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Social Development, Asset Building, and Social Investment: The Historical and International Context

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This article provides an historical background to the special issue by tracing the evolution of social development, asset building and social investment in different parts of the world. These approaches transcend remedial and service-oriented interventions and seek to promote progressive social change. They also stress the importance of investing in people and communities, and focusing on their strengths rather than deficits. The historical evolution of these three approaches in different countries and world regions is described, and their key features are highlighted. The article compares these approaches and considers some of their implications for social welfare, pointing out that they raise a number of issues that should be debated. Some of these issues and the challenges they pose to social welfare scholars are discussed.

Keywords: social development, asset building, social investment, international social welfare

Since the emergence of social work and social policy as applied interdisciplinary fields, different approaches for meeting their declared goals of promoting social well-being have been formulated. Prominent among these are what may be called the service provision or "welfarist" approach, which can be contrasted with a change-oriented or "developmentalist" approach. In social work, the former is often associated with family casework and mental health services, while the latter is often linked to community organization and activist interventions. In social policy, the social service model, which dominated the subject in the latter half of the twentieth century, can be compared to the radical change proposals formulated by critical social policy and Marxist writers. Various iterations of these ideas have emerged over the years and new versions of these approaches have been formulated. Advanced clinical and management techniques have augmented the social service model, while novel approaches such as social development, asset building and social investment now feature prominently among change-oriented proposals.

This article provides an historical background to the special issue by tracing the evolution of social development, asset building and social investment in different countries and regions of the world. Although sharing common features, they emphasize different ways of enhancing social welfare. All transcend remedial and service-oriented interventions by promoting progressive social change. They also stress the importance of investing in people and communities and focusing on their strengths rather than their deficits. The article begins with an overview of the social development approach, tracing its roots in the Global South and implementation in the form of community development, social planning, gender, and livelihoods initiatives. It shows how social development ideas were adopted by the international organizations, resulting in the United Nations Millennium Development Goals and, more recently, the Sustainable Development Goals. Next, it examines the asset building approach which was articulated primarily by scholars in the United States; it found expression in policy proposals for mobilizing financial assets among low-income families and community assets in poor communities. Social investment is then discussed with reference to its popularization in European social policy circles where critical commentaries on the conventional, consumption-based "welfare state" approach has fostered proposals to enhance capabilities and promote people's participation in the productive economy. Finally, the article compares these three approaches and considers their implications for social welfare. Although they have invigorated social work and social policy, they raise issues which should be analyzed and debated. The article concludes by discussing these issues and their challenges to social welfare scholars.

Social Development in the Global South

Social development has been defined and conceptualized in many different ways. Reviewing these different definitions, Midgley and Pawar (2017) observe that some scholars emphasize community-level interventions while others stress the role of national planning and the integration of economic and social activities. Yet others contend that gender or environmental issues should be prioritized, while others believe that social development should be committed to activism and empowerment. To complicate matters further, these diverse approaches also reflect different normative preferences which affect social development practice in different ways. Midgley and Pawar (2017) point out that the lack of a standard definition is a not the result of intellectual sloppiness but of the field's historical evolution and the way practitioners and scholars have sought to respond to changing social, political and economic events at various times. An understanding of this history helps to explain the different directions social development has taken over the years.

Reviewing the historical record, Midgley (1995) concludes that social development is rooted in the struggle for independence from European imperial rule in the years following the Second World War when nationalist leaders in the Global South took the view that sovereignty required both political and economic freedom. Popular campaigns for liberation were accompanied by technocratic debates about how economies based on colonial exploitation could best become autonomous and sustainable. Many of the independence movement embraced the idea that national planning could be used to direct economic growth by mobilizing capital for industrialization and managing resource allocations to different productive economic sectors. As Lewis (1955), a leading development economist at the time, explained, this will generate wage employment, draw labor out of the subsistence agricultural sector and foster widespread prosperity. It was accepted that consumption should be deferred and that all available resources, including international aid and commercial borrowing should be directed towards industrial investment. However, faced with popular pressure to expand education and health care, many governments began to allocate resources to the social services but sought to configure these allocations in ways that served economic goals. The emerging human capital literature provided a rationale for health and educational expenditures but, as Livingstone (1969) noted, there was little evidence that the social services inherited from the colonial period contributed to development. It was in this context that efforts were made to identify new approaches to social welfare that contributed positively to economic development.

