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The Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare

Volume 23
Issue 3 September

Article 17

September 1996

Review of *Social Development: The Development Perspective in Social Welfare*. James Midgley. Reviewed by Martin B. Tracy, Southern Illinois University at Carbondale

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Recommended Citation

Tracy, Martin B. (1996) "Review of *Social Development: The Development Perspective in Social Welfare*. James Midgley. Reviewed by Martin B. Tracy, Southern Illinois University at Carbondale," *The Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare*: Vol. 23: Iss. 3, Article 17.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.15453/0191-5096.2365>

Available at: <https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/jssw/vol23/iss3/17>

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James Midgley, *Social Development: The Developmental Perspective in Social Welfare*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1995. \$65.00 hardcover, \$21.95 papercover.

A growing interest in community-based, cost-effective and integrated social service systems has accompanied the recent rhetoric to reduce the role of federal and state government programs and to decentralize social and economic development. While community-based social development programs have long been targets of social planners in developing economies, with some notable exceptions, the social work profession in the United States has not played a significant role in either their conceptualization or implementation. There are few academic social work programs in the United States that are designed to prepare students for activity in their communities aimed at promoting people's welfare by mobilizing social services within the context of economic development. The inertia of social work education in this arena gives support to critics who see the profession as protectors of social and economic stasis instead of as proactivists for developmental social programs. Much of the profession's reluctance to become more involved in social development may well reflect the fact that there is little consensus of social development as a policy or practice method that can be translated into effective strategies for addressing the needs of socially and economically disadvantaged populations. Indeed, the concept of social development is the subject of much disagreement and debate.

This new work by James Midgley is a major contribution to furthering the understanding of the theory and application of social development. The book provides a long-needed comprehensive overview of social development within a political, social and economic context. Following an introduction which sets the primary thesis, there are chapters on: the definitions of social development; the historical context of how these definitions have been translated into policy; the dominant theoretical frameworks that have shaped policies; the various strategies that have been implemented; and his personal view on how to achieve social development.

While objectively explaining the variety of existing and

historical definitions of social development, Midgley's own perspectives on the appropriate focus of social development policies are based on a definition of social development as "a process of planned social change designed to promote the well-being of the population as a whole in conjunction with a dynamic process of economic development." The concept of social development as a policy process is critical to his perspective. As a process, social development is inextricably tied to economic development, interdisciplinary analysis and strategies, institutional intervention, universal coverage, and comprehensive social welfare.

After a thorough examination in the first four chapters of how social development has evolved throughout ancient and modern history, Midgley concludes by offering a compelling argument for what he refers to as an "institutional perspective" as a necessary prescription for achieving social development goals. The conceptual framework for the perspective is linked to the economic theories of Veblen, Keynes and Galbraith; the pragmatism of Dewey and James; and the welfarism of Beveridge and Titmuss. It encompasses an approach that "seeks to mobilize diverse social institutions including the market, community and state to promote people's welfare" using an activist administrative style known as "managed pluralism."

Midgley argues that the major problem facing developing nations and regions today is "distorted development" when economic growth is not accompanied by concurrent progress in social welfare for the entire population. Economic and social progress must be harmonized in three principal areas: 1) the creation of institutionalized formal co-joint social and economic policies, 2) economic investments that create employment or self-employment opportunities, and 3) policies and programs that generate and sustain human capital, including investments in education, health, housing, maternal and child welfare services.

Midgley's entreaty for promoting the wider potential of social development puts it in synch with the emerging focus on interdisciplinary and community-based service delivery systems, especially in the context of rural social and economic systems in economically developing nations and geographic areas, including specific regions of the United States. This text is a very welcome addition to the literature that should become a standard for

social development content in social work policy and community practice curricula.

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Bob Franklin (Ed.) *The Handbook of Children's Rights: Comparative Policy and Practice*. New York: Routledge, 1995. \$59.95 hardcover; \$17.95 papercover.

This book has four objectives: to explore the various contemporary debates concerning children's rights; to evaluate impact of British legislation on children's rights; to examine recent British policy initiatives intended to secure these rights; and to offer a comparative perspective on children rights in select countries. It accomplishes these tasks extremely well, providing the reader with an excellent comprehensive and insightful appraisal of recent developments in children's rights, now even more timely with an almost explosive acknowledgement worldwide of human rights documents, like the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child. Given the book's comprehensivity, a wide audience could benefit, including, but not limited to educators, social workers, social policy analysts, politicians, philosophers, psychologists, lawyers, juvenile justice and children's advocates in general.

After a moving preface by T. Hammarberg, a member of the U.N. Committee on the Rights of the Child and former Secretary General of Amnesty International, calling for implementation of the *vision* of the Rights of the Child, B. Franklin in Part I gives an overview of children's rights. Like the rest of this work, the scholarship in this overview is strong, giving a reasoned analysis of basic issues surrounding admittedly, a controversial area, which may include, for instance, the child's right to vote.

Part II discusses the changing legal framework of children's rights. T. Jeffs, decrying among other things, the increasing commercialization of education, makes compelling arguments for student participation in policy formulation for securing a child's basic human right to education. C. Lyon and N. Parton then consider basic provisions and the impact of the Children Act 1989, noting that ultimately children have now become reconstituted