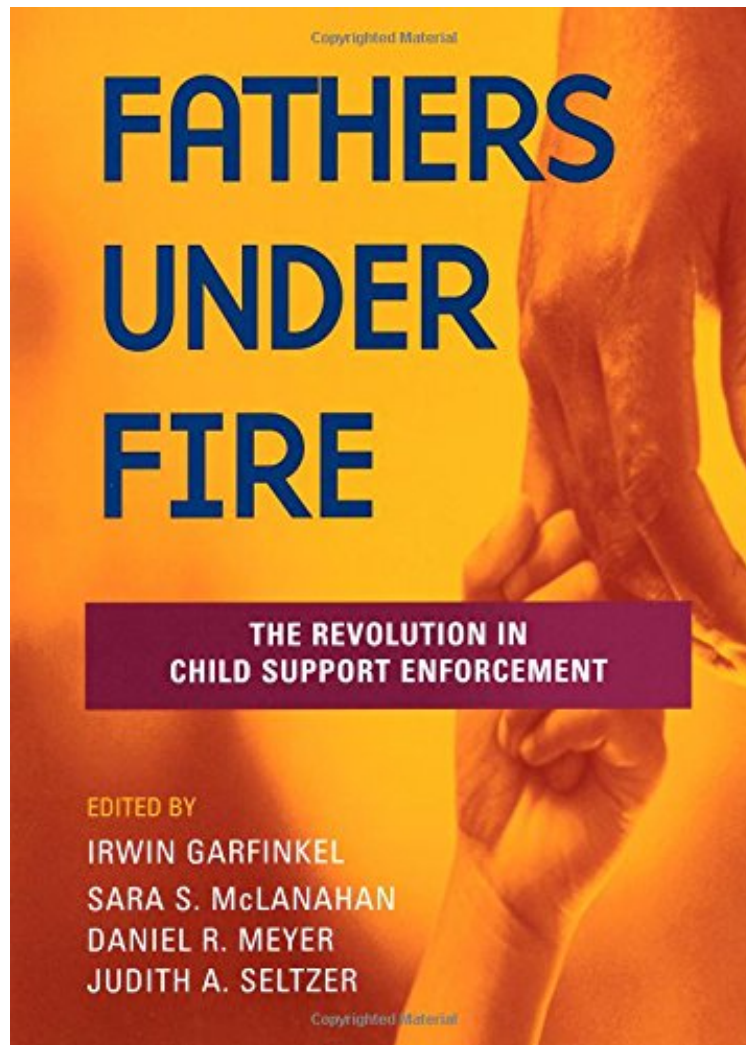


(Ebook pdf) Fathers Under Fire: The Revolution in Child Support Enforcement

Fathers Under Fire: The Revolution in Child Support Enforcement

Judith A. Seltzer

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Judith A. Seltzer : Fathers Under Fire: The Revolution in Child Support Enforcement before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Fathers Under Fire: The Revolution in Child Support Enforcement:

4 of 6 people found the following review helpful. A compilation of research papers on low income fathers.By johnst0j@kochind.comEach chapter of this book is a separate study looking at child support enforcement and its impact on nonresident fathers. The authors believe the biggest impact of enforcement efforts falls on low income and poverty level fathers, therefore virtually all of what they study focuses on that group alone. Consequently, it would have been more appropriate to include "Low Income" in the book's title. Unfortunately, the majority of nonresident fathers are not in this population, as enforcement activities impact them as well. Understanding the impact on the

bigger population would help policy makers improve overall enforcement activities. One area that I was especially disappointed about in this book is the fact that none of the authors address the foundation for child support enforcement, and that is the basis that child support orders are determined. Statistics and figures abound on what nonresident parents (usually fathers) "owe" in child support, yet it seems to be simply accepted as a given that the guidelines used in each state are fundamentally sound in their philosophy and economics. If, as many argue, the numbers are overstated through lack of consideration of the expenses of an involved nonresident parent's "parenting", the impact on them can be enormous, creating a roadblock to involvement in their child's life. This creates enormous conflict of its own, and certainly can't help but contribute to the problem of father absence. As the US Census has pointed out, when a nonresident parent is involved in their child's life, compliance with child support is approximately 90%. One could argue, which this book fails to do, that for enforcement to truly work, we should do all we can to foster dual parent involvement. This book provides an interesting look at poverty level fathers within this public policy arena. Its usefulness from a practical point of view however, is limited to only that population. Focusing change based on this material would be dangerous as the data is "incomplete".

