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"Hitting is Not Manly": Domestic Violence Court and the Re-Imagination of the Patriarchal State

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Rekha Mirchandani

‘Hitting is Not Manly’: Domestic Violence Court and the Re-Imagination of the Patriarchal State



Monday, September 26th, 2005
2:30 p.m.

Sky Bank Room (201A)

Bowen-Thompson Student Union

Can the politically radical battered women’s movement come together with the institutionally conservative court system to mobilize against domestic violence?

Do the new domestic violence courts that result reflect the transformative values of the battered women’s movement or the traditionally patriarchal values of the court?

How can we revise feminist theories of the patriarchal state to capture the dramatically new orientation of domestic violence courts?

Domestic violence courts are part of a larger movement directing our criminal justice system away from an adversarial approach toward a social problem-solving approach to law. In her ethnographic study of a domestic violence court, Professor Mirchandani explores the direction of social and cultural change in the new courts, as well as the challenges these courts present for existing conceptions of social control and the state. Ultimately, she suggests that this new turn in justice reveals important channels of mutual influence between democratic social movements and the state.

Rekha Mirchandani is Assistant Professor of Sociology at BGSU. Her research and teaching focus on classical and contemporary sociological theory with special emphasis on the role of the state and its laws. Currently a fellow at ICS, her recent work appears in journals such as *Sociological Theory*, *Current Perspectives in Social Theory and Law* and *Society Review*.

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