled *Natural birth after birth school preparation*, published in 1981 and edited by Fijałkowski.



Medical History 64 (2), 2020

(1.05.2020): The latest issue of *Medical History* journal features a special issue on transnational history of Catholicism and contraception, guest edited by Laura Kelly and Agata Ignaciuk. Click to read the (Open Access) [Introduction](#) [2].



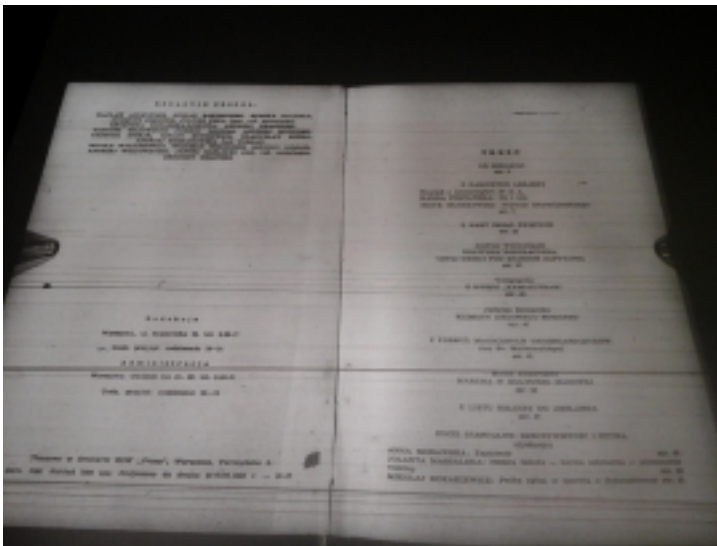
Galileo and the Pill. Law and Life, 1968

Found in the archive (April 20, 2020): In reply to the Encyclical *Humanae Vitae*, a widely read journal, *Prawo i Życie* (Law and Life), republished a comic cartoon from *Die Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*. Galileo offers consolation over the pill: “Don’t worry, in my case 350 years ago the Vatican was wrong too”.

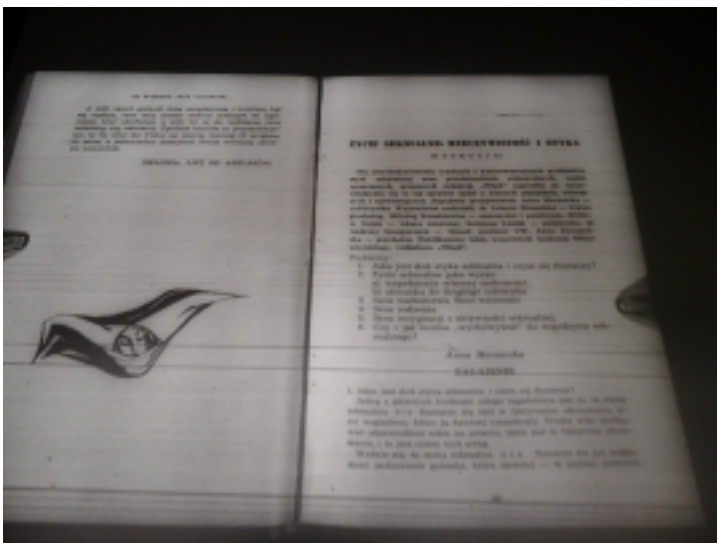


Fijałkowski's books

March 21, 2020: Libraries are closed, but we are working. We got some books online. We are analyzing works of Włodzisław Fijałkowski, who was a Catholic doctor and a pioneer of promoting fathers' engagement in childbirth.



The Bond, 1962, no. 8, table of contents



The Bond, 1962, no. 8, discussion's intro

Found in the archive (Feb 21, 2020): Editors of *The Bond*, a progressive Catholic magazine, presented a special issue on sexuality and Catholicism in 1962. Among contributors: Anna Morawska (one of the most important figures in the Catholic intelligentsia of the time who reported from the Second Vatican Council), Mikołaj Kozakiewicz (the president of the Polish Planned Parenthood Association), Wanda Pótlewska (a conservative Catholic psychiatrist and Karol Wojtyła's friend) and Andrzej Wielowieyski (the president of the Catholic Intelligentsia Club, an important space for anti-communist opposition).



