

Cambridge University Press
0521620996 - Pragmatic Women and Body Politics
Edited by Margaret Lock and Patricia A. Kaufert
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

The essays in this thought-provoking volume provide a critical perspective on women's responses to biomedical and other technologies affecting reproduction and health in general. A theoretical introduction, which argues for a rethinking of the concepts of bio-power, medicalization, agency, and resistance, challenges the assumption that women are passive recipients of technological innovations. Thirteen case studies show that it is usually pragmatism that motivates women's behavior, explaining why their reactions to technology may range from acceptance to rejection or indifference, depending on whether its use fits with their own priorities and values. Essay topics include infertility in east Africa, prenatal diagnostic screening in America, AIDS in Africa, reproductive technologies in China and Japan, the emergence of the breast cancer movement, and health and environmental issues in Egypt and First Nations communities in Canada. Challenging conventional assumptions about the relationship between women and technology, this book is indispensable reading for anthropologists, sociologists, and gender studies scholars.

Cambridge University Press
0521620996 - Pragmatic Women and Body Politics
Edited by Margaret Lock and Patricia A. Kaufert
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

Pragmatic women and body politics

Cambridge University Press
 0521620996 - Pragmatic Women and Body Politics
 Edited by Margaret Lock and Patricia A. Kaufert
 Frontmatter
[More information](#)

Cambridge Studies in Medical Anthropology 5

Editors

Ronald Frankenberg, *Centre for Medical Social Anthropology, University of Keele*

Byron Good, *Department of Social Medicine, Harvard Medical School*

Alan Harwood, *Department of Anthropology, University of Massachusetts, Boston*

Gilbert Lewis, *Department of Social Anthropology, University of Cambridge*

Roland Littlewood, *Department of Anthropology, University College London*

Margaret Lock, *Department of Social Studies of Medicine, McGill University*

Nancy Scheper-Hughes, *Department of Anthropology, University of California, Berkeley*

Medical anthropology is the fastest growing specialist area within anthropology, both in North America and in Europe. Beginning as an applied field serving public health specialists, medical anthropology now provides a significant forum for many of the most urgent debates in anthropology and the humanities.

Medical anthropology includes the study of medical institutions and health care in a variety of rich and poor societies, the investigation of the cultural construction of illness, and the analysis of ideas about the body, birth, maturation, ageing, and death.

This new series includes theoretically innovative monographs, state-of-the-art collections of essays on current issues, and short books introducing the main themes in the subdiscipline.

- 1 Lynn M. Morgan, *Community participation in health: the politics of primary care in Costa Rica*
- 2 Thomas J. Csordos, *Embodiment and experience: The existential ground of culture and self*
- 3 Paul Brodwin, *Medicine and morality in Haiti: the contest for healing power*
- 4 Susan Reynolds Whyte, *Questioning misfortune: the pragmatics of uncertainty in eastern Uganda*

Cambridge University Press
0521620996 - Pragmatic Women and Body Politics
Edited by Margaret Lock and Patricia A. Kaufert
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

Pragmatic women and body politics

Edited by

Margaret Lock

McGill University

Patricia A. Kaufert

University of Manitoba



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press
 0521620996 - Pragmatic Women and Body Politics
 Edited by Margaret Lock and Patricia A. Kaufert
 Frontmatter
[More information](#)

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
 Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore, São Paulo

Cambridge University Press
 The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 2RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org
 Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521620994

© Margaret Lock and Patricia A. Kaufert 1998

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 1998

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data

Pragmatic women and body politics/ edited by Margaret Lock, Patricia A. Kaufert.

p. cm. – (Cambridge studies in medical anthropology 2)

Includes index.

ISBN 0 521 62099 6 – ISBN 0 521 62929 2 (pbk)

1. Women – Health and hygiene. 2. Women – Medical care. 3. Women – Social conditions. 4. Medical technology – Social aspects. 5. Human reproductive technology – Social aspects. 6. Medical anthropology. I. Lock, Margaret II. Kaufert, Patricia A. (Patricia Alice) III. Series.

