

together "satisfies individual needs while avoiding the legal.....liabilities often perceived in marriage" (p. 29). And yet Part Two of the book focuses specifically on Living Together and the Law. "Failure to take into account the legal repercussions of living together can have far-reaching consequences for the individual covivant" (p. 116). At least some of those far-reaching consequences might be considered by some to be legal liabilities!

In spite of the inconsistency, however, Part II of *Living Together* does provide some useful information concerning legal aspects of non-marital cohabitation. Four elements of family law related to this life-style are summarized for each province: the legality of cohabitation agreements; the right of the covivant to apply for covivant maintenance; the legal status of the children; and the parental rights of the non-marital cohabitor. The information provided is a useful overview, which might have been strengthened by specific references to appropriate statutes or cases.

The usefulness of this section does not compensate for the weakness in the remainder of the book, however. To understand the character of non-marital cohabitation and its status in society (the purpose of this book) requires systematic study and analysis, something which this book lacks.

Margaret E. Arcus  
University of British Columbia

**Abortion: Readings and Research.** Paul Sachdev (ed.) *Toronto: Butterworths, 1981. Pp. 237.*

In his preface, Professor Sachdev comments, "No other public issue in modern times has generated such fierce controversy and polarization as abortion" (p. ix). Accordingly, this attempt to go beyond the controversy and pres-

ent a collection which deals with contemporary legal, psychological and sociological research on abortion is to be commended.

The book is divided into four subsections: "Abortion: An Overview," "Emotional and Psychological Aspects of Abortion," "Women Seeking Abortion," and "Options for the Future." The 17 papers deal with such issues as the shortcomings and operation of the Canadian abortion law; the effects on women who seek and are "granted" or "denied" abortions; the consequences for the children of the latter group; the relationships between abortion, contraception and sterilization; and worldwide abortion trends. Sachdev's intent was to deal with the issue in an explicitly Canadian context and the book's main strength lies in the articles which offer reports of Canadian research. Of particular interest are Osborn's discussion of sterilization of abortees based on the study of the Badgley Commission (1977); Chapman-Sheehan and Devlin's unfortunately brief article on access and availability issues in contraceptive failure from their work in the Reproduction Regulation Clinic of the McMaster Medical Centre; Pearce's presentation of psychological factors in unwanted pregnancy (Calgary data) and Berger *et al's* discussion of the characteristics of repeat abortees based on their work at the Montreal General Hospital.

While the value of primary Canadian data should not be underestimated, *Abortion: Readings and Research* has a number of problems that keep it from working. In the first place, the material seems to have been organized in a somewhat arbitrary fashion. For example, the rationale for placing articles in "Emotional and Psychological Aspects of Abortion" as opposed to "Women Seeking Abortion" is unclear. In the first section, the discussion of the Canadian abortion law presumes familiarity with the legislation and, although the text of the relevant section of the Criminal Code (sec. 25) is appended to Dickens' article on "Legal Aspects of Abor-

tion," this cannot be determined from the table of contents.

Rapp's article on the role of the psychiatrist in the implementation of the Canadian abortion law gives the impression that the decision to "permit" or "deny" abortion rests with psychiatrists in current law. While this may be the way the law is implemented in some jurisdictions, the Badgley Commission Report (1977) makes it clear that gynecologists are likely to sit on therapeutic abortion committees as a consequence of professional norms which make it preferable that the recommendation of the woman's physician (for an abortion) be evaluated by his or her peers.

In short, the articles which Sachdev has selected vis-à-vis the Canadian abortion law cannot stand alone. A true "overview" would have presented a straightforward explication of the law which would situate the subsequent critiques. This explication would seem to have been a logical beginning in that the Badgley Commission determined that many physicians - let alone lay people - were extremely unclear as to the specific provisions of the Canadian Criminal Code.

More fundamentally, however, it is questionable whether one can abstract an issue from its social context and claim to do it justice. While the psychological, sociological and legal aspects are of crucial importance, they take their meaning from the contemporary Canadian socio-cultural context. Sachdev acknowledged that abortion is both a political and moral issue. (For him, the "central difficulty in the controversy is the question of when human life begins" (ix), a position shared by Rodman who authored the final article on "Future Directions for Abortion Morality and Policy.") In the attempt to stay clear of these quagmires, however, Sachdev has assembled a series of articles which, while often interesting, are ultimately sterile. A volume on abortion, particularly in Canada at a time when the issue is the centre of controversy, should do

more than acknowledge the existence of the polarities which characterize the debate.