Community development emerged to fulfil this goal. Drawing on earlier colonial initiatives, as well as the community-based projects established by Gandhi and Tagore in India, many governments, supported by the international organizations, launched national-level community development programs. These uniquely combined social and economic objectives by establishing local human capital and income generating projects that simultaneously met social needs and fostered local production (Pawar, 2014). In addition, Brokensha and Hodge (1969) point out that local participation and self-determination were identified as key principles of community development practice. Although it was believed that community development would not only raise living standards but promote democratic ideals, many governments created national-level, bureaucratically-administered community development programs that fostered the agendas of ruling political parties rather than the interests of local people. In the 1980s, with the retrenchment of government services in the developing world as a result of indebtedness and the imposition of structural adjustment programs, the budgets of many state-managed community development programs were severely cut, and some were even dismantled. Lewis and Kanji (2009) observe that nongovernmental organizations, as well as grassroots community groups often funded by international donors, became increasingly involved in the field. Although community development's sponsorship and administrative character changed, it was still recognized as the primary social development strategy.

In the 1960s, community development's formative contribution to social development was augmented by social planning, which sought to address the concern that promoting economic development through national planning was excessively focused on industrial investments, the expansion of trade and spending on infrastructural projects, neglecting the population's social needs. Recognizing that many governments were committed to expanding the social services, it became apparent that central planning agencies needed to expand their remit to more efficiently allocate resources to the social services and properly coordinate and implement social sectoral programs (Hall & Midgley, 2004). These developments were facilitated by a number of critical commentaries on the limitations of the industrialization model by scholars such as Myrdal (1970) and Seers (1969) and the adoption of resolutions by the United Nations to promote social planning among its member states (United Nations, 1971). Together with a group of other progressive economists, Myrdal played a leading role advising the United Nations on how economic planning could be refocused to promote social objectives such as raising living standards and improving health, education and housing conditions. At this time, the World Bank, under the leadership of Robert McNamara, prioritized poverty reduction and, drawing on Schultz's (1959, 1962) pioneering work, recognized the importance of social investments in social development (World Bank, 1975). Under the auspices of the United Nations, expert missions were appointed to advise governments on how to incorporate social development ideas into national plans and in time, national social planning augmented community development as another social development strategy.

The rising international influence of neoliberalism and the imposition of structural adjustment in the 1980s laid the groundwork for the emergence of yet another approach to social development that focused on households rather than communities or the nation state. The livelihoods approach, as it is known, emerged from the pioneering work of Chambers and his colleagues into rural development in the Global South (Chambers, 1983; Chambers & Conway, 1992). Critical of the "top down" approach that characterized much rural community development, they prioritized households as the primary unit for social development effort. Households are also viewed as rational decision makers that act in ways that promote their own well-being. Accordingly, Polak (2008) proposed that social development programs should support their efforts by providing access to expertise and credit and the creation of microenterprises and other income generating projects. In this way, social development enhances capabilities and enables informed choices to be made about how best to improve livelihoods. Championed by the United Nation's Development Programme (UNDP)

(1990) and the writings of Sen (1999), the livelihoods approach comported with individualist, rational choice and market liberal ideas that had become ascendant in the 1980s. It also strengthened the role of nonstate actors in social development. In addition to the proliferation of nongovernmental organizations, commercial providers became more active in the field, particularly as microenterprise programs were transformed into for-profit enterprises (Bateman, 2010).

