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*Globalization and International Social Work:  
Postmodern Change and Challenge.* Malcolm Payne  
and Gurid Aga Askeland. Reviewed by James  
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The authors leave no doubt that government and society has "a judicious collective responsibility for social welfare." And, that government income maintenance programs through social security are not only compatible with economic development, but actually facilitate it. Indeed, they argue convincingly that it is desirable to "harmonize" economic and social policies using social security as a primary instrument of policy.

A minor criticism is that not enough credit is given to current initiatives by the International Labour Organization (ILO), the International Social Security Association (ISSA), and, to a certain extent, even the World Bank, regarding comprehensive approaches to reducing poverty and inequality through social safety nets that include direct monetary transfers as well as public work programs, food distribution programs, and education and health subsidies for the poor. There are specific references to ILO and ISSA involvement, but more might have been made of new initiatives relative to welfare development by these agencies to reduce poverty and improve social security's capacity to reduce poverty, build social inclusion, and extend protection to informal work sectors. Nevertheless, this book is a particularly valuable text for graduate, as well as undergraduate, students engaged in the study of economics and development in an international context in many academic disciplines.

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Malcolm Payne and Gurid Aga Askeland, *Globalization and International Social Work: Postmodern Change and Challenge*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing, 2008. \$99.95 hardcover.

Although social workers have engaged in international activities for many decades, the frequency and intensity of these activities have increased exponentially in recent times as globalization has emerged as a defining phenomenon of the late 20th and early 21st centuries. It is appropriate therefore that contemporary debates about international social work should be framed within the wider context of globalization discourse and the ways social scientists conceptualized and analyzed the

experience of globalization.

Payne and Askeland are among a small group of scholars who recognize the significance of globalization for an understanding of international social work. However, they also link the study of international social work to the cognate concept of postmodernism. Globalization, they contend, is closely associated with postmodern attitudes, beliefs and lifestyles. It gives expression to the demise of grand ideologies and systems of thinking and to economic, political, cultural and social activities that affect the growing contingency, uncertainty and indeterminacy of modern life. Using these conceptual frameworks, the authors offer a lengthy exposition of international social work which seeks to answer a number of core questions. These include whether there is such a thing as international social work; whether Western social work's influence has shaped international social work; and what can be done to create an international social work that is open to local control requirements.

The book has ten chapters dealing somewhat discursively with a number of issues relating to globalization, postmodernism and international social work. It begins with an introductory chapter on the definition of globalization and postmodernism as well as postcolonialism which the authors also recognize as having relevance to a proper appreciation of contemporary realities. One chapter deals with the importance of political reflection in social work practice and another addresses issues of racism, social exclusion and cultural translation. Another chapter discusses the role of knowledge in social work and another debates social work's identity in postmodern agencies and universities. An interesting chapter examines how social workers can negotiate the chaotic world of globalization through living and experiencing different cultures

The authors are to be commended for their use of theoretical ideas, but it is not entirely clear how these abstract notions inform international social work practice. Also, the author's assumptions about their diffusion of postmodernism and their definition of globalization will be contested by those who take different views. Despite their commitment to promoting a cross-cultural perspective, the book presents an essentialist Western perspective on the globalized world. Islamic scholars

would hardly agree that their grand narrative is now irrelevant and Marxists would argue that the current global recession demands a grand narrative that can challenge the hegemony of a failed capitalist system. Nevertheless, this is a valuable although very expensive addition to the literature which will be a valuable resource for anyone working in the field of international social work today.

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Sucheng Chan and Madeline Y. Hsu (Eds.), *Chinese Americans and the Politics of Race and Culture*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 2008. \$27.95 papercover.

In recent years, the concept of transnationalism has received significant attention from social science scholars in immigration studies. By definition, the transnationalism discourse primarily focuses on the dual nature of immigration life, traveling between home and host countries. However, different generations of immigrants at various historical periods face problems that are unique to a particular time and place. Surprisingly, modern social science studies of immigration that have adopted a transnationalism framework tend to focus on the present situation, overlooking the historical context in which immigrant groups lived. This limits our understanding of why and how different immigrant groups are treated differently in the U.S., and, perhaps even more importantly, why the same groups have received differential treatment at different times.

The authors of this book, most of whom are historians, provide a detailed and erudite account of what the study of history can offer to fill this knowledge gap. Using the transnationalism framework, they provide compelling evidence that, throughout history, immigration policy often served the international interests of the government rather than the interests of immigrant groups residing in the country. How immigrant groups were treated, therefore, is a dynamic interplay dependent on U.S. relations with the home countries of immigrant groups, and the negotiation of immigrant groups themselves, creating their own place and space in the U.S. Unlike assimila-