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BOOK REVIEW

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Patel, L., Plagerson, S., & Chinyoka, I. (Eds). (2023). Handbook on social protection and social development in the Global South. Elgar Publishing. ISBN: 978 1 80037 841 4. Pages 586. <https://doi.org/10.4337/9781800378421>

This detailed yet useful volume fills a crucial gap in the scientific body of knowledge on social protection and social development, taking into consideration that many developing countries have recently been migrating from a residual approach to a development approach in addressing social problems and needs in society. The book situates social protection in a broader system of social welfare and development policies and programmes in the developing countries – the global South in particular. Each author in the book focused on a specific facet that is relevant to social protection and social development in the global South. This a very good and readable text that is well aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), for instance, SDG goal 1 on poverty reduction, which is integral to the achievement of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as it intersects with the other SDGs such as achieving zero hunger (SDG 2) and good health and well-being (SDG 3).

Leila Patel, Sophie Plagerson and Isaac Chinyoka open the book with a clear introduction that sets out the purpose of the book. This stimulates readers to explore each of the twenty-nine chapters that focus on social protection and social development from a global South perspective. The chapters are also well organised to ensure that readers remain focused and well aligned with the aims of the book.

The book is divided in seven parts. Part one is made up of three chapters that provide an outline of the theoretical approaches and discourses underpinning social protection policies and their linkage with social welfare policies. For instance, Chapter 1 delves into the contribution of the social development approach to social protection and its linkage to the social welfare systems in the development context. Chapter 2 outlines the contribution of social contract approach to social protection. Chapter 3 outlines how politics influence social protection within the development context.

Part two provides a global and regional overview of the nature, scope and goals of social protection and its linkage to the social welfare systems in each country. In Chapter 4 the global data provide a comparison of social protection models in the global North and South. Chapter 5 provides data on social protection models from the perspective of the Latin America countries, whereas Chapter 6 looks closely at African data on social protection models. Chapter 7 outlines the Southeast Asia data on social protection systems and notes the relatively residual aspects of public policy. Chapter 8 provides data on social protection models from the Middle East and North Africa. I found chapters to be informative on how social protection policies across countries influence the respective social welfare systems.

Part three of the book, consisting of three chapters, delves into several design features of social protection policies. Chapter 9 elaborates on how development agencies have increasingly invested in financial and technical resources to enhance social protection in the developing countries. Chapter 10 examines the intersection of the different approaches and their potential to address social development challenges in the developing countries. Chapter 11 looks at the financial modes adopted in developing countries in that the sources of funding matter most in influencing the nature and scope of social protection.

Part four of the book consists of three chapters that focus on the evaluation and impact of social protection policies and intervention systems to highlight the gaps in the realisation of social development outcomes. Chapter 12 makes the point that more contextual evidence-based tools are required to assess social protection intervention strategies and their integration into the broader development processes. Chapter 13 provides a review of the literature in the global South on the most common social protection interventions – cash transfers, school feeding and public works – and makes recommendation from lessons learnt in order to inform policy makers on the nature of social protection within a development context. In the same vein, Chapter 14 examines how child nutrition as a social protection programme emerged as a policy response to enhance child health and nutritional outcomes in the global South.

Part five of the book consists of six chapters that provide a description of social protection linkages and a wide range of social welfare programmes and policies, and also illustrate innovative strategies in the implementation of social protection programmes. Case studies from some developing countries are used in Chapter 15 to illustrate several useful approaches that expand services to vulnerable populations using cash transfer programmes as social protection strategies. Chapter 16 outlines the contribution of informal worker-led schemes to advance social protection programmes and policies, and the authors argue that such schemes play a pivotal role in the social protection mix. In Chapter 17 the authors postulate that financial capability and asset building play a pivotal role in social protection and also to achieving SDGs. They end the chapter by proposing innovative strategies for promoting financial capability among the financially vulnerable populations. Chapter 18, which is written from the Zimbabwean perspective, argues that should there be greater synergy between formal and informal social welfare programmes, overall outcomes could be improved. In Chapter 19 the authors argue that psychosocial support by social work professionals in the Chilean context ensured a consistently reliable approach in the implementation of social protection programmes. This happens when psychosocial professionals assist families in overcoming

poverty through the adoption of a range of strategies. In the same vein, Chapter 20 provides a critical discussion on the role of public employment programmes in social protection.

Four chapters in Part six of the book provide a critical discussion on the nexus between social protection and social welfare and development services for individuals who have been left behind in the different categories of social protection needs. In Chapter 21 the authors identify the different combinations and modes of delivery in the enhancement of social protection programmes. They conclude that strong partnerships and collaborations, adequate human resources and staff capacity development play a critical role in the successful implementation of social protection at scale. Chapter 22 makes reference to Brazil as a case study to address gender dimensions of social protection. The authors in this case study argue that cash transfer programmes played a huge role in the enhancement of the economic and psychosocial wellbeing of women. Chapter 23 provides a critical analysis of the current approaches to social security provision to people with disabilities in the global South. The authors strongly recommend that there should be disability-specific social security systems that offer financial assistance to people with disabilities across the life cycle. Chapter 24 delves into the social protection needs of refugees and asylum seekers. The authors in this chapter use South Africa as a case study and argue that refugees and asylum seekers face a number of positive and negative experiences in areas ranging from accessing documentation, social assistance, health, housing, education and the labour market. The authors indicate that although the policy framework in South Africa does not accommodate asylum seekers, the judicial system advocates for their social protection.

Finally, the last five chapters in Part seven of the book reflect on the different global responses to COVID-19 and draw on case studies to explore the trends and challenges during COVID-19 period. Chapter 25 delves into the various global social protection responses to the COVID-19 pandemic such as introduction of digital tools, expansion of social assistance, social insurance and labour market policies as well as cash transfer leading the way in the developing countries. Chapter 26 uses India as a case study to reflect on achievements, anomalies and lessons learnt through the digital delivery of welfare services. Chapter 27 reflects on Indonesia's social protection policy and the COVID-19 pandemic. The authors reflect on how the governments' crisis responses to the pandemic prioritised social protection by extending the existing social assistance programme, such as cash transfers for the poor families, food vouchers etc. Chapter 28 uses China as a case study to focus on the social protection strategies that have been implemented to protect children during the COVID-19 pandemic. These strategies amongst others included basic medical services, cash and in-kind assistance and other child protection services across the globe. Chapter 29 reflects on the South Africa's social protection responses to mitigate the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and of the economic restrictions that were instituted. These included, amongst others, the introduction of the Social Relief of Distress grant for unemployed and informal workers.

This book is highly commendable as a constructive study that can benefit the social work education system across the globe, both at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. It could also be a highly fruitful textbook for courses on social and community development.