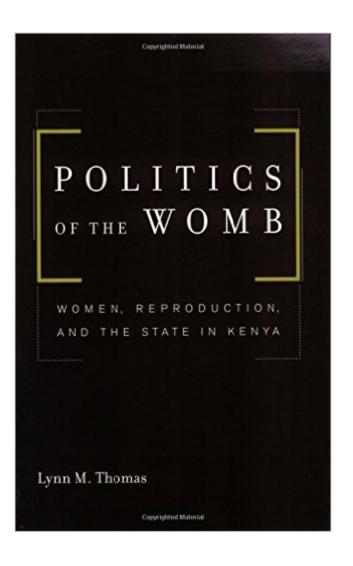
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Politics Of The Womb: Women, Reproduction, And The State In Kenya





Synopsis

In more than a metaphorical sense, the womb has proven to be an important site of political struggle in and about Africa. By examining the political significance—and complex ramifications—of reproductive controversies in twentieth-century Kenya, this book explores why and how control of female initiation, abortion, childbirth, and premarital pregnancy have been crucial to the exercise of colonial and postcolonial power. This innovative book enriches the study of gender, reproduction, sexuality, and African history by revealing how reproductive controversies challenged long-standing social hierarchies and contributed to the construction of new ones that continue to influence the fraught politics of abortion, birth control, female genital cutting, and HIV/AIDS in Africa.

Book Information

Paperback: 316 pages Publisher: University of California Press (August 20, 2003) Language: English ISBN-10: 0520235401 ISBN-13: 978-0520235403 Product Dimensions: 6 x 0.8 x 9 inches Shipping Weight: 15.2 ounces (View shipping rates and policies) Average Customer Review: 4.0 out of 5 stars Â See all reviews (1 customer review) Best Sellers Rank: #961,471 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #80 in Books > History > Africa > Kenya #170 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Politics & Government > Specific Topics > Women in Politics #520 in Books > Textbooks > Humanities > History > Africa

Customer Reviews

By understanding what we commonly call "Female Genital Mutilation" instead as a form of "initiation," Thomas attempts to wrest the practice free from a hundred years of Western colonial and post-colonial censure. Instead, she makes a persuasive case for initiation as residing within a complex and changing nexus of concerns about gender, generation, and class. Debates between colonial and anti-colonial interests, in this way, are marginalized and complicated, and Thomas is able to tell a more nuanced story of struggles over women's reproductive rights. While I thought Thomas's approach to the subject matter was suitably novel, I felt her analysis didn't always match the theoretical standards she sets out in her introduction. Despite claiming to draw from Foucault and his conception of bio-power, this connection was not made explicit in her analysis; likewise for her stated concern about the problems of representing Kenyans' "voice." She name checks the right subaltern studies academics, but does not play their ideas explicitly against hers.Nonetheless, this is an important and innovative contribution to African history that can help us better understand the complexities embedded in debates about reproduction in Kenya and Africa

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