Agnieszka and Agata at the Censorship Symposium at the University of Granada



Participants of the Sex, science, and censorship conference.

Agnieszka Kościńska participated in the international symposium [Sex, science, and censorship in the 19th and 20th centuries](#) [3] (17-18 February 2020), co-organised by Agata Ignaciuk at the University of Granada, Spain. She presented a paper entitled *"It will cause an official protest from the Episcopate": Sexological Self-Censoring between the Communist State and the Catholic Church*.

We are looking for student researchers. More info [in Polish](#) [4].

Project

How did Polish Catholics react to the abortion legislation enacted in 1956? What did the priests and bishops say about contraception in their sermons during the 1930s and in state-socialist Poland? What exactly is “natural family planning” and when was it first recommended for Polish Catholics? Does giving birth “in a natural way” mean the same as giving birth “in a Catholic way”? These are a few of the issues we will explore to investigate the relationship between Catholicism and reproduction in Poland from the 1930s to the present day. Through the methods and perspectives of cultural anthropology (especially the anthropologies of religion and sex), socio-cultural history and the history of medicine, we will investigate both Catholic activism relating to reproductive issues and the intimate practices of Polish Catholics.

We are primarily interested in three areas of Catholic reproductive activism and intimate practices: contraception, abortion, and childbirth. Through archival research, analysis of press and publicity materials, participant observation, in-depth interviews and oral history we will examine the ebbs and flows in responses to these crucial areas of social and private life by the Catholic hierarchy and their followers. Of particular interest will be the differences and similarities between the perceptions of various activist groups and the wider Catholic community. We will also attempt to determine the impact of Catholic reproductive activism on legislative changes initiated in Poland after 1989.

Despite its centrality in the practices and activities of Polish society in the past and present, the relationship between Catholicism and reproduction has yet to be systematically and comprehensively studied from both anthropological and historical perspectives, and research that does exist has rarely been conducted from the bottom-up perspective we will adopt. While many generalizations have been made about the Catholic Church’s influence on Polish reproductive practices, how religious doctrine has influenced the actual intimate practices of Poles has received little attention. The completely unexplored areas of Catholic activism on “natural birth”, developing since the 1970s, and local, grass-root anti-abortion activism in an international context of connections and inspirations, also require in-depth analysis this project will begin to undertake.

Research team

[Dr Agata Chełstowska](#) [5] is an anthropologist and sociologist interested in gender, intimacy, economy and anthropology of law. She lectured at the University of Copenhagen and was a visiting scholar in the New School for Social Research in New York.

[Dr Agata Ignaciuk](#) [6] is an assistant professor at the Department of the History of Science, University of Granada (Spain). She is a cultural historian working at the intersection between the history of medicine and women’s and gender studies. Her research focuses on the history of sexual and reproductive health and rights from a transnational perspective, and dialogues with the history of technology, international studies, anthropology and sociology. She was a Polish National Science Center Polonez (Marie Skłodowska Curie Actions COFUND) research fellow at the University of Warsaw’s Institute of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology (2017-2019). Her first book (co-authored with Teresa Ortiz Gómez) examined the cultural history of the oral contraceptive pill in Spain and Poland. She has also published on gender and the popularization of contraception in state-socialist Poland; Spanish women’s reproductive and contraceptive decision-making during late Francoism and the democratic transition and gender and advertising for oral contraceptives in Spain during the 1960s and 1970s. She is on the editorial board of [Dynamis](#) [7] journal for the history of medicine and health.

Agnieszka Kosiorowska – student of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology and of Applied Linguistics within the College of Interdisciplinary Individual Studies in Humanities and Social Sciences. She participated in an Erasmus+ exchange at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales. She conducted ethnographic research concerning distrust towards expert knowledge in the agricultural Podlaskia. Currently she is working on her master’s thesis about intergenerational language transmission by Polish migrants in Paris.

