

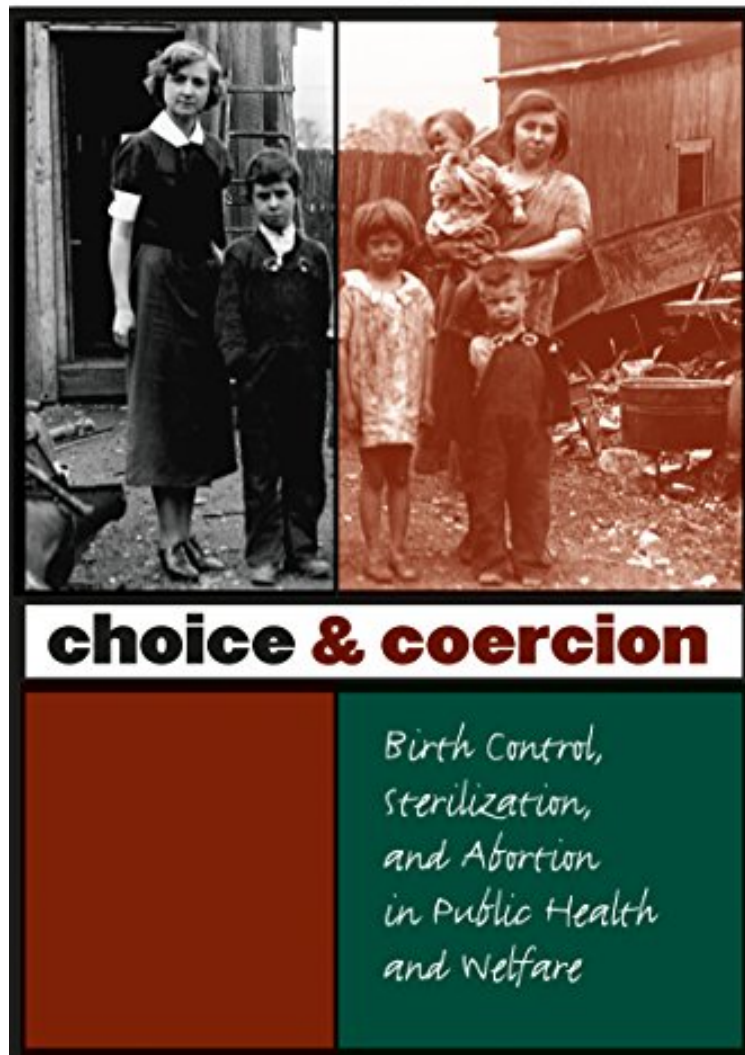
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Johanna Schoen

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Johanna Schoen : Choice and Coercion: Birth Control, Sterilization, and Abortion in Public Health and Welfare (Gender and American Culture) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Choice and Coercion: Birth Control, Sterilization, and Abortion in Public Health and Welfare (Gender and American Culture):

9 of 9 people found the following review helpful. best book I've read on this subject
By Reader
A well-researched and even-handed look at women's reproductive history in the 20th century, this book uses a wide range of sources to look at all aspects of society -- government, philanthropists, medical workers, individuals -- and how the agendas of each sector impacted women's healthcare and options...or lack thereof. Dr. Schoen avoids absolutes: that women or the poor were always the passive, helpless victims or that agencies or doctors held all the social power. She showed that things were (and still are) far more complicated than those easy, cliched stereotypes. At the same time, she writes about difficult subjects and events with compassion. It avoids the hyperbole evident in other books I've read on the matter, and it does not talk down to the reader. At the same time, it is very readable and engaging. Those on the extremes of the pro-choice/anti-abortion argument will likely be annoyed with it because it looks at the subject of women's reproductive history through an objective lens rather than an emotional or sentimental one. It's a fine line to walk, and, in my opinion, she walked it well.

In August 2003, North Carolina became the first U.S. state to offer restitution to victims of state-ordered sterilizations carried out by its eugenics program between 1929 and 1975. The decision was prompted largely by a series of articles in the Winston-Salem Journal. These stories were inspired in part by the research of Johanna Schoen, who was granted unique access to summaries of 7,500 case histories and the papers of the North Carolina Eugenics Board. In this book, Schoen situates the state's reproductive politics in a national and global context. Widening her focus to include birth control, sterilization, and abortion policies across the nation, she demonstrates how each method for limiting unwanted pregnancies had the potential both to expand and to limit women's reproductive choices. Such programs overwhelmingly targeted poor and nonwhite populations, yet they also extended a measure of reproductive control to poor women that was previously out of reach. On an international level, the United States has influenced reproductive health policies by, for example, tying foreign aid to the recipients' compliance with U.S. notions about family planning. The availability of U.S.-funded family planning aid has proved to be a double-edged sword, offering unprecedented opportunities to poor women while subjecting foreign patients to medical experimentation that would be considered unacceptable at home. Drawing on the voices of health and science professionals, civic benefactors, and American women themselves, Schoen's study allows deeper understandings of the modern welfare state and the lives of women.