An article such as that by Professor Donald Granberg ("The Abortion Activists," *Family Planning Perspectives* 13:4, 1981), presenting a scientific study of the pro-choice and pro-life supporters, their social and demographic characteristics and their main arguments, would have been beneficial in situating the current work in its social and political context. As it is, the lead article by Father Alphonse de Valk, "Abortion Politics: Canadian Style" presents a portion of the pro-life view. Had he not been writing under the guise of "value neutrality," his discussion of the influence of the media in bringing about changes in Canada's Criminal Code would have been better taken. At the same time, this could have been balanced by a submission from a pro-choice partisan such as, for example, Eleanor Wright Pelrine (*Abortion in Canada*, 1971). A balanced section on "abortion politics" would not have compromised Sachdev's goal of objectivity and would have facilitated his stated aim to "present a balanced and holistic viewpoint so as to permit a prudent reflection on the issues involved." (ix)

When one recalls that abortion is a procedure in which the patient is always a woman, one misses articles dealing with the issue of reproductive freedom and the ethics of the woman's right to choose. Absent also is any discussion of alternatives to current services such as those offered by women's clinics. These lacunae are paralleled by the masculinist language and the preponderance of male authors, two features which may limit some readers' appreciation of the volume. There is no index, a regrettable economy in a book which brings together a number of diverse studies of the same phenomenon.

However, in the long run one must judge *Abortion: Readings and Research* in light of the availability of comparable material. If one limits oneself to Canadian works, the field is small.

Thus, despite its considerable shortcomings, this work - or at least portions thereof - has value for those who seek to understand the issue of abortion in Canada.

M. Maureen Killoran  
McMaster University

**Immigrant Housewives in Canada: A Report.** Roxana Ng and Judith Ramirez. *Toronto: Immigrant Women's Centre, 1981. Pp. 76.*

This modest little book packs quite a wallop, and should have considerable impact not only on the study of immigration in general and of immigrant women in particular, but also in the areas of social action and social policy. As well as adding a good deal to our knowledge of the daily lives of immigrant women, it pulls the rug out from under a number of the most cherished traditional assumptions about immigration and immigrants in Canada.

The conventional wisdom on immigration - which is reflected in nearly all the literature - is that people choose to immigrate to improve their material well-being. Until recently most studies have assumed that men and women were similarly affected by the process of immigration. Ng and Ramirez show that is simply not true for the women in their study (and, as a growing body of work suggests, is probably untrue for most immigrant women).<sup>1</sup>

It was in part the stupidity of statements about immigrants' lives, caused by the malestream bias in the literature on immigrants, that impelled Ng and Ramirez (themselves immigrants) to undertake this report. Ramirez, a feminist community activist of some renown, was a co-founder of the Immigrant Women's Centre (a grass-roots self-help oriented resource centre) in Toronto in 1975. Frustrated by the lack of information on the needs and everyday lives of working class immigrant women, she and others carried out a series of 100 interviews with the women using

the centre during 1976. The project ran out of money and energy and nothing further was done with the interviews until 1979-80 when the idea was renewed and further interviews were done. (It was at this point that Ng, a recognized feminist researcher and doctoral candidate in Sociology at OISE, became involved). The women interviewed were housewives, mostly from Portuguese, Italian, or Spanish backgrounds, from rural or semi-rural areas in industrially underdeveloped countries. Their husbands worked here in skilled or semi-skilled blue collar jobs.

The report is divided into three major sections, the first of which is concerned with explaining the framework and methodology of the study. The second and longest section discusses the findings of the study in several chapters. The main concentration is on the changes in women's everyday lives and work caused by the immigration of the family into a money economy; changes in women's unpaid work (housework and family management work) inside the home; and women's paid work outside the home. A further chapter examines the effects of "institutionalized processes" (i.e., immigration policy, the segregated labour force) on these women's lives. Finally, the authors consider the negative and positive consequences of immigration for these immigrant women.

The methodology for this study was based on "the standpoint of women," that is, beginning from the everyday experiences of women, and locating those experiences in the context of control by outside interests (employers, the state and its agencies, men) over these women's lives. The method was developed by Dorothy Smith, with whom Ng has worked for a number of years. Not surprisingly, such an approach produces information and conclusions markedly different from those of conventional studies upon which much immigration and settlement policy is based. For example, many of immigrant women's problems are labelled as "cultural adjustment" issues - when in fact "culture" has very little to do with