



The Global Biopolitics of the IUD: How Science Constructs Contraceptive Users and Women's Bodies (Inside Technology)

Chikako Takeshita

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The intrauterine device (IUD) is used by 150 million women around the world. It is the second most prevalent method of female fertility control in the global South and the third most prevalent in the global North. Over its five decades of use, the IUD has been viewed both as a means for women's reproductive autonomy and as coercive tool of state-imposed population control, as a convenient form of birth control on a par with the pill and as a threat to women's health. In this book, Chikako Takeshita investigates the development, marketing, and use of the IUD since the 1960s. She offers a biography of a multifaceted technological object through a feminist science studies lens, tracing the transformations of the scientific discourse around it over time and across different geographies. Takeshita describes how developers of the IUD adapted to different social interests in their research and how changing assumptions about race, class, and female sexuality often guided scientific inquiries. The IUD, she argues, became a "politically versatile technology," adaptable to both feminist and nonfeminist reproductive politics because of researchers' attempts to maintain the device's suitability for women in both the developing and the developed world. Takeshita traces the evolution of scientists' concerns--from contraceptive efficacy and product safety to the politics of abortion--and describes the most recent, hormone-releasing, menstruation-suppressing iteration of the IUD. Examining fifty years of IUD development and use, Takeshita finds a microcosm of the global political economy of women's bodies, health, and sexuality in the history of this contraceptive device.

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