



Childbirth and Authoritative Knowledge: Cross-Cultural Perspectives

Robbie E. Davis-Floyd, Carolyn F. Sargent

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This benchmark collection of cross-cultural essays on reproduction and childbirth extends and enriches the work of Brigitte Jordan, who helped generate and define the field of the anthropology of birth. The authors' focus on authoritative knowledge—the knowledge that counts, on the basis of which decisions are made and actions taken—highlights the vast differences between birthing systems that give authority of knowing to women and their communities and those that invest it in experts and machines.

Childbirth and Authoritative Knowledge offers first-hand ethnographic research conducted by anthropologists in sixteen different societies and cultures and includes the interdisciplinary perspectives of a social psychologist, a sociologist, an epidemiologist, a staff member of the World Health Organization, and a community midwife. Exciting directions for further research as well as pressing needs for policy guidance emerge from these illuminating explorations of authoritative knowledge about birth. This book is certain to follow Jordan's *Birth in Four Cultures* as the definitive volume in a rapidly expanding field.

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