




FORUM

Polish Experts in School-based Sex Education and the West: Exchanging Ideas through the IPPF (1956–1989)

Natalia Jarska 

Tadeusz Manteuffel Institute of History, Polish Academy of Sciences, Rynek Starego Miasta 27/29, 00-272 Warszawa, Poland
njarska@ihpan.edu.pl

In this paper I examine the relationship between Polish experts on school-based sex education and international developments in the field during the post-war period. From 1956 onwards, Polish experts, hoping to introduce sex education to schools, drew on Western experience and knowledge. Using Polish sources, I focus on the ways in which this knowledge was transmitted, the role of the International Planned Parenthood Federation, and the approach of Polish experts towards the West. I argue that during the late 1950s and 1960s, Polish experts valued and relied exclusively on Western models. International exchange on sex education intensified in the 1970s and 1980s, with the Polish expert Mikołaj Kozakiewicz becoming a regional leader within the international family planning movement. However, as Polish experts became more critical about certain Western models of sex education, they began to promote the socialist model of family life education as a more appropriate option.

Introduction

In the early 1960s, Polish sociologist and future Vice President of the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) European Region, Mikołaj Kozakiewicz, reflected on a discussion on pedagogical issues with a Swedish expert. Kozakiewicz was a member of the Society for Conscious Motherhood (SCM), established in 1957, a Polish association-member of the IPPF. The IPPF, founded in 1952 by leading birth control experts from the United States, Western Europe and Asia, became a global organization of experts and activists for the development and implementation of contraception and planned parenthood.¹ In Poland, Kozakiewicz was one of the experts who developed sex education programs and advocated their introduction to schools. As well as his academic and activist career, Kozakiewicz was engaged in politics as a member of the United People's Party (*Zjednoczone Stronnictwo Ludowe*), a party allied with the ruling Polish United Workers' Party (*Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza*). In 1985, he would become a member of Polish parliament.² Back in 1956, the year that marked the end of Stalinism in Poland, Kozakiewicz was confronted with an awkward question:

About five years ago I happened to provide information about education in Poland to a distinguished *bourgeois* Swedish writer and journalist. He was particularly interested in the contemporary problems of Polish youth. Besides me, several editors-in-chief of Polish pedagogical journals participated in the conversation. . . . Our Swedish interviewer asked a lot of pointed and difficult questions and we were happy we could handle them and provide extensive answers, and we were even able to defend our point of view every time he tried to challenge it on the basis of completely

¹ Vicky Claeys, 'Brave and Angry – The Creation and Development of the International Planned Parenthood Federation', *The European Journal of Contraception and Reproductive Health Care*, 15 (2010).

² Tadeusz Mołdawa, *Ludzie władzy 1944–1991: władze państwowe i polityczne Polski według stanu na dzień 28 II 1991* (Warszawa: PWN, 1991), 378.

different ideological and political assumptions. And then, at the very end . . . our interviewer asked: could you say a few words about how sexual education is organized in Poland? This question left us speechless. . . . And now pedagogues and editors that so far had been so self-confident and well-spoken were confused and started to mumble that ‘in our country sexual issues are not a problem.’ . . . The Swedish journalist was astonished. . . . Then one of the editors, renowned for his knowledge and sense of humour, explained: ‘Our youth, like the whole nation, is so absorbed by material, social and political problems, that sexual matters do not cause problems. Sexual issues are so far not a key issue for our pedagogy.’ . . . But we all knew that this was not true.³

This recollection appeared in the preface of the 1961 Polish translation of *Sexual Education*⁴ by British author Cyril Bibby. Kozakiewicz justified the publishing of a foreign book by stating that ‘Polish pedagogy has not made great achievements in this field’⁵. Evidently, Kozakiewicz perceived Western – in this case Swedish and British – experts as a source of inspiration and knowledge.

This paper explores the transnational relationships relating to sex education in which Polish experts engaged between the late 1950s and 1989. Following the onset of the de-Stalinisation process and the legalisation of abortion, both in 1956, Polish experts and activists instigated debates on sexuality. These were initially centred around contraception and family planning, but increasingly addressed sexual expertise and sex education.⁶ Experts from SCM, later renamed the Society for Family Planning, then the Society for Family Development, began to discuss and advocate school-based sex education. These activities were connected to international networks of knowledge exchange from the outset, particularly the IPPF.⁷ Since its foundation, the IPPF had declared that all children had the right ‘to receive scientific sex information as part of their general education’.⁸ These international contacts persisted throughout the communist period. In this paper I focus on information exchange with Western countries from the perspective of Polish experts and examine their approach to Western science and activism, the ways in which knowledge was transferred, and shifting ideas about the place of Poland in international networks, on both the European and Central Eastern European level.

Initially, the ‘West’ refers here to those Western European countries that became a point of reference for Polish experts from the late 1950s onward: Sweden, Denmark and the United Kingdom. However, the West could be and was a generalised and ideologised concept that carried positive and/or negative connotations. In Poland, during both the state-socialist (1945–89) and post-socialist periods (1989 onwards), the West has been understood as a set of contrasting social, economic and cultural arrangements, to which the country could aspire or reject; progressive, but also corrupt and antithetical to both communist and conservative Polish values. Recent nationalist anti-LGBT discourse has utilised this rhetoric, demonstrating the enduring political importance of anti-Western narratives. As my analysis will show, Western sex education was suffused with these contradictory and conflicting connotations during state socialism, deemed either more advanced or too permissive in its approach to sexuality. However, aside from this rhetorical usage, Polish sex education experts did recognise distinctions between Western countries.

³ Mikołaj Kozakiewicz, ‘Przedmowa’ in Cyril Bibby, *Wychowanie seksualne* (Warszawa: PZWL, 1961), 3–4.

⁴ Cyril Bibby, *Wychowanie seksualne* (Warszawa: PZWL, 1961).

⁵ Kozakiewicz, ‘Przedmowa’, 5.

⁶ Natalia Jarska, ‘Modern Marriage and the Culture of Sexuality: Experts between the State and the Church in Poland, 1956–1970’, *European History Quarterly*, 49, 3 (2019); Agata Ignaciuk, ‘No Man’s Land? Gendering Contraception in Family Planning Advice Literature in State-Socialist Poland (1950s–1980s)’, *Social History of Medicine*, 33, 4 (2020); Sylwia Kuźma-Markowska and Agata Ignaciuk, ‘Family Planning Advice in State-Socialist Poland, 1950s–80s: Local and Transnational Exchanges’, *Medical History*, 62, 2 (2020).

⁷ Sylwia Kuźma-Makowska, ‘Międzynarodowe aspekty działalności Towarzystwa Świadomego Macierzyństwa w latach 50 i 60 XX w’, in Bożena Płonka-Syroka and Aleksandra Szlagowska, eds., *Problem kontroli urodzeń i antykoncepcji. Krytyczno-porównawcza analiza dyskursów* (Wrocław: Uniwersytet Medyczny im. Piastów Śląskich, 2013).

⁸ Joan Rettie, ‘Planned Parenthood in Europe: A Personal View’, *IPPF Europe. Regional Information Bulletin*, 2 (1979).