3 of 5 people found the following review helpful. A rehash of old views that misses the point. By johnst0j@kochind.com This book is a composite of papers written by social scientists and legal scholars prepared for a conference in 1995. Although revised to consider criticisms and suggestions from the conference, the chapters fall short in providing significant information regarding the impact of current child support enforcement activity, as much of the most significant new government mandates occurred after these works were written. Even though the majority of enforcement activity in this country involves non-welfare related cases, this book focuses almost exclusively on fathers at or below poverty. The title of the book should have been "Low Income Fathers Under Fire". Although the chapters are interesting, none touch on the fundamental issue dealing with the economic foundation for most state guidelines. It seems to be accepted as a "given" that state review committees have "sound" bases for their respective guidelines, rather than picking them apart to ensure what is said to be "owed" by fathers is indeed appropriate. For instance, an involved father not only is responsible for a formal child support obligation, he must also spend additional money for the child's time spent with him, to which little to no credit is considered. Although father access to children is given some review in the book, very little qualitative attention is given to the subject. This could be explained by the quote in the book that defies common sense, "Children may also benefit from spending more time with nonresident parents, although the evidence for this is mixed." Throughout the book, it is pointed out repeatedly that data is slim about nonresident fathers, yet somehow there is enough to justify this compilation. Its usefulness from a practical standpoint is minimal.

4 of 5 people found the following review helpful. This book focuses a great deal of research on Fathers. By A Customer This book, unlike most other books which blindly focus on independent aspects of poverty and well being, succeeds in bringing together a pool of information on Fathers. I found the writing articulate and the information at worst a honed compilation of all research on the topic, and at best an excellent resource for all in the field of population studies.

"This important and highly informative collection of studies on nonresident fathers and child support should be of great value to scholars and policymakers alike." American Journal of Sociology

Over half of America's children will live apart from their fathers at some point as they grow up, many in the single-mother households that increasingly make up the nation's poor. Federal efforts to improve the collection of child support from fathers appear to have little effect on payments, and many critics have argued that forcing fathers to pay does more harm than good. Much of the uncertainty surrounding child support policies has stemmed from a lack of hard data on nonresident fathers. *Fathers Under Fire* presents the best available information on the financial and social circumstances of the men who are at the center of the debate. In this volume, social scientists and legal scholars explore the issues underlying the child support debate, chief among them on the potential repercussions of stronger enforcement.

Who are nonresident fathers? This volume calls upon both empirical and theoretical data to describe them across a broad economic and social spectrum. Absentee fathers who do not pay child support are much more likely to be school dropouts and low earners than fathers who pay, and nonresident fathers altogether earn less than resident fathers. Fathers who start new families are not significantly less likely to support previous children. But can we predict what would happen if the government were to impose more rigorous child support laws? The data in this volume offer a clearer understanding of the potential benefits and risks of such policies. In contrast to some fears, stronger enforcement is unlikely to push fathers toward. But it does seem to have more of an effect on whether some fathers remarry and become responsible for new families. In these cases, how are subsequent children affected by a father's pre-existing obligations? Should such fathers be allowed to reduce their child support orders in order to provide for their current families? Should child support guidelines permit modifications in the event of a father's changed financial circumstances? Should government enforce a father's right to see his children as well as his obligation to pay support? What can be done to help under- or unemployed fathers meet their payments? This volume provides the information and insight to answer these questions.

The need to help children and reduce the public costs of welfare programs is clear, but the process of achieving these goals is more complex. *Fathers Under Fire* offers an indispensable resource to those searching for effective and equitable solutions to the problems of child support.

About the Author IRWIN GARFINKEL is M. I. Ginsberg Professor of Continuing Urban Problems in the School of Social Work at Columbia University.