



**WESTERN
MICHIGAN**
UNIVERSITY

The Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare

Volume 22

Issue 1 March - Special Issue on Social Work
with Minority and Ethnic Groups

Article 23

March 1995

Companeras: Latina Lesbians. Juanita Ramos.

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/jssw>



Part of the Social Work Commons

Recommended Citation

(1995) "*Companeras: Latina Lesbians.* Juanita Ramos.," *The Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare*: Vol. 22 : Iss. 1 , Article 23.

Available at: <https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/jssw/vol22/iss1/23>

This Book Note is brought to you by the Western Michigan University School of Social Work. For more information, please contact wmu-scholarworks@wmich.edu.



Margaret Hyden, *Women Battering as Marital Act: The Construction of a Violent Marriage*. New York: Sandinavian University Press, 1994. \$35 hardcover. (Distributed in the United States by Oxford University Press, 200 Madison Ave, New York, NY 10016).

This study of the experiences of the victims of family violence in Sweden makes disturbing reading but, at the same time, offers powerful insights into the way women are subjected to abuse and of the way they deal with its consequences. Hyden worked for some time as a social worker in a clinic in Stockholm where she developed the technique of recording the experiences of her clients in narrative form. Using this technique, and linking effectively it to symbolic interactionism to enhance its interpretive power, she has produced a remarkable collection of real life accounts which show how ordinary people suffer the emotional and physical pain of abusive relationships.

The study analyzed 141 cases in which interviews were conducted not only with the women victims, but with the male perpetrators of violence and often with children as well. A smaller group was selected for in-depth analysis. In addition to providing a fascinating narrative account of the experiences of her subjects, Hyden uses her material in theoretical significant ways to test and reformulate several critical propositions in feminist theory relating to the issue of family violence. Her book makes an important contribution and should be widely consulted.

Juanita Ramos (Ed.), *Companeras: Latina Lesbians*, New York: Routledge, 1994. \$45 hardcover, \$14.95 papercover.

This extraordinary book is an anthology of essays, narrative accounts, short stories, oral histories, poems and academic writing on the experiences, views and feelings of forty seven Latina lesbians. While it may appear to deal with an esoteric subject of limited relevance to readers interested in mainstream issues of gender and sexuality, it will enchant anyone working the field. It confirms Routledge's growing reputation as a adventurous publisher of serious books which do not qualify for course adoption. While the book has no unifying theoretical perspective, its literary style which reports subjective experiences and

offers opportunities for artistic expression is highly effective. Its oral histories are perhaps of most significance to social scientists. They unveil the essence of what it means to be a Latina lesbian today.

Dusty Miller, *Women Who Hurt Themselves*. New York: Basic Books, 1994. \$22 hardcover.

In this book, psychotherapist Dusty Miller discusses the problem of Trauma Reenactment Syndrome, a condition in which people repeatedly inflict physical harm and pain on themselves. Although both men and women are involved, TRS occurs more frequently among women than men.

TRS is a complicated syndrome which is manifested not only in self-inflicted pain but by intense secrecy about sufferers' personal lives, a failure to respond to traditional psychotherapy, and a disassociated personality which often fragments into three-part self consisting of the victim, the abuser and an uninvolved 'bystander'.

Miller is an authority on TRS and its treatment, and her book is intended to offer insights into this condition as well as prescriptions for effective intervention. She provides gripping case histories of some of her clients and shows that many have failed to respond to treatment, and particularly behavioral treatments which do not deal with the complex causative factors underlying this condition. Her own therapeutic prescriptions involve a time-consuming but effective system of care that uncovers the hidden childhood experiences of abusive relationships that most of her clients have encountered. She also advocates the active involvement of family members and friends. The book is a useful guide to this little known condition and will be of interest to practitioners as well as other social scientists interested in family abuse.

Valerie Polakow: *Lives on the Edge: Single Mothers and their Children in the Other America*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993. \$22.50 hardcover.

As Polakow shows in this readable and important book, more than thirteen million children live in poverty in the United States today. The vast majority are to be found in poor single-