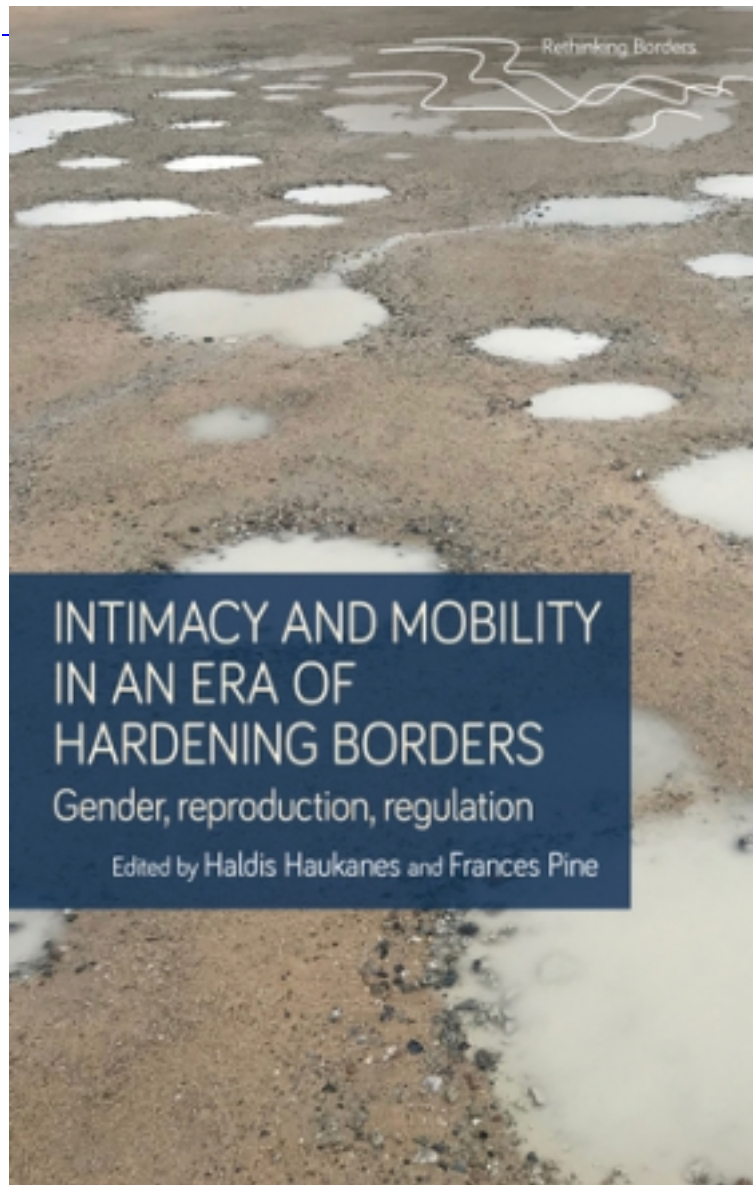


The Handbook of Masturbation and Defloration

“The Handbook of Masturbation and Defloration”: tracing sources of recent neo-conservatism

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[1]

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In the book *Intimacy and Mobility in an Era of Hardening Borders: Gender, Reproduction, Regulation*, ed Haldis Haukanes and Frances Pine (Manchester University Press, Manchester, 2021, pp. 218–234) a chapter by [Jacek Łukowski](#) was published:



“Gender ideology”, an umbrella term covering sex education, women’s rights, LGBTQ rights, and gender mainstreaming, figures at the heart of various political conflicts in Poland (and throughout Central Europe) and is presented as the major threat to the nation. Political analysts assert that the attack on “gender ideology” contributed significantly to the electoral victory of the radical right in Poland, in 2015. This chapter traces the historical roots of the current attack on “gender ideology” and argues that it had already started by the mid-1980s when the Communist Party, hoping to win the battle over young’s people hearts against the Catholic Church, published a progressive sex education handbook to be used in all Polish high schools. The publication ignited a heated debate: reviewers called it “the handbook of masturbation and defloration” and warned about its demoralizing effects. Conservative critics explicitly equated sexuality and gender with issues of national belonging, mobilizing opposition around these concepts. This chapter argues that it was at this moment in the 1980s when current conservative thinking about gender and sexuality vis-à-vis the nation was born and shows that recent neo-conservative approaches towards gender and sexuality have in fact been forged over the last three decades.

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