



These prisoners consisted of 26 male and 22 female and they were the parents of some 125 children in total. Although these parents come from diverse milieu, generally they experience poor, dissolute and criminogenic backgrounds.

The findings which arose from this study are interesting, but of limited value due to the small size of the sample, the method of selection and the generalizations made from it. Among the findings was the disparity between aspirations of individuals and their daily realities for those who moved from rural backgrounds to city life. The unstable and "chaotic" existence of prisoner's wives who often sought out male companions who had similar backgrounds to their "first mate". There was also a lack of interest by the authorities regarding the families of prisoners. Women prisoners were more concerned with the placement of their children and were penalized more in the sense that there was a higher likelihood of their children being placed, than with men.

Arising out of her studies, Alice Parizeau considers that the basis of inadequate parenting and of juvenile delinquency is sociocultural. No doubt there are economic factors involved, but it is the transmission of values or their lack which lies behind the unstable life experience of these parents and their children.

The author's solution to this problem is a socioeducative and family support approach to these families organized on a socio-administrative basis.

This topic is one of fundamental concern for child welfare. The author has clearly shown that the interests of parents and children do not necessarily coincide and where they do not coincide, the role of society is not clearly defined. However, her book is disappointing in that it is not a coherent study and it is difficult to pick up the author's directions. She does not pursue a very rigorous research design and the

nature and method of her study restricts her findings to the target group of prisoners and their families. But her generalizations go well beyond this target group.

There is too much argument by analogy and the case for value transmission and sociocultural causation is not proven. Issues such as the definition of sociocultural and variables indentified to measure its influence are not addressed. Likewise she provides no definition for the boundaries of intervention and while this reviewer shares her emphasis upon primary family support, her intervention proposals are neither grounded in research findings nor do they have a theory basis. This leaves her position somewhat in the air.

Nonetheless, she has presented a conundrum for social administrators; How should children's rights be defined and what makes up good parenting. In those terms, what should be the nature and scope of intervention and can it take on a preventative role prior to maltreatment occurring? The passion which with the author pursues this theme underlines the question: What is in the best interest of children and how can society promote this?

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Dept. Community Welfare Services,  
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## BOOKS RECEIVED for Review

These books will be reviewed in forthcoming issues.

Gray, M. and Wilcok, G. *Our Elders*. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1981.  
Scott, D. *"Don't Mourn for me—Organise. . ."* Sydney, George Allen and Unwin, 1981.