This research is largely based on Polish sources: books and articles on school-based sex education published in professional journals, such as the SCM's *Family Issues (Problemy Rodziny)*. As SCM experts played a key role in advancing sex education programmes, this journal remained a central forum for expert exchange on the topic. I conducted a systematic analysis of *Family Issues* between 1961 and 1989, and complemented this with articles found in book references and bibliographies, and books on sex education for professionals published in Poland between the 1960s and the 1980s. These sources shed light on both communication between Polish and foreign experts and perceptions of foreign expertise in post-1956 Poland. I have also consulted proceedings from international conferences on sex education organised by the IPPF, and IPPF publications available online.⁹ The limited possibilities to access IPPF and British sources on how Poland was perceived by Western experts has restricted the scope of this paper to Polish perceptions of foreign expertise.

Sex education in Eastern Europe under state socialism has recently attracted increasing scholarly interest. Agnieszka Kościańska's analysis of the development of sex advice for children and young people in twentieth-century Poland has revealed enduring controversies surrounding sexual openness and instruction, the role of progressive sexologists attempting to provide advice and the influence of Catholic teachings.¹⁰ Mark Fenemore has explored debates on sex education that took place in East Germany from the mid-1950s onward, discussing both their content and the controversies that emerged, and placing them in a larger context of political and ideological change.¹¹ The provision of advice literature on sexuality and family planning for both young people and adults has attracted considerable interest.¹² While some Western countries, such as Sweden and West Germany, pioneered compulsory sex education in schools, others were more reluctant. Timing also differed among the Eastern European countries, with pioneering elements of sex education becoming part of the East German school curriculum in 1959.¹³ Thus, there was no clear divide between Western and Eastern European countries in the advancement of school-based sex education.

As Lutz Sauerteig and Roger Davison have argued, 'sex education literature was rarely confined within national boundaries'.¹⁴ A number of authors have explored exchanges and similarities between the contents of Western and Eastern sex education in the post-war period. Eszter Varsa has revealed the similarities and discrepancies between family planning advice books in Hungary and Austria.¹⁵ She argues that despite the Cold War context contributing to perceptions of the West as morally corrupt, some concepts relating to the family and sexuality were transmitted through translations and exchange. While some scholars in Hungary, such as Buda and Szilágyi, used literature from the United States to combat the socialist emancipation of women and 'reassert a more conservative gender agenda', interactions with the West increased acceptance of 'forms of sexuality in scientific discourse that were earlier decried as perversions and abnormalities'.¹⁶ Kateřina Lišková, Gábor Szegegi and

⁹ Wellcome Collection (wellcomecollection.org) and the Museum of Abortion and Contraception (muvs.org).

¹⁰ Agnieszka Kościańska, *To See a Moose. The History of Polish Sex Education* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2021).

¹¹ Mark Fenemore, 'The Growing Pains of Sex Education in the German Democratic Republic (GDR), 1945–69 in Shaping Sexual Knowledge', in Lutz D. H. Sauerteig and Roger Davidson, eds., *Shaping Sexual Knowledge. A Cultural History of Sex Education in Twentieth Century Europe* (London: Routledge, 2009).

¹² Kateřina Lišková and Gábor Szegegi, 'Sex and Gender Norms in Marriage: Comparing Expert Advice in Socialist Czechoslovakia and Hungary between the 1950s and 1980s', *History of Psychology*, 24, 1 (2020); Ignaciuk, 'No Man's Land'; Gábor Szegegi, 'The Emancipation of Masturbation in Twentieth-Century Hungary', *The Historical Journal*, 64, 5 (2020); Eszter Varsa, 'Sex Advice East and West: Sex Education and Family Planning in Cold War Austria and Hungary', *The History of the Family*, 25, 4 (2020); Eszter Varsa, "'Respect Girls as Future Mothers": Sex Education as Family Life Education in State Socialist Hungary (1950s–1980s)', in Isabel Heinemann, Theresia Theuke and Ann-Katrin Gembries, eds., *Children by Choice? Changing Values, Reproduction, and Family Planning in the 20th Century* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2018), 98.

¹³ Lutz D. H. Sauerteig and Roger Davidson, 'Shaping the Sexual Knowledge of the Young. Introduction', in Sauerteig and Davidson, *Shaping Sexual Knowledge*, 6.

¹⁴ *Ibid.* 10.

¹⁵ Varsa, 'Sex Advice East and West'.

¹⁶ Varsa, "'Respect Girls as Future Mothers'", 98.

Natalia Jarska have underlined the importance of international developments and exchange through both the UN and IPPF, which made education relating to population issues a shared topic of interest for East and West in the early 1970s.¹⁷ By focusing on transnational exchange, my paper contributes to the developing history of sexual knowledge and transnational relations during the Cold War. My particular focus is the organisation of school-based sex education in Poland in the post-1956 period, and the ways in which those Polish experts striving for its introduction approached Western models. Furthermore, my paper demonstrates that Polish experts predominantly made use of British and Swedish sources.

Polish experts and activists had established connections with international family planning and sex education activists during the interwar period.¹⁸ However, these contacts remained in the private sphere, as early post-war pro-natalism and a lack of opportunities for independent organisations prevented the development of family planning activism in Poland. As historian Sylwia Kuźma-Markowska has shown, transnational exchange between experts in birth control was re-established in 1956, and continued through the 1960s, when around 200 Polish experts visited the United Kingdom for training in birth control methods.¹⁹ The SCM joined IPPF in 1958, and it was through conferences and other official channels that Polish experts learned about sex education in the West. International exchange on the topic intensified from the 1970s onwards, with Poland becoming more active in international networks and developing links with other state-socialist countries.

In this paper I argue that these contacts and the relationship between Polish experts and Western – particularly Swedish and British – expertise underwent two phases. In the first, the interest in and reception of Western knowledge derived from a conviction that local and regional expertise in Poland was inadequate. However, information received from the West was not accepted indiscriminately, as experts attempted to adapt it to what they deemed to be the cultural specificity of Poland. In the second phase, beginning in the early 1970s, Polish experts, and Mikołaj Kozakiewicz in particular, played a more active role, positioning themselves as regional leaders and intermediaries between West and East. At the same time, they became more critical of the Western approach and developed what was termed the ‘socialist’ model of education for family life, as the leader of sex education projects in Poland, Mikołaj Kozakiewicz, gained international recognition. Throughout both phases, this exchange was facilitated by international organisations such as the IPPF. This study clearly illustrates both the significance of Cold War divisions in shaping sexual knowledge and the ways in which experts and activists overcame these divisions from the mid-1950s onwards.

While the development of ideas about sex education and the possibility of realising these in practice depended on larger political issues in Poland, the SCM and other experts played a crucial role by introducing the matter to public debate, developing sex education agendas and campaigning for their application. In the subsequent sections, I provide background information about the development of school-based sex education in the context of changing population dynamics and family policies, and show how this activism was informed by international expert exchange. The two chronological sections, 1956–69 and 1970–89, reflect changing dynamics in the realms of sex education, national family policies, international exchanges and attitudes to Western models of school-based sex education.

