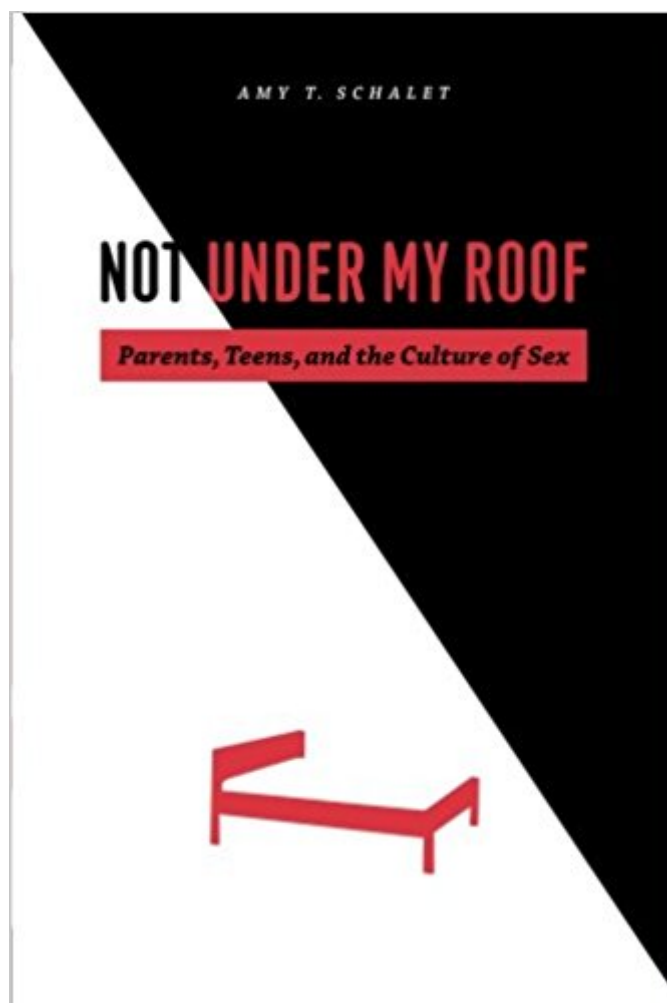


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# Not Under My Roof: Parents, Teens, And The Culture Of Sex



## Synopsis

Winner of the Healthy Teen Network's Carol Mendez Cassell Award for Excellence in Sexuality Education and the American Sociological Association's Children and Youth Section's 2012 Distinguished Scholarly Research Award For American parents, teenage sex is something to be feared and forbidden: most would never consider allowing their children to have sex at home, and sex is a frequent source of family conflict. In the Netherlands, where teenage pregnancies are far less frequent than in the United States, parents aim above all for family cohesiveness, often permitting young couples to sleep together and providing them with contraceptives. Drawing on extensive interviews with parents and teens, *Not Under My Roof* offers an unprecedented, intimate account of the different ways that girls and boys in both countries negotiate love, lust, and growing up. Tracing the roots of the parents' divergent attitudes, Amy T. Schalet reveals how they grow out of their respective conceptions of the self, relationships, gender, autonomy, and authority. She provides a probing analysis of the way family culture shapes not just sex but also alcohol consumption and parent-teen relationships. Avoiding caricatures of permissive Europeans and puritanical Americans, Schalet shows that the Dutch require self-control from teens and parents, while Americans guide their children toward autonomous adulthood at the expense of the family bond.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

“Amy Schalet’s book compares the sexual attitudes of American and Dutch

parents and her findings are nothing short of staggering: Whereas most American parents panic about the idea of allowing their kids to have sex with other kids under their roof, for many Dutch parents, it's not only fine—it's responsible parenting. . . .

Schalet's extensively researched, fascinating work . . . is a startling wake-up call about America's largely misguided attitudes toward sex and growing up. (Salon)"Her book starts in the adolescent bedroom, and ends up explaining why the US is so conservative on social issues and the Netherlands so liberal." Financial Times (Financial

Times)"This is a thorough and intriguing look at how attitudes about sexuality have developed in each country since the 1970s. The author presents a brief but convincing discussion of how the economic and political systems in Holland and the US evolved to create the cultural frameworks that led Dutch parents to normalize teenage sexuality and US parents to dramatize it.

