

Michele Rivkin-Fish: Women's Health in Post-Soviet
Russia: The Politics of Intervention (Indiana UP, 2005)

New Anthropologies of Europe
Daphne Berdahl, Matti Bunzl, and Michael Herzfeld, editors

Indiana University Press is pleased to announce the recent publication of:

Women's Health in Post-Soviet Russia: The Politics of Intervention

Michele Rivkin-Fish

"An unparalleled study of a transforming and privatizing Russian health care system. Rivkin-Fish takes the reader into a new understanding of the fragile and tense relations between state and market transitions, and into the deep and largely silent struggle for gender and health equity in Russia." Adriana Petryna, author of *Life Exposed: Biological Citizens after Chernobyl*.

"Elegantly argued... a vibrant and incisive scholarly work." Alaina Lemon, University of Michigan.

In the first decade after the collapse of the Soviet Union, deteriorating public health indicators such as below-replacement fertility and high rates of sexually transmitted diseases, abortions, birth traumas, and maternal mortality raised acute anxieties over Russia's future. This study documents the efforts of global and local experts, and ordinary Russian women in St. Petersburg, to explain Russia's maternal health problems and devise reforms to solve them. Examining both official health projects and informal daily practices, Michele Rivkin-Fish draws ethnographic and theoretical insights about the contested processes of interpreting and managing neo-liberal transitions in Russia.

Global health advisors and Russian experts worked with different understandings of Russia's social problems and emphasized dramatically different notions of health and well-being. Calls for women's rights, patient self-determination, and democratic reforms clashed with hopes for increased individual discipline and enhanced professional authority. At the same time, a shared logic about the process of intervention shaped these projects: to overcome constraints of the socialist past, actors repeatedly dismissed the state and public sphere as viable sources of social justice and protection. In six case studies examining health care reform, patient education, and the daily negotiations between doctors and patients, Rivkin-Fish reveals how improving health became a matter of transforming individuals' attitudes, values, and behaviors, in lieu of strengthening collective systems for human welfare.

In dialogue with scholars and activists concerned with gender and democracy in the former socialist world. This book brings a feminist concern with power, authority, and global inequality to the study of socialism's aftermath. By placing the work of development experts alongside that of Russian activists and citizens, Rivkin-Fish explores the challenges of bringing anthropological insights to public health interventions for women's empowerment and democracy.

Michele Rivkin-Fish is Associate Professor of Anthropology at the University of Kentucky.

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