At this time, gender, environmental and social justice concerns were increasingly incorporated into social development theory and practice. Gender debates have greatly enriched the field, particularly as the literature on the subject has expanded exponentially, and as major international meetings and conventions sponsored by the United Nations and international women's groups have pressured governments and international organizations to ensure the full participation of women in development. In addition, the adoption of the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) transcended the goal of promoting women's participation in development to address issues of discrimination and oppression. Consequently, many women's groups and non-governmental and grassroots organizations have embraced activism as an essential way of achieving gender equality. Notions of empowerment and social justice have also informed the anti-globalization and environmental justice movements. Although these movements have campaigned at the national level and affiliated with organizational networks at the global level, activism has been most effectively promoted by community workers at the local level who have adopted Freirean *conscientization* (Freire, 1970) techniques and empowerment ideas (Luttrell & Quiroz, 2009) to challenge established hierarchical structures and foment progressive social change.

On the other hand, the international organizations focused largely on national governments, urging the adoption of policies to alleviate poverty and promote health, education, shelter and nutrition. With the convening of the World Summit of Social Development in 1995 and the subsequent adoption of the Millennium Development Goals (United Nations, 2000), efforts were made to enhance the capacity of governments to meet basic needs targets. These were supported by nongovernmental organizations and international donors and involved a huge and unprecedented global commitment to address the most pressing social problems facing humankind at the turn of the twenty-first century. This development, and the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals in 2015, confronted the neoliberal orthodoxy that had dominated international affairs since the 1980s and marked a renewed commitment to mobilizing the power of the state to promote social well-being.

A similar and equally important development was the introduction of social protection cash transfers by a number of governments which challenged the market liberal belief that these programs will dampen incentives, foster dependency and harm the economy (Midgley, 2012). Remarkably, the World Bank that previously urged the privatization of statutory income protection programs now championed their expansion (Fiszbein & Schady, 2009). Although dented by recession, and challenged by problems of effective governance and a lack of political will, the resurrection of the state as a primary agent of social development is a significant development with positive implications for the future.

Asset Building in the United States

Unlike social development, which has been poorly defined, there is far more agreement about the meaning of the term "assets," which are generally viewed as resources with market value that comprise the property or wealth of their owners. While income is defined as the flow of resources to meet immediate consumption needs, assets are a store or stock of resources that can be used in the future either for consumption or investment. Assets are accumulated by individuals, households, organizations, communities and even nations through regular economic activities, but they may also accrue because of government policies. The term "asset building" is often used to refer to policies of this kind.

In the United States, the state and federal governments have engaged in asset building ever since the country's founding. Although European imperial expansion in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries was originally driven by trade, settlement and land acquisition soon became an overriding objective of the colonial enterprise. In feudal Europe, land ownership was highly concentrated among the aristocratic elite and by granting rights of settlement, the European imperial governments provided undreamed of opportunities for colonists to acquire property, even though this was achieved at the expense of indigenous people who were displaced, often by brutal force. Unlike many parts of Latin America, where large estates emerged, colonial settlement in the United States was characterized by smallholding agriculture and the emergence of a new class of property owners whose beliefs shaped the country's political culture after its independence from Britain. Since then, asset accumulation through the acquisition of agricultural land, and subsequently through urban homeownership, savings and the purchase of stocks and other forms of property has been a recurrent theme in the nation's history.

Although seldom acknowledged, the state has actively facilitated asset accumulation over the years. Colonial settlement depended on land grants from the British Crown, and after independence, the United States federal government embarked on a massive program of transferring land to private ownership. Shanks' (2005) detailed account of this formative asset initiative explains that land transfers began at the time of independence, but accelerated rapidly with the enactment of the 1862 Homestead Act during President Lincoln's administration. In terms of this legislation, household heads over the age of 21 years could apply for a grant of 160 acres of federal land located mostly in the country's Western territories, to which they received title after five years of productive use. In this way, approximately 1.5 million families acquired land equal to the combined area of California and Texas. She observes that the Homestead Act was not merely a land giveaway but a deliberate policy to promote asset ownership.