1956–1970: Learning from the West

Although a few publications on sexuality appeared in the early post-war period, there was no revival of the interwar activities of sex education reformers and the subject was not discussed at state level.²⁰

¹⁷ Kateřina Lišková, Natalia Jarska and Gábor Szegedi, ‘Sexuality and Gender in School-based Sex Education in Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland in the 1970s and 1980s’, *The History of the Family*, 25, 1 (2019).

¹⁸ Magdalena Gawin, ‘The Social Politics and Experience of Sex Education in Early Twentieth-Century Poland (1905–39)’, in Sauerteig and Davidson, *Shaping Sexual Knowledge*; Sylwia Kuźma-Markowska, ‘Transatlantyckie kontakty działaczy na rzecz kontroli urodzeń w Polsce i USA (1931–1960)’, *Dzieje Najnowsze*, 4 (2007).

¹⁹ Kuźma-Markowska, ‘Międzynarodowe aspekty’.

²⁰ Romana Lubodzińska, ‘Uświadomienie płciowe w programie 7-letniej szkoły podstawowej’, *Biologia w szkole* 1 (1949).

When approached by an international organisation about family life education in 1947, the Ministry of Education responded that there were no comparable groups in Poland and no interest in establishing contacts.²¹ A publication by the key Soviet expert and reference for Polish pedagogues at that time, Anton Makarenko, in which he discouraged parents from discussing sex with their children ‘too early’, was translated into Polish in 1949.²² As Mikołaj Kozakiewicz explained over a decade later, socialist pedagogy rejected Freud’s theory of ‘pan-sexualism’ and perceived sex education as the ‘Freudists’ domain.²³ Therefore, the lack of discussion about sex education was related to the Stalinisation of pedagogy but also a broader post-war silence on sexuality. Makarenko’s approach to education was also prevalent in East Germany, which, like Poland, maintained a reluctance to talk openly about sex until the period of de-Stalinisation (1956–7).²⁴

In Poland, de-Stalinisation discussions about school-based sex education were preceded by debates on abortion, family planning and a supposed moral crisis among young people. Between 1956 and 1970, a period of what Sylwia Kuźma-Markowska has described as ‘moderate anti-natalism’, education about contraception became the focal point for both experts and the party-state.²⁵ While SCM predominately addressed contraception and family planning, they also initiated debates on sexuality and, at the beginning of the 1960s, contributed to the development of professional sexology in Poland. Between 1957 and 1959, debates on sex education with contributions from medical doctors and pedagogists appeared in popular dailies and periodicals for general and young audiences, and such discussions continued in specialist publications in the early 1960s.²⁶ Experts associated with SCM promoted the introduction of sex education to the school curriculum. In contrast with the largely female-led realm of contraception, this area of SCM activity was primarily developed by male experts. The introduction of school-based sex education was established as a priority at the first SCM national congress in January 1960.²⁷ From the late 1950s onwards, experts advocating the introduction of sex education to schools positioned this as part of a broader modernisation project, in which issues relating to health, sexuality and the family were deemed crucial for combating the ‘backwardness’ of Polish society. Professional intervention would eradicate both ignorance and misinformation; logically, the experts argued, in a society where sexuality had been silenced, parents and peers could not be a reliable source of knowledge. The claim that parental instruction is insufficient or even harmful has been a global feature since sex education was first discussed.²⁸

The legalisation of abortion and establishment of a state-sponsored birth control campaign engendered conflict with the Catholic Church hierarchy, who opposed sex education in schools, preferring the matter to be dealt with by parents. Experts often associated a ‘backward’ lack of sexual knowledge with Catholicism. During the 1970s and 1980s, the Church developed its own networks of premarital preparation and expertise on sexuality and family planning. Catholic experts exchanged information with others, published in professional journals and participated in sex education conferences.²⁹ Nevertheless, the Catholic hierarchy remained opposed to school-based sex education, mounting a

²¹ Ankieta Międzynarodowej Komisji Kongresów Wychowania, 1947, Archive of Modern Records (Archiwum Akt Nowych), Ministry of Education, 582.

²² Anton Makarenko, ‘Wychowanie seksualne’, *Życie Szkoły*, 6 (1949).

²³ Kozakiewicz, ‘Przedmowa’.

²⁴ Fenimore, ‘The Growing Pains’, 74.

²⁵ Sylwia Kuźma-Markowska, ‘Marx or Malthus? Population Debates and the Reproductive Politics of State-Socialist Poland in the 1950s and 1960s’, *The History of the Family*, 25, 4 (2019) <https://doi.org/10.1080/1081602X.2019.1702889>.

²⁶ Mikołaj Kozakiewicz, ‘Wychowanie seksualne a przygotowanie do małżeństwa i życia rodzinnego’, *Problemy Rodziny*, 21 (1985).

²⁷ Mikołaj Kozakiewicz, ed., *Wychowanie seksualne i planowanie rodziny w Polsce: przeszłość, teraźniejszość i przyszłość* (Warszawa: ‘Movex’, 1997), 131.

²⁸ Lesley A. Hall, ‘In Ignorance and in Knowledge. Reflections on the History of Sex Education in Britain’, in Sauerteig and Davidson, *Shaping Sexual Knowledge*, 21–4.

²⁹ On Catholic and secular family planning activism in Poland, see Kuźma-Markowska and Ignaciuk, ‘Family Planning Advice’.

campaign in the mid-1970s. In 1986, as Agnieszka Kościańska has discussed, the Polish episcopate persuaded state authorities to withdraw the first official sex education textbook.³⁰

A great deal of advice literature about sex education for adolescents and parents was published in Poland after 1956. Talks about sex education were offered to schools and parents by SCM activists and experimental curricula were introduced in some cities from the mid-1960s onwards.³¹ The Ministry of Education began debate about sex education in 1963,³² and incorporated some elements of sex education into the primary and secondary school curricula in the schoolyear 1966–7. Training for biology teachers and school principals was provided by SCM, who also asked Mikołaj Kozakiewicz to prepare an instructors' guidebook, published in 1968. As state institutions were reluctant to listen to experts, the introduction of sex education as a separate subject was unattainable. Thus, activism in the 1960s focused on publishing guides for teachers and, towards the end of the decade, organising training at teacher development centres.³³ As sex education became an increasingly important part of their activities, SCM established the Commission for Sex Education under Mikołaj Kozakiewicz in 1969.³⁴ At its Third National Meeting in 1970, SCM prioritised the expansion of school-based sex education programmes and a national meeting of teachers and experts was held that year. Various state institutions were lobbied by SCM to structurally engage in sex education programmes by providing training for teachers and advice for young people and parents.

