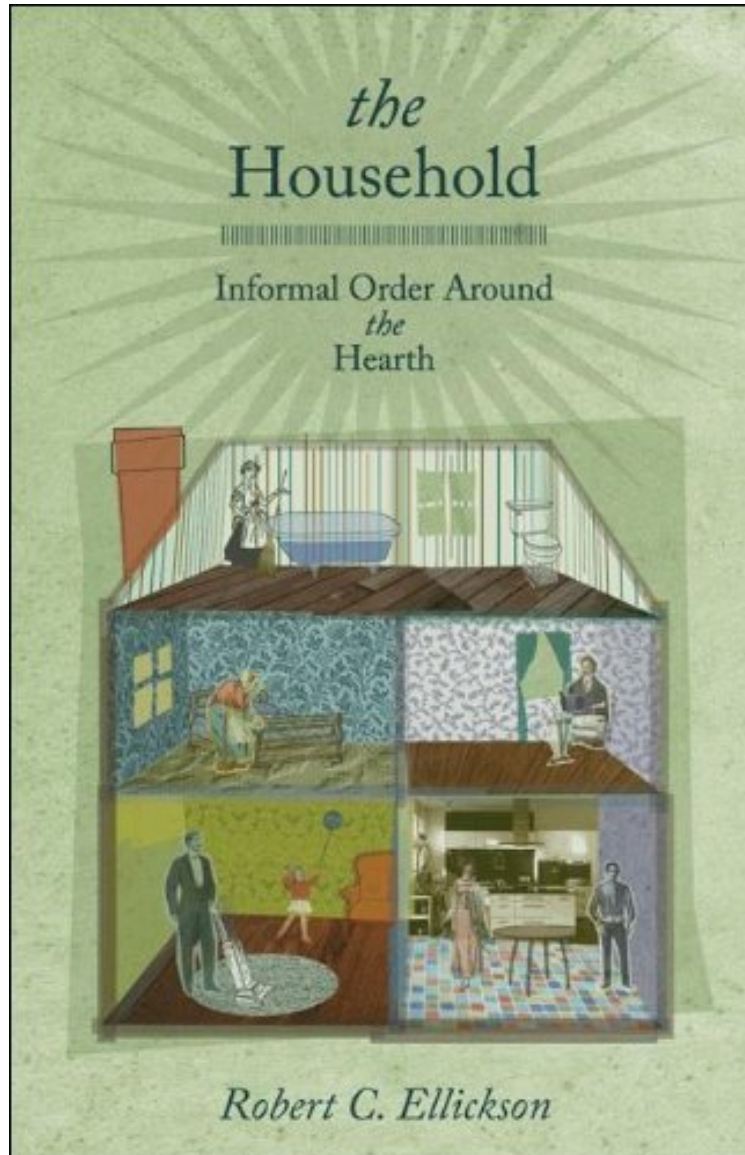


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The Household: Informal Order around the Hearth

Robert C. Ellickson

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Robert C. Ellickson : The Household: Informal Order around the Hearth before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Household: Informal Order around the Hearth:

Some people dwell alone, many in family-based households, and an adventuresome few in communes. The Household is the first book to systematically lay bare the internal dynamics of these and other home arrangements. Legal underpinnings, social considerations, and economic constraints all influence how household participants select their

homemates and govern their interactions around the hearth. Robert Ellickson applies transaction cost economics, sociological theory, and legal analysis to explore issues such as the sharing of household output, the control of domestic misconduct, and the ownership of dwelling units. Drawing on a broad range of historical and statistical sources, Ellickson contrasts family-based households with the more complex arrangements in medieval English castles, Israeli kibbutzim, and contemporary cohousing communities. He shows that most individuals, when structuring their home relationships, pursue a strategy of consorting with intimates. This, he asserts, facilitates informal coordination and tends ultimately to enhance the quality of domestic interactions. He challenges utopian critics who seek to enlarge the scale of the household and legal advocates who urge household members to rely more on written contracts and lawsuits. Ellickson argues that these commentators fail to appreciate the great advantages in the home setting of informally associating with a handful of trusted intimates. *The Household* is a must-read for sociologists, economists, lawyers, and anyone interested in the fundamentals of domestic life.

Robert C. Ellickson defines the household as a voluntary grouping of relatives or non-relatives living under the same roof. As he points out in his engaging study, this pervasive institution has received surprisingly little attention from social theorists. . . . *The Household*, a short, curious and enjoyable book, provides a novel way of looking at an institution from which very few of us can escape. From the Back Cover "This book is very original. Most of the similar literature on the law and economics of the family is contracts- rather than property-based, and the author displays a tremendous knowledge of the literature in a number of related fields. It is a wonderful piece of work and an excellent addition."--Margaret F. Brinig, University of Notre Dame "This is a very good book. The approach is valuable and insightful, and brings solid economic analysis to an institution that, I am convinced, is understudied and poorly understood. I enjoyed this book and learned a lot from it."--George P. Baker, Harvard Business School About the Author Robert C. Ellickson is the Walter E. Meyer Professor of Property and Urban Law at Yale Law School. His books include "Order without Law: How Neighbors Settle Disputes".