

Catholic Intimacies: Negotiating Contraception in Late Communist Poland

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Abstract: The majority of people in Poland self-identified as Catholic throughout the second half of the twentieth century. Despite the Polish Episcopate's unanimous rejection of contraception as immoral and sinful, a considerable proportion of Polish Catholics utilized family planning techniques and technologies explicitly banned by their institutional Church. This article uses personal narratives to show how Polish Catholics negotiated their use of Church-authorized and Church-banned family planning methods with their lived experiences of faith in a communist state where both abortion and contraception were legal. We explore the strategies of interpretation, relativisation, and (selective) rejection through which Catholics who self-identified as “practising” approached birth control as a social issue and an individual practice and show how communist secular approaches to birth control contributed to extending the scope of Catholics' agency in the realm of reproductive decision making.

The article is in [open access](#) [2]

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