From the beginning of post-1956 debates on sex education in general and its implementation in schools, Polish experts turned to Western experiences as a source of knowledge and models, with IPPF playing a key role as a space of transnational and international dialogue. Contacts with British experts were established during intensive exchange between SCM experts and Planned Parenthood, and later the IPPF, the regional headquarters of which were in London. There were also lively contacts with Elise Ottesen-Jensen,³⁵ one of the founders of the Swedish Association for Sexuality Education (RFSU) in 1933, who was elected Regional Chairwoman of the IPPF in 1955.³⁶ Polish experts met Ottesen-Jensen and Thorsten Sjövall, a leading expert on Swedish sex education, at the 1957 IPPF conference in West Berlin, and participated in both the twenty-fifth anniversary of RFSU in Stockholm in 1958 and the 1962 IPPF Regional Conference entitled *Trends in Family Development in Europe* in Poland.³⁷ While the main topic of exchange was contraception and transnational contacts were led by gynaecologists and SCM activists such as Jadwiga Beaupré, Jan Lesiński and Małgorzata Bulska, they met with experts in sex education such as Ottesen-Jensen and Sjövall from Sweden and Agnete Breastrup from Denmark, who all served as IPPF Europe presidents between 1950 and 1980. Some of these experts visited Poland in the late 1950s and the 1960s, and SCM members were soon invited to join the Executive Committee of IPPF Europe.

This reliance on Western experiences and knowledge was related to a discontinuity in Polish expertise on school-based sex education. Polish experts and activists had discussed sex education since the beginning of the twentieth century and developed theoretical approaches as well as practical postulates throughout the 1920s and 1930s.³⁸ As Sylwia Kuźma-Markowska has argued, there was a notable continuity in attitudes to sterilisation between the interwar eugenic and birth control

³⁰ Kościańska, *To See a Moose*.

³¹ Kozakiewicz, *Wychowanie seksualne*, 136.

³² Michael Zok, 'Säkularisierung im Intimbereich. Sexualität und Reproduktion in Irland und Polen nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg' (Secularization in the Private Sphere. Sexuality and Reproduction in Ireland and Poland since World War Two), *Střed | Centre. Journal for Interdisciplinary Studies of Central Europe in 19th and 20th Centuries*, 1 (2018).

³³ Kozakiewicz, *Wychowanie seksualne*, 22–3.

³⁴ Jerzy Witczak, '30 lat z rodziną', *Problemy Rodziny*, 6 (1986), 10–11.

³⁵ Kuźma-Markowska, *Międzynarodowe aspekty*.

³⁶ Jonathan Zimmerman, *Too Hot to Handle: A Global History of Sex Education* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015), 66. Sex education was made obligatory in all public schools in Sweden in 1956.

³⁷ Rettie, 'Planned Parenthood'.

³⁸ See Marek Babik, *Polskie koncepcje wychowania seksualnego w latach 1900–1939* (Wydawnictwo WAM: Kraków, 2010); Kościańska, *To See a Moose*; Magdalena Gawin, 'Spór o wychowanie seksualne dzieci i młodzieży w dwudziestoleciu międzywojennym'; Gawin, 'The Social Politics'.

movements and the expertise developed by SCM after 1956, although voices in favour of sterilisation were limited to professional exchange and not present in advice literature during the post-war period.³⁹ Continuity is also visible in the persistence of experts' idea to introduce compulsory pre-marital medical examination in post-war Poland, despite the shift in political context and population policy. However, this continuity is not evident in school-based sex education. Tadeusz Bilikiewicz, a leading Polish psychiatrist and author of one of the first books on sexuality available after 1956, had published on sex education before the war, and interwar publications appeared in bibliographies published after 1956, including works by supporters of the eugenic movement. However, there were no references to particular ideas or authors from earlier than 1939 and Kozakiewicz stated that pre-war publications were not easy to access. In 1961, he also labelled Polish pedagogy as 'Catholic', and claimed that sex education was only developed in Protestant countries.⁴⁰ A prominent gynaecologist and SCM expert, Jan Lesiński, also stated that there was 'no preparation for family life' in Poland.⁴¹ This ambiguous relation with pre-war Polish expertise was a factor in the reliance on foreign expertise.

In the post-1956 period, Polish experts drew mostly on experiences of school-based sex education in Sweden, Denmark and the United Kingdom.⁴² A public debate about sex education was initiated in 1957, when the daily *Standard for the Young* (*Sztandar Młodych*) published excerpts from a Danish book for parents.⁴³ In late 1958, the same periodical published an article by Jan Lesiński on Western sex education, in which he focused on the four stages of the Swedish programme and stated that sex education 'should be part of the school programme' as it had been in Sweden since 1933. He also emphasised the need to combine information, 'ethical background' and responsibility. Lack of the latter led to 'tragedies, not only for individuals, but also families, that is: the "social unit"'. Lesiński denounced Poland's 'shocking' lack of responsibility, evidenced by 'overcrowded orphanages, abandoned children, "hooliganism" in sex lives, miscarriages and infanticide'. Sex education was, in his view, a remedy for all these social problems, including the 'hooliganism' widely discussed in Poland at that time.⁴⁴ Combining information with ethical education within an understanding of individual happiness in the context of social wellbeing were the key ideas on which Polish sex education theorisation would be founded. While the geographical focus reflected dominant transnational networks, Sweden was renowned for its engagement in sex education. As Lutz Sauerteig has pointed out, 'in the 1960s, a substantial amount of Scandinavian sex education material, which was perceived as being particularly progressive and explicit, was translated into other European languages'.⁴⁵ In 1961, the Polish author Aleksander Majda published the first book on sex education for teachers, which was subsequently approved for use in schools by the Ministry of Education.⁴⁶ Majda explained that he had built his model on the materials available, mainly from Sweden and the United Kingdom.⁴⁷ The Swedish resources, which he found particularly useful, were provided by the Swedish Ministry of Education. Majda also used material produced by Planned Parenthood organisations in the United Kingdom and the United States, and Danish material in relation to very young

³⁹ Sylwia Kuźma-Markowska, 'An Unexpected Continuity: Voluntary and Compulsory Sterilization in the Rhetoric of the Pre- and Post-World War II Polish Birth Control Movement', *East Central Europe*, 38 (2011).

⁴⁰ Kozakiewicz, 'Przedmowa'.

⁴¹ Ibid. Lesiński also mentioned Holland, Denmark, Norway, England and the United States.

⁴² There were also references to French publications. Danuta Barzach, 'Przegląd wydawnictw francuskich', *Psychologia Wychowawcza*, 1 (1959).

⁴³ Jan Lesiński, *Sztandar Młodych*, (1957).

⁴⁴ Lesiński, 'Wychowanie seksualne na Zachodzie', *Sztandar Młodych*, 256 (27 Oct. 1958), 6.

⁴⁵ Sauerteig and Davidson, 'Shaping the Sexual Knowledge'.

⁴⁶ Aleksander Majda, *Wychowanie seksualne dzieci i młodzieży: poradnik dla nauczycieli, wychowawców i rodziców* (Warszawa: Państwowe Zakłady Wydawnictw Szkolnych, 1961).

⁴⁷ More inspiration from the United Kingdom arrived when a number of Bertrand Russell's essays were translated, including one on sex education. The collection was published in 1958 by the Society for Secular School (Towarzystwo Szkoły Świeckiej), with a preface by Bogdan Suchodolski, a leading Polish pedagogue.

children.⁴⁸ At this stage it cannot be ascertained exactly how this material circulated, but it is likely they were accessed through IPPF networks and individual exchange between experts.

