

An interesting finding is that, although many foreign born women have high educations and high incomes, if they do *not work before 15 years* in this country, their rate of employment is low. The significance of an Arab spouse is especially noteworthy in its influence on Arab-American women, and Read suggests this factor be further examined among immigrant groups.

In sum, Read's study stresses the multifaceted nature of cultural factors not captured in economic models of female labor force participation. She states, "At least for Arab-American women, religiosity, gender traditionalism, and homogamy have important consequences for their labor force decisions" (p.119). It is a major contribution.

References

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From Madness to Mutiny: Why Mothers Are Running from the Family Courts—and What Can Be Done about It, by **Amy Neustein** and **Michael Leshner**. Boston, MA: Northeastern University Press, 2005. 316 pp. \$26.00 cloth. ISBN: 1584654627.

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Family sociologists are all too familiar with the tug of war that occurs when relationships deteriorate because of divorce or separation. The battle over what is mine and what is yours can be disgraceful. This tug of war becomes even more damaging when children are involved. During custody litigation, it is the job of the family court to protect children from this process. The court's ultimate goal is to determine what is in the child's best interest. This means, in part, that it is the family

court's job to determine which parent is best suited to have primary care for a child when the family unit breaks up. Are the best interests of children always upheld within the courts? No.

In *From Madness to Mutiny*, Neustein and Leshner have an admirable goal, to expose a family court system that is failing children who are being abused by their fathers. Using court cases and interviews with protective mothers, judges, private attorneys, law guardians, social workers, and mental health experts, Neustein and Leshner examine a disturbing trend in the family court system, mothers losing custody of their children to sexually and physically abusive fathers.

The book is organized into three parts. The first provides an overview of problems inherent within the family court system, drawing attention to the power that judges and other court auxiliaries have wielded in determining child custody cases. The officials' abuse of power and poor custody decisions have been well documented by newspapers, legislators, and commentators. Yet the current system that allows for the abuse of children has remained in place, leading many mothers to declare "mutiny" on the system. Neustein and Leshner describe this rebellion, as well as the emergence of a new Underground Railroad that has been used by many mothers to protect their children from abusive fathers.

The second part of the book delves more deeply into research methodology, focusing on the applicability of ethnomethodology to the study of family courts. Neustein and Leshner emphasize that their sociological inquiry examines how people recreate settings that give meaning to and make sense of their interactive work. Thus, the authors attempt to understand the decision-making process of protective mothers as well as court officials. Through their attempts to understand this process, Neustein and Leshner uncover a corrupt system that abuses its power to the detriment of its clientele. The authors discuss cases where sexual abuse has been well documented by physicians and therapists; yet children are still placed in the custody of their abusive fathers. These egregious acts are being ignored by judges, law guardians, and other court officials. Instead of listening to protective mothers and their children, the family court contends that these mothers are

vengeful, mentally ill women who are trying to get even with their children's fathers.

After documenting the injustices inherent within the family court system, Neustein and Leshner spend the remainder of the book focusing on ways to restructure the family court to better serve and protect mothers and children. Many of their recommendations call for increased surveillance of judges' decisions. These suggestions stem from instances where judges have held secret meetings with defendants' attorneys and law guardians, leading to case decisions without the input of the plaintiff or the plaintiffs' council. The authors suggest making information in these cases available to the public to avoid this secrecy in decision-making.

Law guardians are also guilty of making decisions that disregard the well-being of children. Neustein and Leshner argue that law guardians should be subjected to a national set of standards to ensure that guardians are protecting the best interests of children. These are only a few of the changes that Neustein and Leshner recommend. Overall, Neustein and Leshner insist that the system be completely reformed and rethought at every level, otherwise it will continue to malfunction and do a disservice to children and their protective parents.

The greatest strength of this book is its use of dramatic and often graphic examples of judicial madness that have led to children living in sexually and physically abusive homes. Many of the cases discussed in the text were followed from their beginning through the appellate review process over a twenty-year period. This longitudinal design allows the reader to gage the depth of the problem in the family courts.

From Madness to Mutiny is not an easy book to read. In fact, it is one of the most disturbing books that I have reviewed. After getting past the horrendous accounts of injustice, the importance of the book is quite evident. It contributes not only to the sociology of the family, but also to our understanding of inequities within the criminal justice system for women and children. Neustein and Leshner draw attention to an issue that warrants much more attention from researchers, policy-makers, and the general public. A regularly cited problem within sociology is that our research is only accessible to other sociologists. I do not think that this is true of this

book. This book will appeal not only to family researchers across disciplines, but also to people who work with and advocate for children. It can be used as a supplemental text in teaching about the criminal justice system or family violence.

State of 'The Union': Marriage and Free Love in the Late 1800s, by **Sandra Ellen Schroer**. New York, NY: Routledge, 2005. 144 pp. \$65.00 cloth. ISBN: 0415975948.

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Victoria Woodhull, a famous (or infamous, depending on one's perspective) Free Love activist, presidential candidate in 1872, and the first woman to address the U.S. Congress, defined "Free Love" as "the regulation of the affections according to conscience, taste, and judgment of the individual, in place of their control by law" (p. 109). In *State of 'The Union,'* sociologist Sandra Ellen Schroer explores this unfortunately neglected topic through a qualitative analysis of Free Love publications originating from two utopian communities between the years 1850 and 1902. Her fascinating but short book begins with a brief literature review, followed by an even more concise discussion of her content analysis of the Free Love literature that emerged during this era, the so-called second "Great Awakening," also known as the "Free Love Movement" (p. 1). Schroer content analyzed 241 articles from three Free Love publications associated with two utopian communities and she presents her findings through cross-tabulations by gender and article type (e.g., support of, or opposition to, free love, divorce, marriage, etc.).

But the content analysis is merely background. The bulk of this book—68 of its 111 substantive pages—presents findings based on an excellent critical discourse analysis (CDA) comparing the standpoints of women and men who contributed articles on Free Love to the publication *Age of Freedom* (later re-named *The Good Time Coming*). This four-page periodical was published weekly from February 1858 to September 1859 by the wife of one of the founders of a Free Love community in Berlin Heights, Ohio. Schroer's