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Outsourcing The Womb: Race, Class And Gestational Surrogacy In A Global Market (Framing 21st Century Social Issues)



Synopsis

A quiet revolution has been taking place during the past three decades. The way that children enter families has changed radically among upper middle class families. In the 1980s infertility increasing became defined as a medical problem that could be solved with assisted reproductive technologies (ART) rather than through adoption. Asexual or "assisted conception" involving medical technologies such as in vitro fertilization and embryo transfers began to replace sexual reproduction for infertile couples. Third parties, referred to as surrogates are hired to assist individuals and/or couples who wish to conceive and child with whom they share a genetic tie. This has resulted in a "surrogate baby boom." Outsourcing the Womb provides a critical introduction to the global surrogacy market. A comparative analysis of the assisted reproductive technology and surrogacy industry in Egypt, Israel, India and the United States disentangles the intersecting roles of race, religion, class inequality, religious law, and global capitalism. Gestational surrogacy challenges the idea of "natural" reproduction and of the meaning of parenthood. What role should the state play in providing individuals and families with access to reproductive technologies? This book concludes with a discussion of "reproductive justice". The goal of this new, unique series is to offer readable, teachable "thinking frames" on today's social problems and social issues by leading scholars, all in short 60 page or shorter formats, and available for view on <http://routledge.customgateway.com/routledge-social-issues.html> For instructors teaching a wide range of courses in the social sciences, the Routledge Social Issues Collection now offers the best of both worlds: originally written short texts that provide "overviews" to important social issues as well as teachable excerpts from larger works previously published by Routledge and other presses.

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Customer Reviews

This slim volume is an eye opening retrospective of the increasingly popular practice of hiring women to carry a pregnancy. It reviews historical, legal and social aspects of the impact and controversies which have resulted from this practice. Some may remember the "baby M" case in which a woman carried an implanted pregnancy to term and then decided she would not give up the baby as she had been contracted to do. This and similar cases are recounted and the author also points to potential future problems that are likely to occur in this area. She points out, for example, that very little research has been done to investigate the impact of these practices on the women who essentially rent out their wombs for profit. This growing practice is a business which creates competitive markets in poorer countries where this is a lucrative endeavor for the women and for the organizations that market this service. The legal, social, political and ethical norms are very much undefined or poorly defined and the author raises concerns about the massive potential for exploitation. She describes the current state of in vitro fertilization (IVF) and other "assisted reproduction" practices in several countries including the United States, England and India. Legal, social and financial aspects differ significantly. This is a fascinating and informative read which I think can serve the interests of students, researchers, legislators and journalists. It is well researched and carefully referenced with a great bibliography. And anyone concerned with these practices, women's rights, legal implications and social impact will find this to be a great summary and thought provoking resource. I would put this in the hands of any journalist working in this area. Highly recommended.

I was excited about this book. But despite a few interesting examples, the read and setup of the book was somewhat dry. I don't think I will be using it for the women and science course I will be teaching as originally planned.

Author definitely hammered home the agenda that surrogacy stratifies societies based on racial, economical, religious, and factors of circumstance. Would have liked a little bit more data to support those points but it was a fair starting point.

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