Schalet has juxtaposed US and Dutch cultural histories, family values, and societal attitudes about such seemingly diverse issues as sexuality, immigration, and the intersection of individual autonomy and state sovereignty to produce a fascinating look into the origins and consequences of two diametrically opposed paradigms of adolescent sexuality. . . . Highly recommended. (Choice)"Not Under My Roof is a fascinating book. I have told all of my friends who have teenagers

to read it. I also recommend it for classroom use. College students will immediately grasp how society shapes their experiences of sex, drugs, and alcohol." (American Journal of Sociology)"[An] engaging and informative monograph. . . . Lucid and highly attuned to the complexities of human experience, Not Under My Roof should find a welcome place in advanced undergraduate and graduate courses on sexuality, gender, and culture and should be required reading for scholars in those areas, as well as for makers of public policy." (Gender and Society)"The analyses and insights are mightily impressive. . . . Schalet's own background has enabled her to be both an insider and an outsider in her observations in both countries, and this advantage has clearly been maximised. A very important work, and very strongly recommended. (Sex Education)"In Not Under My Roof, Amy Schalet mines the radically different American and Dutch understandings of adolescent sexuality—their different takes on lust, love, gender, hormones, control, and selfhood—and comes away with scholarly gold. Carefully researched, wicked smart, and filled with the voices and stories of parents and teenagers, Schalet's is one of the best books on sexuality and culture in years. (Joshua Gamson, University of San Francisco)"Schalet's insightful analyses—grounded in history, sociology, and adolescent development—provide a roadmap for normalizing sexuality and guiding social policy. Taking adolescent sexuality out of the

darkness of the back seat and into the light under the family roof has the power to transform adolescent and adult sexuality and family relations. (John Santelli, MD, Columbia University)

“Combining intimate personal stories with brilliant sociological insight, Schalet challenges our assumptions about teenage sex and the inevitability of conflict between teenagers and parents. American adolescents rebel, and their parents impose harsh discipline because they prize individual autonomy and fear the social disorder it implies. Dutch parents expect their children to be reasonable because they see self-regulation as a natural attribute of a cohesive society. This far-reaching and enthralling cultural analysis puts flesh on the bones of theories of modern individualism, and, perhaps more importantly, it offers American parents a new, hopeful—if at times unsettling—sense of how we might better love, respect, and care for our children. (Ann Swidler, University of California, Berkeley)

“I just finished reading Amy Schalet’s wonderful book, *Not Under My Roof*, and can’t say enough good things about it. It’s easy to read and understand. As the CEO of an almost 100-year-old nonprofit, the American Social Health Association, whose purpose is to educate Americans about how to be sexually healthy, this book is spot on. We tell people every day that parents are critical in starting a child on a sexually healthy life. It is my sincere hope that every parent will read this book. As the parent of a 23 and 17-year-old, I am humbled by how very much I had to learn. From the first time I heard Amy speak, I was forever changed as a parent. Thank you Amy! (Lynn B. Barclay President and CEO, American Social Health Association)

*Not Under My Roof* is a thought-provoking sociological treatise rooted in the lives and words of real people. The material is sophisticated, but the writing is clear and direct, which makes it a pleasure to read. Dr. Schalet’s meticulous research gleans the perspectives of teens and their parents in both the U.S. and Holland, offering poignant insight into the struggles over emerging sexuality that occur in the transition from adolescence to adulthood. Hers is a lucid window into another culture that may help us to more clearly see ourselves. (Jillian Henderson, University of California, San Francisco)

“With grace and style, Amy Schalet presents a forceful and convincing argument about the divergent cultural approaches to sexuality, socialization of adolescents, and conceptions of citizenship in the United States and the Netherlands, probing deep-seated value differences that play out in the management of sex. Nuanced, well documented, and remarkably persuasive, *Not Under My Roof* is an exemplary study. (Frank Furstenberg, University of Pennsylvania)

Winner of the Healthy Teen Network’s Carol Mendez Cassell Award for Excellence in Sexuality Education (Healthy Teen Network) ASA Children and Youth Section’s 2012 Distinguished Scholarly Research

Award (American Sociological Association) --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

Amy T. Schalet is assistant professor of sociology at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

