

ROUTLEDGE ADVANCES IN SOCIOLOGY

# Social Policy and Planning for the 21st Century

In Search of the Next Great  
Social Transformation

Donald G. Reid

ROUTLEDGE



an Informa business

ISBN-13: 978-1-138-67405-9

90000



9 781138 674059

 **Routledge**  
Taylor & Francis Group  
[www.routledge.com](http://www.routledge.com)

# Social Policy and Planning for the 21st Century

Donald G. Reid

ge

# **Social Policy and Planning for the 21st Century**

**In Search of the Next Great  
Social Transformation**

**Donald G. Reid**

First published 2017  
by Routledge  
711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017

and by Routledge  
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN

*Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business*

© 2017 Taylor & Francis

The right of Donald G. Reid to be identified as author of this work has been asserted by him in accordance with sections 77 and 78 of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reprinted or reproduced or utilised in any form or by any electronic, mechanical, or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publishers.

*Trademark notice:* Product or corporate names may be trademarks or registered trademarks, and are used only for identification and explanation without intent to infringe.

*Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data*

Names: Reid, Donald G., author.

Title: Social policy and planning for the 21st century : in search of the next great social transformation / Donald G. Reid.

Description: Abingdon, Oxon ; New York, NY : Routledge, 2017. |

Series: Routledge advances in sociology ; 185

Identifiers: LCCN 2016007994 | ISBN 9781138674059 (hardback) |

ISBN 9781315561530 (e-book)

Subjects: LCSH: Social policy. | Social planning. | Social problems—History—21st century.

Classification: LCC HN18.3 .R449 2017 | DDC 303.3—dc23

LC record available at <http://lcn.loc.gov/2016007994>

ISBN: 978-1-138-67405-9 (hbk)

ISBN: 978-1-315-56153-0 (ebk)

Typeset in Times New Roman  
by Apex CoVantage, LLC



Printed and bound in Great Britain by  
TJ International Ltd, Padstow, Cornwall

# **Social Policy and Planning for the 21st Century**

The greatest problems facing humanity today are climate change, poverty, and the increasing separation between the rich and poor. The aim of this book is to examine the social constructions that have led to these breakdowns and provide potential solutions that are based on a fundamental change in the structure of society and the values on which a new and better social system can be built.

Unless we as a society set a drastically different course soon, human life as we know it will suffer greatly, perhaps even cease altogether. Excess consumption is becoming anti-social as the effects of global warming and increasing poverty become apparent. What, then, will form the new social values on which society replaces the present emphasis on work and material consumption that now prevail? This book's answer to that question is accomplishment and aesthetic consumption. The proposed refocused existence will necessitate a new economic order that provides access to a livelihood beyond the market system.

This groundbreaking book will appeal to students and scholars of sociology, leisure studies, political science, and social work.

**Donald G. Reid** is University Professor Emeritus in the School of Environmental Design and Rural Development at the University of Guelph, Canada.

# Acknowledgements

A number of people have been very helpful in developing the ideas contained in this book. First, I want to thank Tim Brookes for helping me clarify many of my thoughts on the subjects elaborated herein. Tim and I spent many interesting hours overlooking the ocean, drinking coffee as we talked and debated these ideas. Thanks to Patricia MacPherson for her continued support. Patricia's ongoing encouragement is greatly appreciated. I wish to thank Nicole Gosselin for the many hours she spent editing this book. Editors are underappreciated but add much to the final product. Also, a number of people, including Hilary Black, Jennifer Burns, Shawn Filson, Sarah Mahato, Maanpreet Sian, Rana Telfah, and Nicole Vanquaethem, read the draft manuscript and made valuable comments, many of which contributed to the final version of this book.