Experts also provided some translations of English texts for Polish readers. Lack of archival material makes it difficult to assess why particular publications were chosen, but it is likely to have been determined by accessibility, copyright law and authors' willingness to have their work published in Poland. Abraham and Hannah Stone's book, *Marriage Manual*, was translated into Polish by Jan Lesiński and published in 1961 and 1962 editions. *Radar*, the first Polish youth magazine to have a regular column on sex issues, had published excerpts of the book in 1960. Hannah Stone was the medical director of Margaret Sanger's birth control clinic in New York and ran counselling centres for couples with her husband Abraham, who had actively recruited experts for IPPF in Europe during the mid-1950s.⁴⁹ First published in 1935, numerous post-war editions of *Marriage Manual* had been published.⁵⁰ Although the book was intended for betrothed couples, it became principally a source of knowledge for young people in Poland.

Also published in 1961 was a Polish translation of *Sex Education: A Guide for Parents, Teachers and Youth Leaders* by the British author, biologist and education officer for the Central Council for Health Education, Cyril Bibby.⁵¹ This had originally been published in 1945 and undergone numerous revisions.⁵² Bibby, a leading figure in sex education between the 1930s and 1960s, played an important role in shaping the first sex education school curriculum in the United Kingdom during the early 1940s, and his book became the 'standard textbook on the subject for several decades'.⁵³ Bibby discussed the roles of parents and school in sex education, explained how to deal with particular topics and problems, outlined a school curriculum and appended a 'tentative scheme for sex education'.⁵⁴ The translation contained the same chapters and appendix, with a new Polish introduction and bibliography.⁵⁵

The introduction, written by Mikołaj Kozakiewicz, referred to the key ideas in Polish discourse on school-based sex education. He criticised liberal and individualistic approaches to sex, claiming that '[s]killful and safe [sex] is the slogan of worthless and immoral people who see in the other person nothing but an object of his/her sexual desires, and who do not recognise any moral and social obligations'. Although Kozakiewicz wanted teachers to 'explain to children the limits of freedom in sex', he also stated that a highly restrained approach to sexuality was 'not our educational ideal'.⁵⁶

It was following these publications by Lesiński and Majda that Kozakiewicz suggested knowledge, morality, 'culture of feelings' and 'awareness of social duties' should be included in any sex education curriculum. During the late 1950s and 1960s, Polish experts underlined the social importance of sex and used this as justification for implementing sex education in schools. Kozakiewicz not only believed the wellbeing of society depended on happy sexual relationships, he also linked sexuality with public roles, claiming that only people who fulfilled societal duties 'towards the others' would be faithful to their wives. The importance of sexuality for social order was also raised by Czechoslovak sexologists at that time.⁵⁷

During the 1960s, although Polish experts believed that issues relating to school-based sex education were largely similar regardless of geography, they also argued that Poland had specific concerns

⁴⁸ For example, he quoted Helen Wright, who visited Poland in Nov. 1957.

⁴⁹ Christina Simmons, *Making Marriage Modern: Women's Sexuality from the Progressive Era to World War II* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

⁵⁰ Hannah M. Stone and Abraham Stone, *Marriage Manual. Practical Guidebook to Sex and Marriage* (New York: Pocket Books, 1935).

⁵¹ Bibby, *Wychowanie seksualne*.

⁵² Cyril Bibby, *Sex Education: a Guide for Parents, Teachers and Youth Leaders* (London: Macmillan, 1945).

⁵³ Hall, 'In Ignorance', 22, 26.

⁵⁴ The content of the English edition is available online at www.wellcomecollection.org/works/z2hwa6tu (last visited 19 July 2022).

⁵⁵ Bibby, *Wychowanie seksualne*.

⁵⁶ Kozakiewicz, 'Przedmowa', 10–11.

⁵⁷ Kateřina Lišková, *Sexual Liberation, Socialist Style: Communist Czechoslovakia and the Science of Desire, 1948–1989* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018).

that related to political and cultural differences. Aleksander Majda certainly recognised important ‘cultural differences’, including excessive alcohol consumption in Poland.⁵⁸ Mikołaj Kozakiewicz, who had not only written a long introduction to Bibby’s book but also made changes to the main text and added comments, apparently with the author’s consent, viewed Polish specificity as twofold. One aspect was that Poland was ‘backward, obscurantist and intolerant’, with religion having a significant influence on parental attitudes to sex.⁵⁹ Thus, sex education was a necessary enlightenment, a way of ‘shaping a scientific worldview’ (*naukowy pogląd na świat*). This was a highly popular phrase during state socialism, used to describe socialist education and distinguish it from religious belief. Socialist industrialisation policies had highlighted this ‘backwardness’ when ‘many young people rushed to the cities’. Kozakiewicz also referred to a fear that female workers’ sexualities were becoming out of control, a concern often expressed during de-Stalinisation as part of a critique of the Stalinist period.⁶⁰ He believed such issues could be solved by the socialist state; and this was the second aspect of Poland’s specificity. Capitalism did ‘not set the rules here’ and a centralised and unified educational system guaranteed efficacy. Kozakiewicz viewed the centralised socialist state as the main agent in battling ‘backwardness’ and pursuing modernisation, the principal aim of which was to shape ‘a conscious and progressive (*postępowy*) human’.

However, the changes and comments Kozakiewicz introduced to Bibby’s text were minor, mostly referring to specificities of the school system, curricula and institutions. There were no religion classes in Polish schools in 1961, and Kozakiewicz believed sex education could be mainstreamed through official youth organisations. However, he also claimed there was ‘a national specificity in sex’. Here, Kozakiewicz was indicating more than political, social and economic differences. He shortened Bibby’s section on homosexuality, arguing that ‘this deviation’ was not common in Poland and homosexual acts were not penalised. Despite recognising the political differences between the United Kingdom and Poland, Kozakiewicz believed the programme Bibby designed in the early 1940s could be applied in 1960s Poland.

In the years 1956–70, expertise on school-based sex education developed within the framework of state-supported family planning campaign and moderate anti-natalist policies. Following intensive exchange in the realm of birth control, Polish experts turned to expertise on sex education from Western countries such as United Kingdom, Sweden and Denmark. They perceived these countries as more advanced in the development of school programs. However, the implementation of Western experiences had to respect local specificity derived from the socialist system seen as progressive in its attempts to modernise education and society.

1970–1989: Kozakiewicz on an International Stage

In the 1970s, further development of school-based sex education was enabled by a general change in family policy. The party leadership that came to power at the end of 1970 responded to demographers’ warnings of declining birth rates by adopting a pro-natalist approach. Extended maternity leaves and child benefits were introduced and embedded in an intensive pro-family rhetoric that emphasised the maternal role of women. At the same time, the party-state intensified youth education, including preparation for life in a ‘socialist family’.⁶¹ According to Kozakiewicz, the Communist Party’s interest in ‘socialist education’ and ‘preparation for life in the family’, expressed at the Sixth Party Congress in 1972, made it possible to promote school-based sex education. The SCM took advantage of widely held debates on family issues to mainstream its ideas about sex education in key media outlets, including television.⁶² Not only did the shift in national policy provide a more favourable framework, sex

⁵⁸ Majda, *Wychowanie seksualne*.

