



# **Politics of Morality: The Church, the State, and Reproductive Rights in Postsocialist Poland (Polish and Polish American Studies)**

*Joanna Mishtal*

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"...A compelling and horrifying account of how Polish institutions intervened and gained command over women's lives."

—Joanna Regulska, coeditor of *Women and Gender in Postwar Europe: From Cold War to European Union*

After the hope and enthusiasm that followed the collapse of Poland's state socialism in 1989, political forces that had lain concealed emerged and established a new religious-nationalist orthodoxy. As the Catholic Church emerged as a political force in the Polish government, it precipitated a rapid erosion of reproductive rights, especially the right to abortion, which had been relatively well established.

In *The Politics of Morality*, Joanna Mishtal explores this expansion of power by the religious right, along with the little-studied implications of the new reproductive governance for women. She examines the contradiction between an emerging democracy on one hand, and a declining tolerance for reproductive rights, women's rights, and political and religious pluralism on the other. At the same time, women resist these strictures by pursuing abortion illegally, defying religious prohibitions on contraception, and forming advocacy groups. Surveillance, control, and abuse of power are persistent themes in this revealing ethnography, which will speak to scholars of women's rights, political history, and Eastern Europe.

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