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**Review of *Kids Raised by the Government*. Ira M. Schwartz and Gideon Fishman. Reviewed by Sherrill Clark, University of California, Berkeley.**

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reforms are sufficient to protect social security's viability without undermining its egalitarian principles.

The final chapter also provides a provocative and erudite analysis of the major challenges facing social security today—not only in the countries of the rich world, but in the developing world and the ex-Soviet nations. In the poor world, Dixon pointedly notes that social security remains largely irrelevant to the basic material needs of most ordinary people. Focussed on the urban middle class and public employees, social security generally bypasses the rural poor, especially women, as well as urban dwellers in the informal sectors of the economy. In the post-Soviet nations, as the reasonably generous cradle-to-the-grave social security systems of the past have decomposed, a variety of new, "mixed," and substantially less protective systems are evolving.

Dixon's book provides an important addition to the social security literature and a helpful contribution to comparative policy studies; his organizing categories offer a useful context for comparing and evaluating programs. While somewhat circumscribed in its analytic dimensions—Dixon largely ignores issues such as race, gender, and economic globalization—*Social Security in Global Perspective* is impressive in scope and scholarship, an outstanding addition to the burgeoning social security literature.

Paul Terrell

University of California, Berkeley

Ira M. Schwartz and Gideon Fishman, *Kids Raised by the Government*. Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 1999. \$49.95 hardcover.

Over half a million children live in subsidized out of home care in the United States and their numbers are growing. Children from ethnic minority groups, especially African American children, are overrepresented. The authors of this book assert that child welfare system dooms children to impermanent living arrangements and poverty is the main reason. Hence: Kids are being raised by the government because, under the current system, they live in damaging impermanent relationships paid for by the government.

To begin, Schwartz and Fishman declare that the public child welfare system, created to combat child maltreatment, is so broken that nothing less than radical change will improve the situation. Furthermore, they say that limiting the debate to internal philosophical disagreements over the merits of family preservation versus early permanency, occurs at the expense of seeing the bigger picture. So far so good: this book will not be a rehash of Harlow's chicken wire mother experiments. They promise the reader new strategies based on empirical research.

But then, inexplicably, the authors ignore the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997 (P.L. 105 - 89) in favor of analyzing the Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act of 1980 (P.L. 96 -272). They contend that child welfare philosophy, simultaneously protecting children and preserving families, is misguided. Citing class action suits brought against public child welfare agencies during the 1980s and 1990s, they present case examples of the system's inefficiency and inability to protect children. The next three chapters are intended to give readers insight into how the system has failed to handle adoptions, the connection with the juvenile justice system, and the role of residential care.

The authors present adoption data from Michigan which shows that the younger a child is when s/he enters the system, the longer the stay. Additionally, infants and teenagers are the least likely to be adopted. They conclude that removing barriers to adoption should be first priority of reform. Reunification with parents should be reconsidered as a viable option for permanency.

Next, Schwartz and Fishman address the charge that the child welfare dependency system creates juvenile delinquents. Their research indicates that the age of the child at first contact with the system, they do so more frequently as juvenile delinquents rather than dependents. The goal of child welfare services turns from compassion to social control with children over the age of 10 or 12.

Finally the authors present research that implicates expensive residential treatment in maintaining status quo by keeping children in care longer than necessary. However, the data they use combines emergency shelters, group homes, and institutions under the umbrella of residential treatment.

This book's point about the bigger picture to confront poverty has merit. For example, increases in child neglect, the most

prevalent form of child maltreatment, are related to decreases in parental income. More child neglect is seen in poor families than in middle class families. Yet poverty by itself cannot be seen as the cause of child neglect and other forms of maltreatment because not all poor parents neglect their children. However after making the point about poverty, Schwartz and Fishman do not present research about or discuss child neglect in depth.

The authors conclude this book by making a series of recommendations. First, they do not recommend eliminating family preservation which is surprising, considering the arguments made in previous chapters. They recommend that family preservation services should be focused on preventing expensive residential care, rather than family foster care. Second they say child abuse investigation should be separated from services. They say managed care shows promise in the child welfare field, but again their information is disconnected from the earlier arguments.

The Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997 (P.L. 105 - 89) has stimulated discussion of several legal permanency options for children. Kin care has always been an informal resource for troubled families, although government is just now considering it as a legal permanency alternative to adoption, rather than a long term foster care arrangement. Children being raised in kin care make up the fastest growing segment of kids raised by the government. Increases in the lengths of stay in kin care can be directly tied to poverty, but the authors do not discuss the research about kin care which shows that children stay longer in the system when placed with kin.

This book presents some new information, especially in the area of juvenile justice. Nevertheless, the so-called radical new strategies, such as managed care, are not connected with the earlier chapters. This leads to the conclusion that readers may have been better served by four separate research articles.

In the end, basing this inquiry on a dated policy and providing only a brief analysis of the policy that superceded it, distracts from the worthy premise of this book: To improve the lives of impoverished families and establish permanence for children requires us to think outside of the child welfare box. Increasing levels of domestic violence, high rates of teen pregnancy, lack of affordable housing and child care, availability of illegal drugs, inadequacies

of health and education systems are implicated. Schwartz and Fishman are correct: Congress, having tackled welfare reform, should now have the political will to reform child welfare and relate it to these broader issues.

Sherrill Clark

University of California, Berkeley

Howard Karger and Joanne Levine, *The Internet and Technology for the Human Services*, New York: Longman, 1999. \$27.19 paperback.

Many have felt that human services and technology are strange bedfellows. Yet our professional future depends on our comfort in adopting a full range of technological tools for improving services and interventions. Few human service book authors have invested the personal and/or publishing resources on this fluid and rapidly transforming phenomenon. Karger and Levine take on this risky endeavor and make a notable contribution to helping both the neophytes and the technologically savvy move toward the new millennium.

Experts note that the Internet is one of the fastest growing technologies of all time. The metastasis of web sites, services, and sales creates multiple challenges for human service providers. Tackling the nearly impossible, the authors successfully provide a comprehensive resource for navigating the white water of technological advances.

Appropriately, Karger and Levine lay the framework for their discussion in Part I by presenting an overview of the Internet that addresses the historical context of cyberspace. Within this venue, they also give a caveat to the ethical dilemmas human service administrators face as they grapple with technology policy and the corresponding legal implications as they have emerged in the Information Age.

In Part II of their presentation, the authors make the practical application of the Internet to the human services milieu. They discuss the use of the Internet for multi-cultural exchange, networking, on-line counseling, and advancing telemedicine. They also provide readers with a myriad of resource ideas for using the Internet to conducting research.