⁵⁹ Kozakiewicz, ‘Przedmowa’, 15.

⁶⁰ Małgorzata Fidelis, *Women, Communism, and Industrialization in Postwar Poland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

⁶¹ Lišková, Jarska and Szegedi, ‘Sexuality and Gender’.

⁶² Kozakiewicz, *Wychowanie seksualne*, 23–5.

education, understood as part of larger population policies, gained international recognition as a crucial issue, a process that impacted on the development of sex education curricula in Eastern Europe.⁶³

In this favourable environment, sex education was introduced for secondary school students as part of a new 'preparation for family life' course, with around one third of the curriculum dedicated to information about sexuality and reproduction. Sex education was only provided for students aged fifteen to nineteen and, as not obligatory, adopted by a limited number of schools.⁶⁴ The first textbook was published when the subject became compulsory in the mid-1980s.⁶⁵

Towards the end of the 1960s, international exchange intensified. According to his memoirs, Kozakiewicz became more involved in the IPPF from 1970 onwards, when renowned Polish gynaecologist and member of the Regional Executive Committee, Małgorzata Bulska, invited him to participate in international seminars.⁶⁶ Within increasing international focus on population policies during the 1960s and 1970s, controversies relating to global family planning principles arose between the West, socialist countries and the Global South, leading the United Nations to also address sex education as part of family planning and organise specialised seminars.⁶⁷

Experts met at the various conferences dedicated to sex education, increasing the international exchange of information. In October 1970, IPPF Region Europe organised a seminar on sex education, featuring Thorsten Sjövall (leading expert on sex education in Sweden) in Baden/Vienna, at which Mikołaj Kozakiewicz presented on the content of sex education. He spoke about a 'national character' that every country needed to address when shaping their programme. Sex education was about 'preparing for marriage', and its main aim was 'to show love as fundamental to a better sex life'. Kozakiewicz claimed young people not only needed knowledge but a moral guide to sexuality, emphasised 'psychosexual' gender differences, recommended 'restraint' in fostering premarital sex as young people should not start their sex lives too early, stated that satisfaction should not be the only aim of sex, and warned against the dissemination of contraception becoming 'too widespread'.⁶⁸ Kozakiewicz's approach typifies the increasingly pro-natalist approach of Polish experts in the late 1960s.⁶⁹ It also reflects the leading Polish sexologists' stress on gender difference as the basis of pleasurable sex.⁷⁰ The ensuing discussion revealed a resistance to the latter attitude among other participants.

Organised by the Swedish Association for Sex Education, *The Second International Symposium on Sex Education* that took place in Sweden and Denmark a year later included visits to Swedish and Danish schools.⁷¹ Other international seminars, including the 1970 and 1971 UN meetings in Karlovy Vary (Czechoslovakia) and Kiljava (Finland), highlighted the need to introduce compulsory sex education as part of broader family planning initiatives and contributed to the introduction of more comprehensive education for family life programmes in Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland.⁷²

⁶³ Lišková, Jarska and Szegedi, 'Sexuality and Gender'.

⁶⁴ Mikołaj Kozakiewicz, 'Raport w sprawach: planowania rodziny, poradnictwa przedmałżeńskiego i rodzinnego oraz wychowania seksualnego w Polsce w roku 1978', *Problemy Rodziny*, 2 (1979).

⁶⁵ Kościańska, *To See a Moose*.

⁶⁶ Kozakiewicz, *Wychowanie seksualne*.

⁶⁷ See Matthew Connelly, *Fatal Misconception: The Struggle to Control World Population* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010); and recently Maud Anne Bracke, 'Women's Rights, Family Planning, and Population Control: The Emergence of Reproductive Rights in the United Nations (1960s–70s)', *The International History Review* (2021), 1–21. DOI: 10.1080/07075332.2021.1985585.

⁶⁸ Regional Council Sex Education Seminar and Regional Council Sex Education Seminar, *Seminarium wychowania seksualnego, Baden/Wiedeń 6–8 październik 1970 r.* (Warsaw: Międzynarodowa Federacja Planowania Rodziny/Region Europy i Bliskiego Wschodu, 1972).

⁶⁹ Kuźma-Markowska, 'Marx or Malthus?'.

⁷⁰ Agnieszka Kościańska, *Gender, Pleasure, and Violence: The Construction of Expert Knowledge of Sexuality in Poland* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2021).

⁷¹ Mikołaj Kozakiewicz, 'II Międzynarodowe Sympozjum Wychowania Seksualnego', *Problemy Rodziny*, 1 (1972).

⁷² Lišková, Jarska and Szegedi, 'Sexuality and Gender'. For a report of the Kiljava conference in Polish, see Irena Krzysztofowicz, 'Sprawozdanie z Kiljavy', *Problemy Rodziny*, 4 (1971).

In 1972 and 1973, Kozakiewicz attended four IPPF seminars in Italy, the United Kingdom, Belgium and Portugal.⁷³ Another Polish expert, Andrzej Jaczewski, author of popular advice books for young readers, also represented Poland at some of the numerous IPPF meetings on sex education held in the 1970s. When Małgorzata Bulska stepped down, Kozakiewicz joined the Regional Executive Committee, becoming Vice President in 1980 and gaining re-election in 1984.⁷⁴

Kozakiewicz strengthened the international standing of Poland by organising international conferences. The foreign experts invited to one in 1973 originated from Sweden, the United Kingdom (Norman Rea), Italy (Roberto Leoni), West Germany (Jurgen Heinrichs, IPPF Regional President from 1980), East Germany and Romania, and the proceedings were published in English.⁷⁵ Kozakiewicz gave a presentation entitled 'Controversial problems of sex education', in which he stressed the need to link 'the problems of sex' to marriage and parenthood, and understand the risk of 'the dehumanisation of people and their moral degradation' whenever sex became a consumer good and 'subjected to the laws of a commercialised market'⁷⁶. This was a clear criticism of capitalism. While Polish experts had emphasised the need for moral values and social obligations in sex education during the 1960s, this approach intensified in the 1970s and became linked with the promotion of parenthood and family as the goal and context of sex. A similar international seminar was held two years later, but participation by state-socialist countries was limited to representatives from Poland and East Germany.