An insightful and engaging account of local, national, and international struggles over the control of women's fertility. . . . Should be read by students and researchers alike interested in the American South, medicine, state formation, and the intersections of gender, race, and class.--NC Historical Schoen analyzes how news reports can water down historical complexity and stifle further discussion, and how apologies can mislead the public into thinking that problems have been solved and impoverished women's reproductive rights are secure.--Journal of African American History
Schoen works from a dazzling array of material. . . . [She] sifts through this evidence with remarkable care and tact, providing a picture of the changing nature of women's access to reproductive technologies over several decades. The strength of the work lies in how Schoen refuses to shy away from complex and competing accounts of a fraught set of topics. . . . A bold and innovative move to set the terms on which we might be able to write global histories of reproduction.--Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences
[A] well-written book. . . . [that has] the sort of impact that many academics dream of initiating and rarely achieve.--Journal of Interdisciplinary History
Schoen successfully reveals what has been a misunderstood history of the agency and coercion involved in the relationship between women's bodies and the state. This book is a valuable contribution to the history of medicine, public health and welfare, women's rights and the impact of state policy on individual women and their families in the United States and around the world.--Journal of American Studies
Skillfully demonstrates the global impact of these earlier twentieth century debates and imperial relationships. . . . Schoen skillfully positions her work within the wider study of women's reproduction history.--Material Culture
The material on North Carolina [is] compelling and highly accessible.--Journal of the History of Medicine
Schoen's book is a must read for anyone interested in reproductive issues. . . . The reclamation of women's motivation in securing access to services, as well as the positive portrayal of some health and state officials, is a breath of fresh air.--Journal of Southern History
Deserves to be on the reading list of every women's studies program and to be read by men and women who wish to improve the health of both our female citizens and our democracy.--Winston-Salem Journal
Schoen has given us a well-documented twentieth-century history of the struggle over reproductive rights grounded in politics and culture, a richly nuanced sociological account drawing from interviews and original documents, and a passionate argument for the importance of securing the citizen's right to birth control.--American Journal of Sociology
This is an important study, one that rightfully places North Carolina's story squarely on the historical map.--American Historical
Schoen's book is a striking corrective to simplistic misconceptions that reproductive control had only negative connotations for working-class or African American women who were subject to eugenic state sterilization policies. . . . Schoen has provided a thoughtful, rigorous, and original study of women's multifaceted interaction with state reproductive policy.--Journal of American History
Although not indicated in either title or subtitle, this book's focus is North Carolina, 1880-1973. There is,

however, nothing narrow or provincial about this impressive study. . . . It is impossible here to adequately convey the sophistication and complexity of the monograph. . . . All students and practitioners interested in women's health, social welfare policy, community medicine, social activism, fertility control, reproductive rights, pharmaceutical trials, coercive abortion, and sterilization programs should read this book. Essential.--Choice

Johanna Schoen's historical scholarship recovers the voices of poor women of color in the American South as active agents in determining their own sexuality and pregnancies. Schoen's story of poor women's negotiations with family planners, doctors, social workers and the state in mid-twentieth century North Carolina is riveting in itself. But the brilliance of this book is the deftness through which it links local particularities to a larger global context where birth control methods may be either liberating or controlling, depending on the dynamics of gender, race, class, and power.--Rosalind Pollack Petchesky, City University of New York

Johanna Schoen's close and judicious analysis of North Carolina's birth control and, especially, sterilization policy will change the way historians frame these controversial issues. I would hope that it would also change the way policymakers think. Never sacrificing complexity, the book demonstrates the need to keep in mind both the repressive and the liberating potential of modern reproduction-control technology. A distinguished piece of scholarship.--Linda Gordon, New York University

Johanna Schoen has written history that matters: this compelling and sophisticated account of abortion, birth control, and sterilization links domestic practices in rural North Carolina to population and birth control policies in Puerto Rico and India. *Choice and Coercion* illuminates the racialized and class basis of reproductive politics by analyzing the conditions under which women, social workers, medical researchers, philanthropists, feminists, and public health workers sought to curb reproduction. Jim Crow here meets neo-colonialism, but neither can trump women's personal quest to control pregnancy. Schoen has produced revisionist history at its most powerful.--Eileen Boris, University of California, Santa Barbara

From the Inside Flap

Based on unique access to more than 7,500 case histories and the papers of the North Carolina state eugenics board, Schoen looks at legislation, public health programs, and women's responses to sterilization, contraceptive use, and access to abortion from the 1920s to the 1970s.