The homestead initiative was accompanied by the allocation of federal land to the states to establish universities specializing in agriculture and engineering, both of which supported the expansion of land ownership. Much later, in the 1930s, the Roosevelt Administration made a major contribution to asset accumulation by introducing mortgage interest tax deductions, and this was accompanied by the creation of federal agencies which provided housing loan guarantees and related services. This process continued after the Second World War with the enactment of the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, or the "GI Bill," as it became known, which Mettler (2005) points out provided mortgages and other forms of assistance to soldiers wishing to acquire homes after demobilization. These initiatives massively stimulated asset accumulation in the form of home ownership in the Post-War years.

Government policies have also supported financial asset accumulation. In his popular book *Agrarian Justice* published in 1797, Tom Paine, the radical author and defender of the American Revolution, proposed that the federal government grant a sum of £15 to all adults when they reached the age of 21 years to help them acquire land, set up their own household and, as he put it "begin the world." Although this proposal was not implemented, the idea that the government should support financial asset accumulation has re-emerged from time to time. In 1974, the federal government created Individual Retirement Accounts (IRAs), which are tax advantaged savings plans for workers without employee retirement plans. In 1981, this rule was relaxed to permit anyone to open an IRA account. Subsequently, Haveman (1988) advocated the creation of "human capital accounts" to assist young people wishing to save for college, and Ackerman and Alstot (1999) resurrected Paine's ideas by proposing that those completing high school be given a government grant of $80,000 to spend as they wish.

Although these recommendations were not implemented, Sherradden's (1991) proposal for the creation of Individual Development Accounts (IDAs), which are matched savings accounts targeted at low-income families, attracted widespread attention and resulted in the creation of a significant number of IDA programs around the country (Schreiner & Sherraden, 2006). IDA accounts are usually managed by nonprofit organizations which are well placed to motivate poor families to open savings accounts in which their deposits are matched, usually on a one-to-one ratio, but sometimes larger matches are provided. Withdrawals are only permitted for approved social purposes such as education, homeownership and small business start-ups. Funding is usually provided by foundations and state or local governments, often drawing on federal funds through, for example, the so-called "welfare reform" legislation enacted during President Clinton's administration in 1996. Warren and Edwards (2005) note that 22 states had accessed federal funds to establish IDA projects through this statute. In addition, legislation enacted in 1998 introduced competitive federal grants to nonprofits, credit unions and local governments to launch IDA projects, although on a time-limited basis.

Sherraden's innovative ideas not only led to the creation of savings accounts that benefit low-income families, but offered a comprehensive rationale for asset accumulation as an alternative to consumption-based welfare. His work had a profound impact on social policy thinking and made a major contribution to the articulation of the social investment approach. In addition to campaigning for the expansion of IDAs, he and his colleagues also supported other forms of financial asset accumulation, such as college savings accounts and child and youth savings accounts. They helped establish a child savings demonstration initiative launched by the state of Oklahoma, known as the SEED OK program, which matched deposits by families saving for a college education (Sherraden & Clancy, 2007). Although the demonstration project and its matches has ended, families can still open tax advantaged savings accounts with the state government. In addition, Sherraden's work also inspired several international financial asset accumulation initiatives, notably in Britain where he advised the Labour government on creating a child saving account in 2005 and a matched savings account for low-income families in 2009. Sadly, both initiatives were abolished by the Conservative coalition government in 2010, shortly after it was elected to office.

As in other countries, assets are also accumulated at the local level in the United States by community organizations and local government agencies. Most municipal authorities manage parks, libraries, sporting facilities and other amenities which are utilized by their communities. However, these amenities are not always available in low-income areas. On the other hand, the settlement house movement in the late nineteenth century pioneered the creation of community centers in these communities where local people gained access to adult education, recreation, sports and other activities. The settlement houses also facilitated the expansion of community programs in the country's poor urban areas, and community organizing, or community development as it was also known, became a major endeavor involving the social work profession, nonprofit organizations and government agencies.