# Contents

<i>List of Illustrations</i>	vii
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	viii

## PART I

1 Introduction	3
2 The Human Crisis	11
3 Culture and False Consciousness in Human Evolution	32
4 The Context for Policy Making	51
5 Planning Theory in Social Policy Development	61

## PART II

6 Poverty and Marginalization in the Keynesian State	75
7 Beyond Poverty: Major Areas for Active Social Policy	100
8 Social Policy in the Developing World	118
9 Community Building	126
10 The Role of Research in Social Policy Formation	141



**PART III**

11	Decentring Work: The Role of Meaningful Activity and Leisure in Social Policy Development	161
12	The Way Forward: The Great Transformation	176
	<i>Index</i>	201

# Illustrations

## Figures

5.1	Domains of Social Policy Theory	64
6.1	Roots and Outcomes of Poverty	90
7.1	The Homelessness Crisis	111
9.1	Three Major Components to Community Building	127
10.1	Stages in the Research and Planning Process	151
12.1	Transition from the Status Quo to a New Social Contract	181

## Table

6.1	The Basic Welfare State in Canada	81
-----	-----------------------------------	----

## Part I



# 1 Introduction

The social and environmental basis on which modern life is constructed is deteriorating. News, including print, broadcast, and social media, is increasingly concerned about the consequences of climate change, growing poverty, and increasing separation between the rich and poor. The aim of this book is to examine the social constructions that have led to these failures in modern society and provide some ideas with regard to how civilization might set a different course; one that requires a fundamental change in the structure of society and the values on which a new and better social system could be built. Let there be no mistake—unless we as a society set a drastically different course soon, human life on this planet may suffer greatly, perhaps even cease to exist altogether.

The first part of this book sets out the present condition of society and highlights some of the major entanglements that have caused the problems facing humanity today. It focuses on identifying the issues that accompany climate change, the drastic separation of the rich and poor, and the underlying basis for poverty in the face of increasing affluence for some. These conditions have become embedded in our modern culture.

Culture is the organizing force that provides structure to human individual and social existence, and this book examines the role it plays in constructing social life. Culture is the lens through which *Homo sapiens* interpret and create their everyday social world. As cultures mature, many false consciousness are created to help society reaffirm itself in the face of changing social environments. False consciousness is an inevitable by-product of culture as humans attempt to hang on to the aspects of their lives that give them comfort even though they may now be inhibiting the proper functioning of society. These practices may spell the doom for a society that is unable to see the negativities for what they are and search out more appropriate explanations for the changing conditions they confront. One such false consciousness is our notion of wealth creation and the process we have created for its distribution. The overwhelming focus of society on wealth creation at the expense of other life-sustaining values is an issue that needs to be addressed if social and environmental integration is to be sustained. Culture and the values it creates are major evolutionary devices in the lives of humans that play a deterministic role



in social change, much like genes play in biological evolution. In fact, culture may now be more important than biology in determining the future of humankind. What gets established as humanity's culture in the future will determine the fate of society over the near and long term.

Social and environmental policy plays an intricate part in implementing the values of society. The context for policy making is extremely important and provides the framework for social discourse. There are a number of competing views about not only what form social policy should take in modern society, but also how much of it should be produced and for whom. The issues of eligibility are critical to social justice. Most people possess an underlying perspective about where the root causes of human frailty lie. This worldview determines the need for social policy and what should or should not be done about it by the collective. Most of these views are built on a vision of fundamental human nature and human society. At the most fundamental level of this debate are the competing ideas of biological influence on human makeup and those of environmental determinism. These concepts shape the core of the social debate in society today and will be discussed at great length later in this book.

A person's theory of society dictates what social interventions should be considered in order to address the inadequacies that plague his or her individual life and the broader social condition. For some, intervention in the human system is seen as social engineering and to be minimized at best, if not avoided altogether. For others intervention in the social system is seen as the way to create a modern civilization. It is important to this discussion to lay out the theories that direct the policy and planning process and what outcomes these differing views of the world have on social construction. Culture influences, and perhaps dominates, the social development discourse. The domination of culture, which has been appropriately strong in the social policy discussion, may now need to recognize the increasing importance of the nature side of the argument, given the recent advances in genetic mapping and neurological science. No longer can nature be ignored, given the recent advances in genetics and other biological discoveries, including a greater understanding of the function and role of the brain in human consciousness. These ideas and their potential contribution to human development are provided in more detail in later chapters in this book.

