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Review of *Social Development Theory & Practice*. James Midgley. Reviewed by Lynne M. Healy.

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Book Reviews

James Midgley, *Social Development Theory & Practice*. Sage Publications, (2013), 296 pages, \$40.00 (paper), \$120.00 (hardcover.)

For more than 50 years, academics and practitioners have explored social development, and its theories and accomplishments have been the subject of extensive debate. This is a pivotal time for social development. The year 2015 marks the 20th anniversary of the 1995 World Summit for Social Development and its Copenhagen Declaration; it is the target date set for achievement of the Millennium Development Goals; and it will see the launch of the United Nations new Post-2015 Agenda for development and the environment. Thus, we can expect a reinvigorated interest in the debates surrounding development, including social development. The publication of *Social Development: Theory & Practice* by James Midgley is timely indeed.

In this new volume, James Midgley draws on his own extensive scholarship on development as well as the work of leading scholars from diverse disciplines to produce a summative work on social development. Reflecting on successes and disappointments of development efforts, he raises concerns about “distorted development” that has, in many cases, failed to improve the lives of those living in poverty.

The book synthesizes a great deal of information and diverse perspectives on social development. In selecting the topics of emphasis, Midgley lays out his definition of social development in depth. The book is logically organized into four sections. In the first section, he discusses definitions of social development, the history of social development, and its place within the overall framework of development. He begins with a broad definition of social development as “a process of planned social change designed to promote the well-being of the population as a whole within the context of a dynamic multifaceted development process” (p. 13). He then identifies

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a set of characteristics of social development including “productivist,” meaning that social development interventions contribute to economic development. This is not necessarily a part of all definitions of social development, but it explains the book’s heavy emphasis on interventions that have an economic component. This background is followed in Section II by two chapters summarizing theories and theoretical debates.

The main section of the book devotes a chapter to each of 7 intervention strategies for social development. These are: Investments in development of human capital; Development of social capital; Decent work and employment; Microfinance and microenterprise; Asset building as a social development strategy; Social protection; and Social planning. In each chapter, Midgley addresses the history of the intervention strategy, then presents features of the intervention, and assesses strengths and limitations of its contributions to social development. Community development is covered in the chapter on social capital, addressing efforts to build community, community action and economic development at the community level. Midgley pulls his arguments together in the final chapter in which he lays out his recommended approach to social development—institutional structuralism. Noting that this is best achieved within a “proactive, enabling state”(p. 214), he identifies the barriers and challenges ahead. A glossary of development terms and an extensive reference list complete the volume.

Social Development: Theory & Practice has many strengths. The book is thoroughly researched and brings together a vast literature in a coherent volume. It is global in scope, as the author draws on his experiences in diverse parts of the world. In most instances, readers will appreciate the scope of the work in providing careful historical perspective, a perspective often lacking in American scholarship. In the chapter on social protection, however, somewhat less emphasis might have been placed on the English Poor Laws and earlier interventions to provide more detail on the recent work by the International Labour Organization (ILO) and key social welfare advocacy groups to promote the Global Social Protection Floor Initiative. Inclusion of more data from the ILO on cost estimates for protection floors in poorer countries would have enriched the discussion.

Although the book is quite comprehensive, some of the more important recent developments could have been given more attention. Ironically, perhaps, the volume may over-emphasize economic productivity and put too little focus on the social and community aspects of development. Social integration, identified by the 1995 World Summit as one of the 3 pillars of social development, is largely ignored and does not even appear as a term in the index. There is also relatively little attention to environment and sustainability, a theme that will feature centrally in the United Nations Post-2015 agenda.

Overall, however, this is an important book that adds significantly to social development theory and practice. It provides excellent background for rethinking social development, the priority theme for the United Nations Commission for Social Development 2015-2016. James Midgley has once again enriched the social development knowledge base and produced a book that is a "must read" for scholars, students and practitioners in the field of development.

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James Midgley & David Piachaud (Eds.), *Social Protection, Economic Growth and Social Change: Goals, Issues and Trajectories in China, India, Brazil and South Africa*. Edward Elgar Publishing Ltd., (2013), 296 pages, \$120.60 (hardback).

Two decades ago a series of epochal events began to change the socio-political and economic landscape of the world. The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 coincided with the Tiananmen Square demonstrations in China, the return to democracy in Chile and the demise of the Soviet Union. Furthermore, economic liberalization in India in 1991 and the end of apartheid in April 1994 in South Africa marked the rise of civil society and democratic movements, as well as the emergence of a borderless one-globe market. In contemporary times, as vast power is concentrated in the hands of a few multinational corporations, the question remains about how individuals, families and communities can educate and organize themselves to protect their health needs, livelihoods, homes, neighborhoods and environment. Social protection policy has historically