RA564.85.P73 1997

362.1'082–dc21 97–10263 CIP

ISBN-13 978-0-521-62099-4 hardback

ISBN-10 0-521-62099-6 hardback

ISBN-13 978-0-521-62929-4 paperback

ISBN-10 0-521-62929-2 paperback

Transferred to digital printing 2006

Contents

<i>List of contributors</i>	<i>page</i>
1 Introduction MARGARET LOCK AND PATRICIA A. KAUFERT	1
2 Remembering Amal: on birth and the British in northern Sudan JANICE BODDY	28
3 Resistance and embrace: Sudanese rural women and systems of power ELLEN GRUENBAUM	58
4 Not only women: science as resistance in open door Egypt SOHEIR A. MORSY	77
5 Inscribing the body politic: women and AIDS in Africa BROOKE GRUNDFEST SCHOEPF	98
6 Barren ground: contesting identities of infertile women in Pemba, Tanzania KARINA KIELMANN	127
7 Wives, mothers, and lesbians: rethinking resistance in the US ELLEN LEWIN	164
8 The consequences of modernity for childless women in China: medicalization and resistance LISA HANDWERKER	178
9 Perfecting society: reproductive technologies, genetic testing, and the planned family in Japan MARGARET LOCK	206
10 An ethnography of the medicalization of Puerto Rican women's reproduction IRIS LOPEZ	240

Cambridge University Press
0521620996 - Pragmatic Women and Body Politics
Edited by Margaret Lock and Patricia A. Kaufert
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

viii	<i>Contents</i>	
11	Situating resistance in fields of resistance: Aboriginal women and environmentalism JOHN D. O'NEIL, BRENDA D. ELIAS, AND ANNALEE YASSI	260
12	Women, resistance, and the breast cancer movement PATRICIA A. KAUFERT	287
13	Selective compliance with biomedical authority and the uses of experiential knowledge EMILY K. ABEL AND C.H. BROWNER	310
14	The mission within the madness: self-initiated medicalization as expression of agency MARK NICHTER	327
	<i>Index</i>	354

Contributors

EMILY K. ABEL Emily Abel, Professor of Health Services and Women's Studies, UCLA, is the author of *Who Cares for the Elderly? Public Policy and the Experience of Adult Daughters* (Temple, 1991) and co-editor with Margaret K. Nelson of *Circles of Care: Work and Identity in Women's Lives* (SUNY Press, 1990). She is writing a history of women's care for sick and disabled family members in the United States from 1850–1940.

JANICE BODDY Janice Boddy is Professor of Anthropology at the University of Toronto. She is the author of *Wombs and Alien Spirits: Women, Men and the Zar Cult in Northern Sudan* (1989), articles on spirit possession, feminism, female circumcision, and popular anthropology, and co-author of *Aman: The Story of a Somali Girl* (1994; translated into fourteen languages). She is currently doing archival research for a book on attempts by the British colonial administration to reform women's bodies and Sudanese society in the first half of this century.

CAROLE H. BROWNER Carole Browner is a Professor in the Department of Psychiatry and Biobehavioral Sciences, and in the Department of Anthropology at UCLA. She is a social anthropologist whose research interests lie at the intersection of gender, health, and development. She has published extensively on field studies in urban Columbia, rural Mexico, and the US.

BRENDA D. ELIAS Brenda Elias is a Ph.D. student and research associate in Community Health Sciences. Her interests are in cultural risk assessment, management, and communication. She has presented and co-published papers and reports concerning the social and cultural construction of risk perceptions in the Canadian North. She has worked collaboratively with First Nation peoples, currently with a First Nation University Research Team on a national–regional health survey in Manitoba First Nation communities (Canada).

Cambridge University Press
 0521620996 - Pragmatic Women and Body Politics
 Edited by Margaret Lock and Patricia A. Kaufert
 Frontmatter
[More information](#)

x *List of contributors*

ELLEN GRUENBAUM Ellen Gruenbaum is Professor of Anthropology at California State University, San Bernardino, where she also served as the Director of Women's Studies for six years. She lived in Sudan for five years, during which time she taught at the University of Khartoum and conducted ethnographic research. She is currently writing a book using an anthropological perspective on the "female circumcision" controversy.

LISA HANDWERKER Lisa Handwerker, a medical anthropologist, is currently an Associate Professor at the California Institute of Integral Studies and research affiliate at the Institute for Research on Women and Gender at Stanford University. She was recently elected to the board of the National Women's Health Network and chairs the reproductive health committee. She is also chair of the Council on Anthropology and Reproduction of the Society of Medical Anthropology, American Anthropological Association.