However, the staff of these programs often viewed deprived communities in very negative terms, stressing their "pathologies" rather than strengths. After Kretzman and McKnight (1993) challenged this interpretation, the field was radically altered to emphasize the importance of assets rather than deficits in community development. Articulating the asset building community development (or ABCD) approach, they urged that conventional needs assessments, which emphasize problems and shortfalls, be replaced by asset mapping, which encourages community practitioners to work with local community members to identify the local resources on which community development effort can build. In addition to local schools, churches, libraries, clinics, community centers and other facilities, they point out that poor communities have human and social assets in the form of local knowledge and networks that can be used constructively by community practitioners. Since then, their ideas have informed many community-based projects in poor communities in the United States. In addition, Green and Haines (2008) point out that local organizations, such as the Community Development Corporations established in many of the country's deprived areas since the 1960s, have utilized federal funds to sponsor the construction of affordable housing and other community facilities.

In addition to locally held assets, Americans also have a stake in regional and national assets such as parks and monuments, public universities, state and federal forest lands, the seashore, rivers and watersheds as well as the electromagnetic spectrum and the internet, all of which constitute what Ostrom (1990) called the "Commons." Facing relentless pressures to transfer these assets to commercial owners, she made a vigorous case for preserving the Commons in the public interest. However, it should be recognized that these assets actually belong to the government rather than its citizens, and some, like Bollier (2006), argue for policies that effectively transfer ownership to ordinary people. One example is the Alaska Permanent Fund established in 1976 which, following a referendum approving an amendment to the state's constitution, created a sovereign wealth fund which accumulates tax revenues from oil production and pays an annual dividend to each of the state's residents. Although sovereign wealth funds have been created in a number of countries, the

Alaska fund is distinctive in that all residents have a stake in the fund and directly share its revenues.

Social Investment and the European Welfare States

Investments may be defined as resources that generate future, value added resources. Investments are a key factor in economic development, providing the capital that drives productive activities and producing the surpluses on which economic growth depends. Drawing on these ideas, Midgley (2008) contends that government spending on social programs which generate future yields should not be viewed as fostering consumption but as investments. Accordingly, he defines social investments as resource allocations that produce returns, contribute to development and promote future social well-being (Midgley, 2017b, p. 27). As mentioned earlier, Schultz (1959, 1962) was among the first to argue that government spending on education, health and nutrition are human capital investments rather than allocations that sustain consumption. Since then, the notion of social investment has featured prominently in social development in the Global South, and is being embraced elsewhere, especially in Europe.

Social welfare spending has traditionally been associated with consumption. By providing comprehensive social services and income transfers, governments ensure that the basic needs of their citizens are met. This goal is prioritized by most European governments, which allocate a significant share of public revenues to social welfare. They also accept that social needs should be met as of right, and in addition, there is widespread support for the view that welfare programs foster social solidarity and institutionalize collectively held altruistic sentiments (Midgley, 2009). For these reasons, most European countries are referred to as "welfare states." Although Greve (2014) notes that the term is poorly defined, it conjures an image of benevolent governments that spend generously to meet social needs. Indeed, Obinger & Wagschal (2010) report that by the beginning of this century, many European governments were allocating more than 25 per cent of GDP annually to the social services. Despite levelling-off since the 1980s (at which time social spending reached unprecedented levels), high social spending continues to characterize most European countries today.

These spending levels have been criticized by politicians and social policy writers on the political right for many years. For example, Sinn (2007) claims that Germany's extensive welfare programs are damaging the country's economy and harming its future prosperity. Similar views have been expressed by other scholars and several European governments have been persuaded to reduce social spending or otherwise impose work conditionalities on welfare recipients. As Wahl (2011) observes, even the emblematic Nordic welfare states have not been immune from market liberal pressures to "reform" their social welfare systems. Other writers who are not associated with the political right concede that that the traditional consumption-based welfare state is unsuited to the economic, demographic and social changes that have taken place in Europe and other Western countries in recent times. These changes include deindustrialization, population aging, persistent structural unemployment and new attitudes and lifestyles that reflect the rise of individualism. All have limited the ability of European governments to meet the needs of their citizens through comprehensive social services and income transfers. Accordingly, many social policy writers argue that a more dynamic approach which transcends the conventional consumption-based welfare system should be adopted. Since social investment enhances peoples' capabilities and fosters their participation in the productive economy with positive social and economic effects, it offers an alternative of this kind.

