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## *Social Policy for Development.* Anthony Hall and James Midgley.

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## Book Notes

Anthony Hall and James Midgley, *Social Policy for Development*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2004. \$110.00 hardcover, \$42.95 papercover.

Theoretical conceptualization of social policy in the development context have evolved significantly in recent years. Although the term "development" carries different connotations in different countries and regions of the world, it has been most frequently used to connote a process of economic growth. However, economic development in many parts of the world has not been accompanied by a concomitant level of social progress. Economic growth that fails to raise standards of living for all can hardly be described as development. As Anthony Hall and James Midgley argue in this book, it is at this juncture that social policy interfaces with development.

This book is an update of *The Social Dimensions of Development* (Wiley, 1982), written by Margaret Hardiman and James Midgley. In this new version of the book, Hall and Midgley re-examine the role and scope of social policy in development and refurbish the core contents of the old volume. The new edition reflects the rapidly evolving theoretical and practical debates that are taking place in social policy today. It also extends the content presented in the earlier book.

The book consists of nine chapters that cover various theories and topics of social policy concerning development in the South. The first chapter redefines the role of social policy and broadens the scope of social policy from welfare to livelihoods. The authors apply normative theories in a practical way, and adopt a holistic approach. Chapter two examines the concept of poverty and inequality and examines the policy implications of addressing these issues. The authors contend that the social development approach provides the most useful framework for dealing with the challenge of poverty and inequality today. Chapter three considers changing approaches to rural development in the evolution from modernization towards a sustainable livelihoods policy approach, while Chapter four analyses urban development and social policy. Chapter five reviews the way the expansion

of formal education now serve a diverse development agenda, while Chapter six describes changing health policies and the gradual demise of primary health care in the context of economic liberalization. Chapter seven and eight respectively examine the role of social work and social security policies in the South. Finally, chapter nine explores the contributions of overseas development assistance to advancing the global social policy agenda.

The strength of this book lies not only in its effective theoretical framework and knowledgeable account of social development issues in the South, but also in its feasible and practical social policy proposals that permeate all the chapters. What seems to be missing, however, is the interaction between developmental social policy and other important developmental dimensions, such as environment and politics. Needless to say, social policy in the development context must interface with the environmentalist's critical arguments and concerns. With regard to politics, the success of social policy will also depend on political stability, especially in view of the vicissitude of power struggles in the South.

Nevertheless, by articulating original and feasible solutions for sustainable development in the South, this book makes a significant contribution to social policy thinking. It will be of particular benefit to students of social policy and development studies but also to those working in related interdisciplinary fields. Practitioners in government and in the international and non-governmental organizations will also find it useful.

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Kristina Smock, *Democracy in Action: Community Organizing and Urban Change*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2004. \$62.50 hardcover, \$26.50 papercover.

Interest in community practice has intensified in recent years and many more books on the topic have been published. Most of these are textbooks intended for course adoption at schools of social work where students today appear to be more eager to engage in community practice. Some social work educators will view this as a desirable development when compared to