



The Bottle, The Breast, and the State: The Politics of Infant Feeding in the United States

Maureen Rand Oakley

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The Bottle, the Breast, and the State: The Politics of Infant Feeding in the United States explores the ways in which breastfeeding is both promoted and made difficult in the United States. It also examines how the use of formula is often shamed yet encouraged by many standard medical and government practices. Using both qualitative and quantitative methods, it explores the politics, policies, and individual experiences surrounding infant feeding. Oakley shows that a failure to separate the issue of breastfeeding rights and support, from problematic approaches to breastfeeding advocacy, in both academic scholarship and public discourse, has led to a deadlock that prevents groups from working together in support of breastfeeding without shaming. Drawing on a feminist ethic of care, Oakley develops a caring infant feeding advocacy. This approach values the caring work done by parents and recognizes the benefits of this work for society. It promotes policies supportive of parenting in general and breastfeeding in particular, in order to remove barriers that present a challenge to some women who wish to breastfeed. Caring infant feeding advocacy also works to promote the development of better alternatives for those who do not breastfeed.

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