An important contribution to the articulation of the social investment approach came from the British Labour Party's Commission on Social Justice which was appointed to review the Party's policies in the wake of its unexpected electoral defeat in 1992 (Commission on Social Justice, 1994). Questioning the assumptions on which the Party's social policies had been based, the Commission recognized that Labour's traditional proletarian commitments and class loyalties had failed to accommodate rising affluence as well as consumerism, individualism and growing skepticism about government welfare. The Commission concluded that a new approach, which emphasizes knowledge and skills acquisition, productive employment and economic participation, is required. It was in this context that the term "social investment state" was coined by Anthony Giddens (1998), the respected sociologist and adviser to Prime Minister Tony Blair. The social investment state, Giddens claimed, will shift social policy's preoccupation with providing services to "passive" welfare recipients to investing in their capabilities to function effectively in the productive economy. Huo (2009) observes that Social Democratic parties in other European countries were also formulating revisionist agendas at this time to place more emphasis on education and employment-friendly policies than welfare transfers.

Another important contribution was the European Union's Lisbon Treaty of 2000, which was primarily concerned with updating the Union's constitutional provisions, but member states were also urged to refocus their criminal justice, security and welfare policies to achieve greater standardization, improve coordination and to promote approaches better suited to changing needs and realities. van Kersbergen and Hemerijck (2012) note that the treaty's Social Agenda addressed the limitations of the traditional welfare state approach which, it was argued, needed reformulation if the social challenges facing the Union's member states were to be met. Mindful of high rates of unemployment and particularly youth unemployment, the Social Agenda urged that greater emphasis be placed on job creation, education and skills development, new forms of work organization and innovative policies that promote social inclusion. Interventions of this kind were soon associated with the notion of social investment.

These events inspired some European social policy scholars (Bonoli, 2013; Esping-Andersen, Gallie, Hemerijck, & Myles, 2002; Hemerijck, 2013; Morel, Palier, & Palme, 2012) to commend the positive features of social investment and to advocate for its adoption. Although social investment is defined in different ways and often emphasizes particular interventions such as employment services, skills training, or childcare, the new social investment approach has common features. First, it is exclusively statist focusing on statutory welfare, ignoring the contribution of nonprofits and faith-based organizations, markets and families and particularly the role of women in social welfare. Another feature is the idea that social investment is a new and distinctive paradigm that differs from the traditional welfare state paradigm. What Giddens (1998) calls the "social investment state" is qualitatively different from the "welfare state." Morel et al. (2012) agree and contrast the social investment paradigm with the Keynesian and neoliberal paradigms. A third feature is that social investments are initiated and implemented at the national rather than the local level. Indeed, as Midgley (2017b) points out, European social investment writers have paid little attention to community-level interventions, even though many communities have adopted programs that actively promote social investments.

Elaborating on the social investment paradigm, most scholars draw a sharp distinction between policies and programs that promote investments and those that perpetuate consumption. Morel et al. (2012) offer a helpful schematic representation of this difference showing that social investments promote labor market participation and prepare people for employment, while consumption-based welfare is concerned with income transfers, social services and decommodification. Esping-Andersen et al. (2002) concur, noting that social investment prioritizes child-centered human capital investments, affordable daycare, family leave and other employed-focused policies. Many social investment writers employ catchy epithets for contrast. Morel et al. (2012) distinguish between "preparing" and "repairing" social programs, claiming that the former facilitates peoples' participation in the productive economy, while the latter seeks to remedy the problems facing needy families. Other terms such as "productive" versus "protective" welfare and "promotive" rather than "supportive" welfare have also been used to illustrate the difference between social investment and conventional social welfare.