PATRICIA A. KAUFERT Patricia Kaufert has done research and published on a number of topics related to women's health including menopause, childbirth, and screening for breast cancer. She has been a member of numerous provincial and national committees in Canada concerned with women's health. She is at present working with Margaret Lock on a project looking at the communication of risk in relation to hormone therapy.

KARINA KIELMANN Karina Kielmann is currently working towards her doctorate from the Johns Hopkins School of Public Health. Drawing on a combined background of medical anthropology and international health, her work juxtaposes medical and public health discourses on reproductive health with women's interpretations and experiences of health and illness. She has lived and worked in Kenya, Tanzania, and most recently India.

ELLEN LEWIN Ellen Lewin is the author of *Lesbian Mothers: Accounts of Gender in American Culture*. Her most recent book is *Recognizing Ourselves: Rituals of Lesbian and Gay Commitment in America* to be published by Columbia University Press. She is currently an Affiliated Scholar at the Institute for Research on Women and Gender at Stanford University.

MARGARET LOCK Margaret Lock is Professor in the Department of Social Studies of Medicine and the Department of Anthropology at McGill University. She is the author of *East Asian medicine in Urban Japan: Varieties of Medical Experience* (California: 1980), and the

Cambridge University Press
 0521620996 - Pragmatic Women and Body Politics
 Edited by Margaret Lock and Patricia A. Kaufert
 Frontmatter
[More information](#)

List of contributors

xi

prize-winning *Encounters with Aging: Mythologies of Menopause in Japan and North America* (California: 1993). Lock has edited four other books and written over 100 scholarly articles. She is part president of the Society for Medical Anthropology, American Anthropological Association, and a member of the Royal Society of Canada and the Canadian Institute for Advanced Research (CIAR). She is currently writing a book on biomedical technologies and changing conceptions of life and death.

IRIS LOPEZ Iris Lopez is an anthropologist and the Director of the Women's Studies Program at City College (CCNY). She has taught in the department of Latin American and Caribbean Studies at the City College of New York since 1985 and has also been a visiting professor at the University of California in Los Angeles. She spent one year doing a postdoctorate at the University of Hawaii at Manoa. Currently, she is writing a book on sterilization and Puerto Rican women in New York City.

SOHEIR A. MORSY Soheir Morsy is Associate Professor of Anthropology and Director of Women's Studies at Tufts University. Her work with the United Nations in parts of Asia and Africa has dealt with issues of development, particularly in terms of gender, health, education, and agrarian schemes.

MARK NICTER Mark Nichter is a Professor of Anthropology at the University of Arizona, Tucson, who specializes in the study of the anthropology of the body, medical anthropology, and ethnomedicine. In addition to anthropology, Mark has postgraduate training in international health and psychiatry and has a joint appointment in the department of family and community medicine. He is the author of over thirty articles and two books in the field of medical anthropology and is actively engaged in research in North America, as well as in South and South-East Asia.

JOHN D. O'NEIL John O'Neil is a medical anthropologist who has worked with Aboriginal people in Canada, Australia, and Siberia over the past twenty years on a variety of issues related to community health. The focus of this work has been to establish a critique of the colonizing effects of Western health care practices on Aboriginal understandings of health and healing. Significant publications include several book chapters (co-authored with Patricia Kaufert) examining the impact of obstetric practices in Inuit communities, and a series of "definitive" papers examining Aboriginal health policy issues in Canada published in conjunction with

Cambridge University Press
0521620996 - Pragmatic Women and Body Politics
Edited by Margaret Lock and Patricia A. Kaufert
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

xii *List of contributors*

the various reports of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (1993–7).

BROOKE GRUNDFEST SCHOEPF Brooke Grundfest Schoepf, an economic and medical anthropologist, obtained her doctorate from Columbia University in 1969. She has conducted field research in England, France, the US, and ten countries in Africa, most recently in Rwanda. Currently, Schoepf is on faculty at the Institute for Health and Social Justice, the Department of Social Medicine of Harvard University Medical School (Boston), and the National University of Rwanda (Butare).

ANNALEE YASSI Annalee Yassi is the Director of Environmental and Occupational Medicine at the University of Manitoba. She has published extensively in the areas of environmental health surveillance, occupational health for health care workers, and cross-cultural environmental and occupational epidemiology. Yassi is currently working on a book and an international training program in basic environmental health through the World Health Organization. She is also working on several environmental health projects in Latin America.