Exchanges of knowledge between state-socialist countries intensified towards the end of the 1970s and impacted the development of their sex education agendas. While the common framework was education for family life, curricula differed in regard to sexual openness and gender difference.⁷⁷ The introduction of school-based sex education in Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland was triggered by population policies.⁷⁸ Kozakiewicz believed Polish experts should take a leading role in shaping the 'state-socialist' model of sex education, whose main feature was the framing of sexuality as connected to family life and reproduction, and facilitating exchange. In 1976, the seminar *Family Planning and Sex Education in Socialist Countries* was held in Jabłonna, Poland, with delegations from the Soviet Union, Romania, East Germany and Hungary.⁷⁹ Four years later, Kozakiewicz organised another seminar for state-socialist countries, entitled *Family Life and Sex Education in Socialist Countries*, attended by experts from Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Bulgaria, Romania and the Soviet Union.⁸⁰ Apparently, no representatives of Western countries were in attendance. In the preface to the published conference volume, Kozakiewicz stated that in 'the popularisation of the idea of family planning and of sex education, a particular role among the socialist countries in Eastern Europe is entrusted to the Polish Society for Family Development (TRR)'. He related this situation to the fact that only Poland and East Germany were members of the IPPF, claiming the association had become 'a place of meetings, exchange of views ... the source of international material, in particular that of IPPF, on subjects of sex education, family planning and population problems'.⁸¹ Between the two

⁷³ Kozakiewicz, *Wychowanie seksualne*, 25.

⁷⁴ Report on the 1984 Regional Council Meeting, *Planned Parenthood in Europe. Information Bulletin*, Autumn 1984, 38.

⁷⁵ Polish Society for Family Planning, *Seminary on Sex Education, Jabłonna (Poland) Nov. 1973* (Warszawa: Polish Society for Family Planning, 1973).

⁷⁶ Kozakiewicz, 'Controversial Problems of Sex Education' In Polish Society of Family Planning', *Seminary on Sex Education*, 9–10.

⁷⁷ Lišková, Jarska and Szegedi, 'Sexuality and Gender'.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.* Varsa, 'Sex Advice'.

⁷⁹ *Family Planning and Sex Education in Socialist Countries: Proceedings of a Seminar held in Dec. 1976*, Warsaw, Poland, 1976.

⁸⁰ Towarzystwo Rozwoju Rodziny (Polish Society for Family Development), Mikołaj Kozakiewicz, ed., *Przygotowanie młodzieży do życia seksualnego, małżeństwa i życia w rodzinie w krajach socjalistycznych: (materiały II seminarium międzynarodowego 22–24.IX.1980)* (Warsaw: Polish Society for Family Development, 1981).

⁸¹ Towarzystwo Rozwoju Rodziny (Polish Society for Family Development), Mikołaj Kozakiewicz, ed., *The Family Life and Sex Education in Socialist Countries. Proceedings from the 2nd Seminar of Socialistic Countries held 22–24 September in Warsaw* (Warsaw: 1981).

seminars and with financial support from the IPPF, TRR organised a library of films and slides from 'more advanced countries' such as Sweden, Denmark, and the United Kingdom for distribution through Eastern Europe. Last but not least, IPPF supplied paper for the published reports from both seminars; a significant aid for a country in deep economic crisis, as Poland was in the early 1980s.

Kozakiewicz viewed himself as the IPPF expert responsible for 'all socialist countries in which sex education was non-existent', and repeatedly referred to Poland's leading role in developing the socialist model in ministerial documents.⁸² He claimed that sex was critical for the 'psychological and physical health of the family' and that the Polish model of sex education was 'an object of interest worldwide'.⁸³ While this may well be an overestimation of Polish influence on global developments, it is true that Kozakiewicz was very active in the 1970s and 1980s, promoting Polish programmes and expertise on sex education in other countries and positioning himself as regional leader.

As an active member of the IPPF executive, Kozakiewicz initiated comparative research on sexuality and young people. In 1975, he and Norman Rea from the United Kingdom undertook a survey on the status of sex education in European member countries. A report from the survey, entitled *Sex Education and Adolescence in Europe – Sexuality, Marriage and the Family*, was published in London in 1981.⁸⁴ The importance of Polish experts in IPPF structures and activities had declined by the end of the 1980s, a process that Andrzej Kulczycki claimed was related to the diminishing role of Planned Parenthood organisations in Poland at that time.⁸⁵

While international contacts and exchange intensified, the Polish attitude to Western models of sex education was shifting, and by the end of the 1960s Polish experts were starting to disparage the sexual revolution. In 1969, Kozakiewicz published a book entitled *At the Base of Sex Education (U podstaw wychowania seksualnego)*, in which he emphasised 'socialist ethics', now viewed as a contrast to the Western sexual revolution.⁸⁶ Referring to a UNESCO survey, he argued that 'the situation of sex education in Polish schools was not worse than in most civilised countries in 1965'.⁸⁷ Kozakiewicz was particularly critical of the Swedish model, widespread in Scandinavia and the United Kingdom, in which he claimed there was 'more and more instruction, and less and less education [*wychowanie*]'.⁸⁸ The Swedish curriculum had certainly become more explicit.⁸⁹ Kozakiewicz suggested it should only be followed in terms of continuity of education, with different stages but one process of gradual knowledge provision. At the SCM Congress in 1970, Kozakiewicz framed the organisation's approach as a counterpoint to the 'sexual revolution' of the West, underlining that while the main objective of sex education was to lift the taboo on sexuality, it should also prevent the 'anarchical behaviours' encouraged by the 'sexual revolution'.⁹⁰ Uncontrolled sexuality endangered social order and education was intended to prevent this from happening.

Commenting on the aforementioned Swedish-Danish seminar in *Family Issues*, Kozakiewicz differentiated the Polish and Swedish models. He claimed sex education in Sweden was based on a positive attitude towards all manifestations of human sexuality with no attempt at prevention, except in avoiding unwanted pregnancy. Sex was situated as the foundation of happiness, pornography and sex 'as a relaxing activity' were accepted, 'romantic love' was viewed with scepticism, and any distinction made

⁸² Kozakiewicz, *Wychowanie seksualne*, 26.

⁸³ Prawna sytuacja kobiet po rozwiązaniu małżeństwa (information for the UN), Archive of Modern Records, Ministerstwo Sprawiedliwości, 2271.

⁸⁴ Mikołaj Kozakiewicz, *Sex Education and Adolescence in Europe – Sexuality, Marriage and the Family* (Europe Region: International Planned Parenthood Federation, 1981).

⁸⁵ Andrzej Kulczycki, 'Abortion in Poland: Peering into Pandora's Box', in Andrzej Kulczycki, *The Abortion Debate in the World Arena* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1999), 121.

⁸⁶ Mikołaj Kozakiewicz, *U podstaw wychowania seksualnego* (Warszawa: Państwowy Zakład Wydawnictw Lekarskich, 1969).

⁸⁷ Nevertheless, he did criticize the fact that sex education was only taught for a couple of hours a year in Poland, as part of Human Sciences.

⁸⁸ Kozakiewicz, *U podstaw*, 86.

⁸⁹ Zimmermann, *Too Hot to Handle*, 90–1.