Social investment scholars like Hemerijck (2012, 2013) offer a stadial, historic interpretation of the emergence of the social investment paradigm, contending that the adoption of the European Union's Lisbon Treaty heralds the emergence of a new stage in the history of social policy. He argues that this shift, which he calls the social investment 'turn,' is a profound development involving a *gestalt* switch from traditional welfare transfers to empowering investments (2013, p. 39). Like Morel et al. (2012), he believes that the welfare state has evolved from the Keynesian era which emphasized service provision through the neoliberal stage which prioritized work and productivity to the new social investment stage. Jenson (2010) also claims that the emergence of social investment marks the end of the neoliberal period with its emphasis on individual responsibility, unfettered markets and minimal state involvement.

Although this interpretation views the advent of social investment as a recent development, Morel et al. (2012) believe that social investment ideas can be traced back to the 1930s when Myrdal first argued that social welfare programs contribute positively to the economy. However, Midgley (2015) observes that social investment has an earlier provenance, pointing out that an important precursor was the concern with what was called national efficiency in Britain in the early twentieth century. At this time, it was recognized that the country's poor standards of nutrition, health care and education had lowered "population quality," with negative consequences for Britain's position as a major imperial power. By expanding the social services, the population's "fitness" to compete successfully against rival imperial powers would be enhanced. Although he also notes that social investment ideas have long featured in social development in the Global South, most Western scholars contend that social investment is of recent origin. Many also believe that it is likely to become the dominant feature of European social policy. By shifting the emphasis from income transfers and social services to social investments, Esping-Andersen et al. (2002) contend that a "new welfare state" will emerge. However, given the realities of population aging and the need for social protection programs that cushion the effects of economic volatility, traditional welfare programs are likely to remain a dominant feature of social policy in Europe for many years to come.

Implications for Social Welfare

These three examples of the change-oriented developmentalist approach share common features. As mentioned in the introduction to this article, they all prioritize interventions that foster growth and progressive change and, in this way, transcend social welfare's problem-solving and maintenance functions. Progressive change is a clearly defined objective of social development and, as Midgley (2014) points out, many scholars and practitioners working in the field emphasize interventions that foster this goal. Indeed, he himself defines social development as a process of planned social change in which economic, social, gender, environmental and other dimensions of the development process are harmoniously integrated (2014, p. 13). The notion of change is also incorporated into the assets and social investment approaches, both of which seek to promote future well-being. Sherraden (1991) stresses the way financial asset building inculcates a future orientation among participants that enhances their capacity to meet their social needs.

All three approaches also recognize that purposeful interventions are needed to achieve change. Unlike Hayekian market liberals, they reject the idea that progressive change occurs spontaneously, and argue instead that purposeful interventions by governments and other agents are required. These agents include community groups, nonprofit organizations, professionals, paraprofessionals and even commercial providers. In the European social investment approach, the state is identified as the primary agent for achieving change, while in social development, multiple agents, and especially community level organizations, contribute to the change process. In asset building, nonprofits and professional personnel play a key role in promoting both financial and community asset accumulation.

All three approaches prioritize interventions that have an investment function by allocating resources that generate future returns. This emphasis is eponymously obvious in the work of European social investment scholars, but it also characterizes the social development and asset building approaches. In social development, human capital and social capital investments are given high priority, particularly at the community level. The notion of investment is central to the asset building approach, where asset accumulation facilitates the mobilization of resources for future well-being. Sherraden's (1991) pathbreaking book not only offered practical proposals for financial asset accumulation but was the first to articulate a comprehensive rationale for transcending the consumption-based welfare system through social investments. As he eloquently put it, "We should think about welfare policy not solely as support but also as investment. We should look not solely at deficiency but also at capacity" (p. 13).

