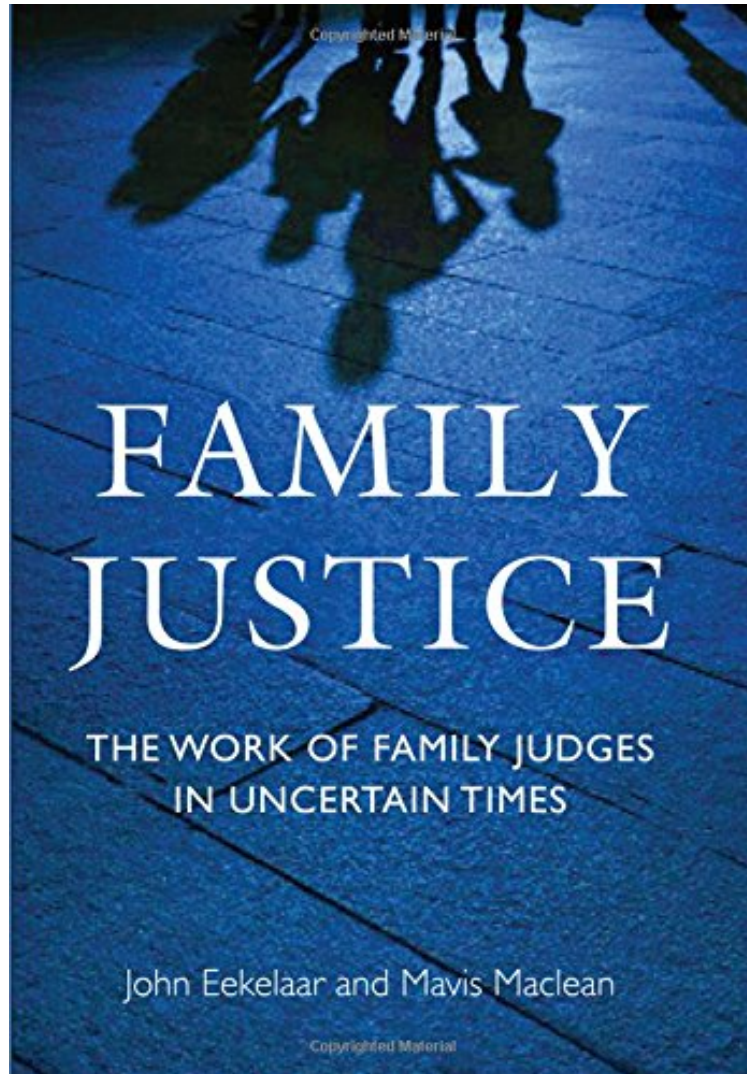


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## Family Justice: The Work of Family Judges in Uncertain Times

*John Eekelaar, Mavis Maclean*

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**John Eekelaar, Mavis Maclean : Family Justice: The Work of Family Judges in Uncertain Times** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Family Justice: The Work of Family Judges in Uncertain Times:

This book is about the delivery of family justice in England and Wales, focusing on the work of the family judiciary in the lower courts. The policy context is moving so rapidly that the authors have gone beyond presenting their empirical findings to offer a broader consideration of the nature and role of the family justice system, as these are in danger of

being lost amid present reform proposals. The first four chapters are historical and comparative, examining assumptions about family justice, while offering a defense of the role of legal rights in family life and the importance of good policy making, balancing both outcome- and behavior-based approaches to family justice. Comparative examples from the US and Australia show how new approaches to family justice can be successfully deployed. The next three chapters are empirical, including a typology of the roles played and tasks addressed by the judges, overturning the commonly held assumption that the central judicial role is adjudication, emphasizing the extent to which judges integrate outcome- and behavior-focused approaches to family justice, and giving a detailed account of the daily work of circuit and district judges and legal advisers. The conclusion is that there is a trend across jurisdictions, driven by technological innovation and by economic constraints, to reduce the role of courts and lawyers in favor of individual choices based on private or government funded information sources. While these developments can be beneficial, they also have dangers and limitations. The final chapter argues that despite the move to privatized forms of dispute resolution, family justice still demands a sound judicial structure.

This is a relatively small book, which disguises the amount of valuable analysis and information contained in it.... a fundamental, fascinating and altogether fantastic contribution to the understanding of the family law system and the distribution of justice. It presents a cogent and empirically-based argument against the reforms proposed in the Family Justice , challenging the assumptions about family law work in courts and practice, and should be read by academics, politicians and practitioners alike. (Claire Fenton-Glynn *Edinburgh Law* , Volume 18) This is a thoughtful and well-written book those insights into practice wed well with the authors' own thoughts. What a pity its readership is unlikely to include the relevant policy-makers or the people those family problems are so constructively addressed. (Chris Barton *Journal of Social Welfare Family Law*, Volume 36, Number 1)...illustrates the authors' ability to make a sophisticated and wide-ranging argument that is nonetheless supported by closely observed detail. Its overarching themes regarding the role of the state in its citizens' personal and family lives should be of interest to all those concerned with this area of the law. (Felicity Bell *Sydney Law* , Volume 36) About the Author Mavis Maclean, CBE is co-founder of the Oxford Centre for Family Law and Policy, Oxford University and a Senior Research Fellow of St Hilda's College. John Eekelaar, FBA is Emeritus Fellow of Pembroke College, Oxford.