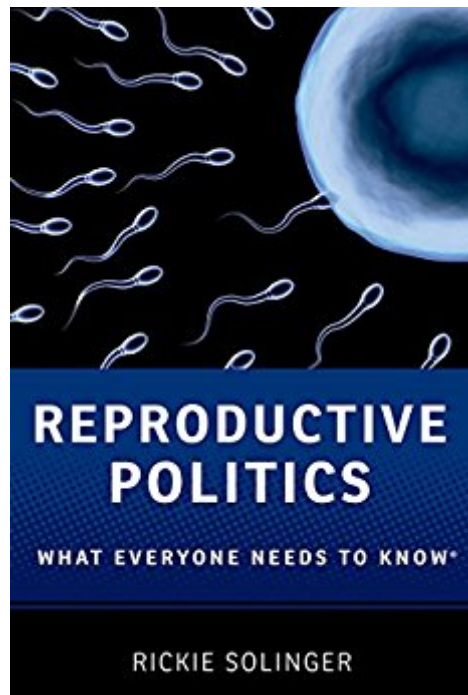


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Reproductive Politics: What Everyone Needs To Know?



Synopsis

The term "reproductive politics" was coined by feminists in the 1970s to describe contemporary *Roe v. Wade*-era power struggles over contraception and abortion, adoption and surrogacy, and other satellite issues. Forty years later, questions about reproductive rights are just as complex--and controversial--as they were then. Focusing mainly on the United States, *Reproductive Politics: What Everyone Needs to Know?* explores the legal, political, religious, social, ethical, and medical dimensions of this hotly contested arena. Tracing the historical roots of reproductive politics up through the present, Rickie Solinger considers a range of topics from abortion and contraception to health care reform and assisted reproductive technologies. Solinger tackles some of the most contentious questions up for debate today, including the definition of "fetal personhood," and the roles poverty and welfare policy play in shaping reproductive rights. The answers she provides are informative, balanced, and sometimes quite surprising. Offering a wide range of information in an accessible and engaging manner, *Reproductive Politics: What Everyone Needs to Know?* orients readers and provides the knowledge necessary to follow the debates in this important and continually evolving field. *What Everyone Needs to Know?* is a registered trademark of Oxford University Press.

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Customer Reviews

This is a first-rate, indispensable, fact-filled, concise guide to the state of reproductive rights and health today. In carefully neutral language, Solinger lays out the major issues and controversies around abortion, birth control, pregnancy, childbirth, assisted reproductive technology, immigration and overpopulation (or, if you prefer, "overpopulation"), public support for low income mothers and children, disability and more. As a historian, Solinger is particularly interested in the way class and race affect the way Americans think about motherhood. For whom is motherhood a crucial aspect of feminine dignity, and for whom is motherhood proof of laziness and depravity? Who gets to have a child and raise that child? Which children are socially valued? The answers have changed over time--single white teenagers, who used to be virtually forced to surrender their babies for adoption, face much less stigma now and mostly keep their babies--but still favor whites over blacks and Latinas, the married over the unmarried, the straight over the LGBT, the healthy over the disabled, and of course, the well-off over the poor. Solinger charts the way "choice" language has replaced "rights" language, permitting the denial of social support to women, whether they seek to terminate a pregnancy or have a baby: Why should "the taxpayer" help a woman pay for her choice?

Interestingly, other Western industrialized countries don't see it that way: birth control and abortion are underwritten by the state, and low-income mothers and children get far more help than they do here. A must for anyone who needs to be up-to-date on this issues: writers, students, academics, journalists. Whatever your convictions on reproductive issues, you will be challenged and surprised.

This book divides each of its short chapters into still shorter entries on different questions, from "What is the link between citizenship and reproductive politics?" to "Why did Susan B. Anthony oppose abortion?" In that sense, it's almost as much a mini-encyclopedia as a regular book. You can dip in anywhere and not feel disoriented. That said, the short sections on discrete topics ultimately produce an impressively comprehensive narrative, weaving together many important threads, including class, race, sexuality, religion, and history. Chock full of useful facts, this accessible and readable book would be a great text for college classes, journalists, or just concerned citizens - ie, for anybody who wants to be brought up to speed quickly and easily (but not shallowly) on the central reproductive issues in the US today.

It's a very thorough investigation into reproductive politics. It does, however, mostly read like a thesis. It gets right to the point, and every paragraph is important. This makes it a little difficult to read as opposed to other non-fiction I have read that take a bit more time with the subject. But I still think the book is an excellent resource, and it taught me a lot about the background to all these famous feminists and feminist movements in American history and how they viewed these issues.

If you want a comprehensive look at the issues of reproductive justice in the U.S. this is your ticket. Engaging and informative, and imbued with feminist values, the book covers the history, science, ethics, economics, politics and racial politics of every aspect of women's reproductive lives. For those engaged in combating the current assaults on women's right to choose when and how they will form their families, this is an essential primer.

The book is an outstanding source of information about how this issue has been handled over time. As a woman, I am appalled to have it confirmed that women have no reproductive rights.

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