Prof. Schalet's book may be the most useful scholarly work ever written about adolescent sexuality. Her comparison of how parents and society deal with teens and sex in Holland and the United States is all the more significant since both societies have been strongly influenced by Calvinist Protestantism and both cultures prize social equality, individuality, and autonomy. As Schalet explains, Dutch society has developed a template for "normal" and healthy adolescent sexual development that fosters emotionally committed relationships under parents' and adults' watchful gaze. Although she is scrupulously fair in admitting its imperfections, Schalet shows that this template leads to clearly superior health outcomes, since Dutch teens have much lower rates of unintended pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, and abortions than do American teens. By contrast, American teenage sexuality is a battleground pitting girls against boys, parents against children, and ungovernable adolescent peer groups against ineffectually authoritarian adult laws and norms. Few of the participants on the American scene seem particularly happy with the way things are. This is where Amy Schalet's book is so valuable: she shows that things could be otherwise. As a piece of scholarship, this book is of sterling quality: it recognizes and respects the cultural and institutional forces at work in each country's approach to adolescent sexuality. Schalet demonstrates that culture shapes behavior and experience powerfully, but that cultural change is also possible: the Dutch approach to sexuality is a recent, post-1960s innovation. The American parents, health professionals, educators, and even teens who will benefit most from this book are those with socially liberal impulses who feel that there must be a better way, but are not entirely sure what a realistic alternative to the status quo might be. For these people, Schalet shows a way forward that is neither the current prohibitionist culture nor a completely permissive libertarian mirror image of the status quo. Her book holds out the possibility of a more humane, mutually respectful, and healthy adolescent experience of sexuality. Staunch social conservatives who read this book will probably come away unconvinced, believing that American adolescents are somehow intrinsically less self-disciplined than their European counterparts. (How is it that "socialism" teaches self-control so effectively?) Or they may believe that making teens "pay for their sins" is morally or religiously appropriate. But for American readers who want a more compassionate--and demonstrably effective--approach to helping adolescents learn about love and sex, Schalet's book is indispensable. The more widely this book is read, the better the prospects for improving our

children's lives, home by home and community by community.

I was looking for a more secular discussion of different cultural approaches to this issue, because I have a soon to be teenager. I am a well educated white middle class mother, living in New York City. I do not really cleave to any religious dogma, and I liked the concept that teen sexuality should be normalized, but I was annoyed that the author kept characterizing the American approach as "dramatizing" it with such phrases as "raging hormones". It had not really occurred to me that I would forbid my son to have his girlfriend overnight, but this book did bring up some interesting aspects of this possibility that I had not considered. For this, I found the book informative. However, it was very academic. As a former almost academic, to me that means that the argument is presented and re-presented repetitively. I know that this is part of the academic structure, and so when I figured that out, I got what I needed to out of the book, skipped to the conclusion and felt satisfied. Other less lazy or more engaged readers / parents may want to slog through the argument in it's entirety, but I did not feel the need to do so.

What a smart book and an excellent topic. My teenager started to describe the hook-up culture at her high school. I wanted some resources to think more about how to talk to her, figure out to articulate my gut instincts and just get a broader range of thoughts about teenage sexuality. Though academic, this is not a difficult read and viewing teenage sexuality and parent/teen relationships as they are approached cross-culturally is enlightening. I am 125 pages in now and, reading this book along with 'Girls and Sex', by husband and I feel like we are ready for the next round of conversations with our 15 and 17 year olds. We lean more towards the approach taken by many of the Dutch parents but it would be wonderful if people not inclined to thinking about another way to view teen sexuality would be open enough to read and consider.

I think this should be required reading for anyone raising a teenager. If my brother-in-law had read this, perhaps his daughter would not be living with me instead of him right now. Believe it or not, sex is a healthy part of relationships. Will I let my daughter have her boyfriend over for the night when she is 16? Absolutely, as long as they have shown they are going about the relationship in a mature manner. Would I rather her get caught having sex in the back of a car in a parking lot? Would I rather her tearfully tell me she is pregnant because she was too scared to ask about birth control? Read it and think. Of course not everyone will agree, but it will give you a different perspective.

Very interesting makes sense why America has had a problem with teen pregnancy.

Excellent

Very clinical.

Book was like it was described and the book came right on time which made it even better. I would recommend this product to other people

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