The idea that peoples' strengths and capabilities should be enhanced is another common theme in the developmentalist literature. In addition to implementing a variety of programs and projects, collaborative partnerships that utilize capabilities in ways that promote participation and self-determination are emphasized. Accordingly, clients are not regarded as the passive recipients of treatment or services but as active participants in promoting social well-being. In social development, these notions have historically been prioritized in community-level interventions where local people are seen as partners capable of determining their own priorities and of identifying the best ways of reaching collective goals. Asset building also recognizes the importance of combining capabilities with interventions such as matched savings accounts. Sherraden (2005) draws on Sen's (1985) ideas to formalize the role of individual effort and self-determination in asset building. Similarly, in the European social investment approach, human capital and other investments provide the means by which peoples' abilities to participate fully in the productive economy are realized. However, European social investment writers place more emphasis on implementing national-level policies than people's participation, revealing a preference for state directed "top-down" interventions.

Despite these commonalities, the three approaches also have distinct features. The European social investment approach has been formulated in the context of welfare state discourse, while asset building and social development draw liberally on ideas from diverse disciplines, including economics, sociology, and social work. Social development emerged as a subfield of the interdisciplinary subject of development studies and it also draws on the insights of economics and sociology. Other interdisciplinary fields are exerting increasing influence on social development. One of these is gender studies, which informs much social development practice today. The field of environmental studies has also become increasingly important, shaping the notion of sustainable development which is incorporated into social development's literature as well as professional practice. Its influence is revealed in the naming of the new Sustainable Development Goals, which succeeded the Millennium Development Goals.

The three approaches also differ in that they prioritize investments targeted at different groups and at different levels. Both social development and asset building are focused on households and communities, but they also operate at the national level in the form of government planning and policy making and the creation of nationally held assets. On the other hand, social investment focuses on the national level. In addition, different approaches prioritize different interventions. The European social investment approach emphasizes policies that promote employment and skills acquisition, while asset building is concerned with savings accounts and the creation of community-level facilities. Social development utilizes a plethora of programs and projects including childcare centers, schools, community health clinics, microenterprises, cash transfers and food-for-work programs, among others, creating an eclectic set of interventions that are not always harmonized or incorporated into a coherent conceptual framework. This poses a challenge for practitioners who Midgley (2014) believes will benefit from working within a more coherent and inclusive conceptual framework.

The same observation applies to the three approaches discussed in this article which currently offer distinctive but overlapping agendas for achieving social change. Although it can be argued that they give voice to legitimate normative differences, problems of duplication and fragmentation limit practice efficacy. The problem is compounded by a lack of collaboration between academics and practitioners working in these different fields. European advocates of social investment are largely ignorant of the work of social development scholars who, in turn, have a limited understanding of the way social investment ideas have emerged in Western social policy. However, the problem also presents an opportunity for scholars to formulate an inclusive conceptual framework that can accommodate different ideas, values and practice modalities and facilitate the implementation of effectively interventions.

Another challenge concerns the need for a greater international commitment. This article has deliberately highlighted the way the three change-oriented developmentalist approaches have been articulated in different parts of the world. However, they are not limited to specific countries or regions. Asset building ideas from the United States have been adopted in many other nations, and as Moser and Dani (2008) reveal, have been actively promoted in the Global South by the World Bank. Similarly, social development practice innovations have not been confined to the developing nations but have also been implemented in Western countries. For, example, microenterprise projects based on the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh have been replicated in the United States. In addition, the United Nations has played a major role in diffusing social development ideas around the world, particularly through sharing information about implementing the Millennium Development Goals. Their workshops, conferences and publications have made a major contribution to spreading practice wisdom internationally. However, greater effort is needed to ensure that innovative ideas and practice experiences are disseminated globally so that practitioners working in government agencies, nonprofit organizations, community groups and others can benefit from informative reciprocal exchanges. In this way, what Midgley (2017a) calls a "one world" perspective in social welfare that fosters progressive social change and enhances the well-being of all the world's people may emerge.

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