⁹⁰ Kozakiewicz, *Wychowanie seksualne*, 147.

between the experiences and needs of men and women was impugned.⁹¹ As is clear, Sweden was no longer considered an appropriate model for Poland to follow. By the early 1970s it was perceived as too liberal, too detached from the idea of social responsibility and love as a basis for durable relationships, and unwilling to recognise the gender differences that Polish sexologists valued.⁹² However, interest in the Swedish model did persist through the decade.⁹³ Swedish experts were invited to seminars on sex education in Poland, such as one on primary schools in Katowice during 1970, at which an expert from the Swedish Ministry of Education was an invited guest.⁹⁴ Kozakiewicz considered Danish sex education, which ‘forbade discussing technical aspects of sexual intercourse’ and promoted contraception less intensively, to be more acceptable.⁹⁵

Kozakiewicz believed different national approaches to sex education related to population policies, as he discussed at an IPPF conference in Italy in 1972 and summarised for Polish readers in 1978.⁹⁶ On the basis of the IPPF study on sex education conducted in eighteen countries, he claimed that four approaches existed: anti-natalist, an approach designed for developing countries as part of global population policy; narrowly understood sexual education with sexuality as an autonomous sphere, detached from reproduction and the family, as in the traditional Swedish model; education as relating to interpersonal communication, as in the United Kingdom, Denmark and Yugoslavia; and the preparation for family life provided in state-socialist countries and Southern Europe, which encouraged ‘reasonable’ procreation.⁹⁷ Although diverse approaches to sex education coexisted within the IPPF, according to Joan Rettie, Secretary of IPPF Europe from the late 1950s to 1978, Kozakiewicz ‘played a prominent part in the Region in creating a broader understanding of sex education in terms of family life education’.⁹⁸

The rejection of liberal approaches to sexuality characteristic of late-socialist expert writings can be understood within a broader context of pro-family rhetoric adopted by Polish authorities in the 1970s and rejection of the sexual revolution. The pro-natalist policies and strong pro-family rhetoric adopted by communist leaders during this decade were juxtaposed with the immorality of the West. For example, at the inaugural meeting of the Council of Family Issues, a governmental body established in 1978, the Polish prime minister, Piotr Jaroszewicz, stated that ‘in the West family collapses, but not here, in a socialist country’.⁹⁹ The corrupting influence of the West was also part of the discourse on sex education in East Germany during the 1960s, although more in relation to the damaging influence of popular culture on young people than education.¹⁰⁰ While in the 1960s Polish experts on sex education had depicted ‘bourgeois’ Western countries as having different social principles to the socialist countries in Eastern Europe, during the 1970s this rhetoric of difference developed an image of the West as a place where sexuality had become commercialised and detached from broader social and moral issues such as the family and reproduction. In the early 1970s, as Barbara Klich-Kluczevska has shown, Polish fears of an ‘imagined sexual revolution’ among young people influenced by Western popular culture were strengthened by leading sexologists such as Zbigniew Lew-Starowicz.¹⁰¹ Although this approach furthered the anti-Western ideologies of the state, Polish

⁹¹ Kozakiewicz, ‘II Międzynarodowe seminarium’, 62.

⁹² See Kościańska, *Gender, Pleasure*.

⁹³ E. von Brunken, ‘Polityka seksualna i wychowanie seksualne w Szwecji’, *Problemy Rodziny*, 1 (1976).

⁹⁴ Kozakiewicz, *Wychowanie seksualne*, 30.

⁹⁵ Kozakiewicz, ‘II Międzynarodowe seminarium’, 63.

⁹⁶ Kozakiewicz, ‘Wychowanie jako narzędzie polityki ludnościowej’, *Wiś Współczesna*, 1978.

⁹⁷ Mikołaj Kozakiewicz, ‘Dum duo dicunt, idem non est idem. The Notion of Sex Education. Reflection on Key Concepts’, in Philip Meredith, ed., *The Other Curriculum: European Strategies for School Sex Education* (London: International Planned Parenthood Federation, 1989).

⁹⁸ Rettie, ‘Planned Parenthood’, 10.

⁹⁹ Protokół z posiedzenia inauguracyjnego, 19 Dec. 1978, Archive of Modern Records, Rada ds. Rodziny, 79/2.

¹⁰⁰ Fenimore, ‘The Growing Pains’, 84–5.

¹⁰¹ Barbara Klich-Kluczevska, ‘Młodzież, seks, cenzorzy i ludzie. Debata wokół filmu Seksolatki’, in Katarzyna Stańczak-Wiślicz, ed., *Kultura popularna w Polsce 1944–1989. Między projektem ideologicznym a kontestacją* (Warsaw: IBL, 2015), 131–49.

experts had begun to have reservations about the sexual revolution in the late 1960s, prior to the 1970s pro-family shift in policy.

Compared with their activities in the 1960s, Polish experts played a more important international role during the 1970s and 1980s. Increased exchange did not translate to influence on Polish programmes, however, as Western models were now confronted with the ‘socialist’ model of education for family life and Polish experts criticised the West for relaxing sexual norms. Kozakiewicz no longer sought Western expertise as a source of knowledge and viewed Polish achievements as original, successful and worthy of export. This shift can be interpreted as a reaction to the sexual revolution, perceived as contrary to the socialist moral and social approach to sexuality. The increasing emphasis on reproduction and family life in the framing of sex education in Poland related to the more general shift in policies towards pro-natalism. While the party-state focus on the family created favourable conditions for sex education to be introduced to schools, it also strengthened the framework of ‘family life education’.

Conclusions

Debates on sex education and the need for its introduction to the school curriculum re-emerged in Poland during de-Stalinisation in the mid-1950s. Polish experts, who perceived Polish expertise in this area to be inadequate, viewed sex education as a way of modernising what they deemed to be a backward society. In their search for knowledge on how to develop and deliver sex education they turned to Western expertise, particularly from Sweden and the United Kingdom, and contacts were facilitated through SCM membership in the IPPF network. Although Western models were praised and adapted, Poland was always considered to have its own specificity in both politics and culture. A focus on ‘education’ (*wychowanie*) rather than pure ‘instruction’ and the importance of the social aspects of sex were emphasised by Polish experts throughout the state-socialist period.

By the early 1970s, Polish experts had begun to criticise Swedish sex education for its focus on instruction and neglect of gender difference. This approach stemmed from a fear of sexual revolution and the state’s increasing pro-natalist and family rhetoric. Although the state was more willing to introduce information about sex into school curricula during the 1970s, the primary aim was to establish healthy socialist families.

At the same time, exchanges between Eastern and Western Europe and Poland’s role in international networks increased, with Kozakiewicz becoming Vice President of IPPF Europe. No longer viewing Polish experts as less advanced, he believed they could take the lead in developing an appropriate framework for sex education. The ‘socialist’ model of sex education was conceptualised as education for family life, with sexuality linked to reproduction and ethics and less emphasis on technical advice. This model drew on the approach of the previous decade, as Polish experts had underlined the need to establish a strong connection between knowledge and values in the 1960s. During the 1970s they believed the Western sexual revolution threatened these principles and that socialist Eastern Europe could provide an alternative. The history of expert exchanges on sex education between Poland and Western countries through international organisations illustrates how the process of developing independent and original expertise was intertwined with increasing anti-Westernism.

Acknowledgements. The author would like to thank the editors, Kateřina Lišková and the anonymous reviewers for their comments, and Joanna Baines for her copy-editing assistance.