

Negotiating moral regimes

Negotiating moral regimes: Polish Catholics' changing attitudes towards Catholic sexual ethics

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Ethnographic fieldwork on Catholicism, sexuality, and reproduction conducted in two distinct settings – among Polish people residing in Poland and those who emigrated to the Île-de-France region in France – revealed a wide range of attitudes towards Catholic sexual ethics. While some respondents find the Church's teachings, which ban premarital sex, artificial contraception, and abortion, coercive, others view the Church as a guarantor of personal liberty and human dignity and consider the Catholic vision of married life attractive. This article emerges from an attempt to understand and reconcile such differing perspectives. The author argues that Polish Catholics are caught between conflicting moral regimes, one produced by religious and the other by secular forms of reproductive governance. They actively negotiate both to shape their sexual lives and families and to give meaning to their reproductive choices

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