[Dr Agnieszka Kościńska](#) [8] (PI) is an associate professor at the Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology, University of Warsaw. She is the author and (co)editor of several volumes on gender, sexuality, and sexology, including the monographs, *Gender, Pleasure, and Violence: The Construction of Expert Knowledge of Sexuality in Poland* (forthcoming with [Indiana University Press](#) [9], Polish version 2014, University of Warsaw Press) and *To See a Moose: The History of Polish Sex Education from the First Lesson to the Internet* (forthcoming with Berghahn Books, Polish version: 2017, Czarne), and the special issue of *Sexualities*, “The science of sex in a space of uncertainty: Naturalizing and modernizing Europe’s East, past and present” (no. 1-2, 2016, co-edited with Hadley Renkin). [Visit Agnieszka’s website.](#) [10]

[Dr Sylwia Kuźma-Markowska](#) [11] is a historian and Associate Professor at the American Studies Center,

University of Warsaw. She specializes in 20th-century social and cultural history of the United States and Poland. Her areas of research include women's and gender history, transnational history of reproduction, and history of social movements. She has published on family planning activism in Poland and the United States as well as on the history of abortion and eugenics.

Natalia Pomian is a student at the Institute of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology, University of Warsaw. As part of her bachelor's dissertation, she conducted research in Sokółka in Podlaskie Voivodship. She analyzed the narratives about the establishment of a woodwork factory in 1972 and its impact on the life of the local community and individual employees, especially in the context of political transformation. She is currently writing a master's thesis about youth fashion in the 1980s in Warsaw. She is interested in oral history and post-socialism in Central and Eastern Europe. In 2018, she spent a semester at Charles University in Prague as an Erasmus exchange student.

Publications

Writing in progress. Meanwhile, please check our recent publications on project-related themes:

Agnieszka Kościńska, [Humanae Vitae, birth control and the forgotten history of the Catholic Church in Poland](#) [12] (Alana Harris, ed., *The schism of '68: Catholicism, contraception and Humanae Vitae in Europe*, 2018)

Sylwia Kuźma-Markowska, [Marx or Malthus? Population debates and the reproductive politics of state-socialist Poland in the 1950s and 1960s](#) [13] (*The History of the Family*, 2019).

Agata Ignaciuk, [No man's land? Gendering contraception in family planning advice literature in state-socialist Poland \(1950s-1980s\)](#) [14] (*Social History of Medicine*, 2019)

Sylwia Kuźma-Markowska and Agata Ignaciuk, [Family planning advice in state-socialist Poland, 1950s-1980s: Local and transnational exchanges](#) [15] (*Medical History*, 2020).

Agata Ignaciuk; Laura Kelly, [Contraception and Catholicism in the twentieth century: Transnational perspectives on expert, activist and intimate practices](#) [2] (*Medical History*, 2020).



[16]

Source URL: <https://etnologia.uw.edu.pl/en/cathorep>

Links

[1] <https://etnologia.uw.edu.pl/katorep>

[2] <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/medical-history/article/contraception-and-catholicism-in-the-twentieth-century-transnational-perspectives-on-expert-activist-and-intimate-practices/9B46B3ADE9D6CC5C98C4100579EC7AB3/core-reader>

[3] <http://rethinkingsexology.exeter.ac.uk/2019/06/cfp-sex-science-and-censorship-in-the-19th-and-20th-centuries/>

[4] <https://www.etnologia.uw.edu.pl/katorep>

[5] <https://uw.academia.edu/AgataChe%C5%82stowska/CurriculumVitae>

[6] <https://agataignaciuk.academia.edu/>

[7] <http://www.revistadynamis.es/en/>

- [8] <https://www.etnologia.uw.edu.pl/en/about-us/people/academic-and-non-academic/agnieszka-koscianska>
- [9] http://www.iupress.indiana.edu/product_info.php?cPath=1037_5879_3130_10449&products_id=810702
- [10] <https://akoscianska.wordpress.com/>
- [11] <https://uw.academia.edu/SylwiaKuzmaMarkowska>
- [12] <https://www.palgrave.com/gp/book/9783319708102>
- [13] <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/1081602X.2019.1702889>
- [14] <https://academic.oup.com/shm/advance-article/doi/10.1093/shm/hkz007/5486195>
- [15] https://depot.ceon.pl/bitstream/handle/123456789/17324/Kuzma-Markowska%2C%20Ignaciuk_Family%20planning%20advice%20AM.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y
- [16] <https://mobile.twitter.com/catholicising>