Review of *Homelessness in America (3 volumes).* Robert Hartman McNamara. Reviewed by John Q. Hodges.

John Q. Hodges
Western Carolina University

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the ideas involved and reduce unnecessary repetition would improve the book's readability and increase its accessibility.
   Marcia Russell, Prevention Research Center, Pacific Institute
   for Research & Evaluation

Robert Hartman McNamara, *Homelessness in America* (3 Volumes). Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2008. $300.00 hardcover.

Homelessness in America is a particularly complex problem, vulnerable to changing political realities, demographic shifts, and seismic cultural events such as the ongoing wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Researchers and policy advocates have debated nearly every facet of the phenomenon, from the number of homeless to the causal factors to solutions for homelessness. McNamara's three-volume edited overview nicely captures the depth and the breadth of the issue. Given the luxury of three volumes, it manages to be both comprehensive and yet in-depth on most topics, whereas most other overviews of homelessness tend to leave the reader frustrated with the relatively surface-level discussions.

The structure of the three volumes is quite fascinating: Volume One is titled "Faces of Homelessness" and deals with the diversity of homelessness (chapters include rural homelessness, homeless veterans, homeless women, and the elderly homeless). Volume Two is titled "Causes of Homelessness" and tackles both the micro (HIV/AIDS, substance abuse, mental illness) and the macro causes (housing policy, Hurricane Katrina). Finally, Volume Three is titled "Solutions to Homelessness" and thoroughly covers not only potential solutions, but also discusses the evolution of the homeless population and discusses future trends.

The strength of these volumes is certainly their comprehensiveness. All the major issues related to homelessness are covered in great depth and with skillful analysis. Particularly strong are the chapters on lesser-studied facets of homelessness, such as Jaimie Page's discussion of youth who age out of foster care and Hodas and Myers' examination of rural

homelessness.

Less strong is the organizational logic of the three volumes. At times, it feels as if there is redundant content between the volumes (such as the demographics and trends of homelessness) as well as within volumes, such as the discussion of criminalization of the homeless in Volume 3. With the three volume structure however, it would be difficult for each volume to be comprehensive without some duplication of content. On the other hand, given the very slender size of each volume, it seems quite feasible for this project to have been constructed as one larger volume with three subsections on faces of homelessness, causes of homelessness, and solutions to homelessness. However, these are very minor objections to what is certainly the most thorough, analytical, and honest discussion of one of the most perplexing social problems in America. This volume not only encapsulates the arguments of the previous thirty years, but deepens and extends them for the current complexity of the issue.

John Q. Hodges, Western Carolina University

Kate Morris, Marian Barnes and Paul Mason, *Children, Families and Social Exclusion: New Approaches to Prevention*. Bristol: Policy Press, 2009. $36.95 papercover.

The importance of prevention has been emphasized in social work, criminal justice and social welfare for many decades but unfortunately, it has not been given the priority it deserves. Although everyone agrees that it is more important to prevent rather than respond to social problems, resources have traditionally been disproportionately allocated to remedial interventions. One problem is how to translate the ideal of prevention into concrete policies and programs that can be evaluated, reformulated and adopted to achieve prevention goals.

This book reports on a major prevention initiative in the field of child welfare which was introduced in Britain in the early years of this century by the Labour government in the wake of a series of child abuse cases which attracted a good deal of public attention. Although British child welfare policy