Any text on social policy must address the substance of the domain with which it is concerned. Issues of poverty and the marginalization of an increasing number of individuals in society will be examined in later chapters of this book. It is often claimed that a critical measure of a civilized society is how it treats its minorities, including its marginalized and disadvantaged citizens. Although some progress has been made in a few quarters, such as gender equality and race discrimination, it has fallen behind on other measures, such as poverty. It is evident that at least one marginalized group, the poverty stricken, have not made much, if any, progress in overcoming their predicament since the end of World War II, and, their condition continues to deteriorate today. Poverty in both the developed and in many parts of the developing world is

not being eliminated in spite of constant economic growth across the globe and governments' continuing rhetoric about eradicating its presence.

In its present form poverty is gaining ground because the growth in the economy is being consumed by fewer and fewer people, particularly in the developed world, leaving an ever-growing poorer population and a widening of the income gap. Some predictions have suggested that in a decade or so the poor in the United States will be as visible as it is today in many of the developing countries. The issue of poverty is as much about the equal distribution of resources and social justice as it is about the ability of populations to consume sufficient calories to maintain life, although that dire level of poverty continues to exist as well.

A large part of social policy is about poverty, either in attempting to reduce its consequence for those who find themselves experiencing its ferocity or in attempting to protect the general population from falling into it. Poverty is viewed as either a system problem, in that the economy is unable to supply a means for making a living to those unemployed and marginalized, or an individual problem whereby those in poverty may simply lack the skills to find a job, and those who are designated as lazy by society and thought to lack all motivation for working and taking responsibility for themselves. In the latter case, the poor and those on social assistance are frequently characterized by society as social deviants, the undeserving poor, and a drag on the economy. One of the objectives of this book is to challenge those myths and stereotypes, which are designed to denigrate and blame those experiencing poverty for the failures of society. I intend to provide a more realistic picture of its true structure.

In addition to poverty, social policy addresses a number of social issues in society. These concerns can be classified in many ways, but they will be categorized in this book as healthcare, housing and homelessness, education, and justice and democracy. Although this book views poverty as a key problem for social policy to address, these other related issues need to be dealt with as well. Many of them are the result of poverty or, in some cases, the cause of it. Some of these problems may be related to poverty directly; however, they can also stand on their own and constitute concerns that society might want to address as separate public questions. Many of these domains may affect the entire population or a specific group within society and if treated or enhanced will provide a desired benefit to the general public. Many of these efforts can be remedial or developmental in nature—remedial in that if eradicated, society will be better off; developmental in that their adoption by society will enhance individual functioning directly or social solidarity generally.

This book's focus is mainly on Western nations; however, the developing world requires some attention as well. Given the upheaval throughout the world and the resulting mass migration of populations produced by conflict and hunger, social problems produced in one country are no longer the exclusive domain of that single country, but are shared throughout the globe. Consider those fleeing conflicts in their home countries and the resulting

migration throughout the globe. Europe has been particularly inundated with migration and is having difficulties integrating those new arrivals into their societies. Because globalization has become a dominant force in the world, it is necessary to compare and contrast poverty in the developing world with the developed countries across the globe. There may not be much difference between the poor in the so-called developing world and the marginalized in developed countries, given the recent condition of marginalized populations, such as the First Nations people in Canada, recent ethnic migrants to Britain, and some inner-city neighbourhoods and rural parts of the United States. In some ways their struggle is not much different than communities in Africa and elsewhere.

That said, the origin of social policy development in the developing world is dramatically different than in the more affluent countries of the West. Perhaps the most telling feature of this difference is that many developing world countries were not constructed on, or have subsequently adopted, Keynesian principles. Additionally, a number of these countries entered the modern era as colonies of European nations, and therefore, did not develop a tradition of social welfare based on any notion of equity, nor were the colonial masters particularly concerned about the domestic economy and the welfare of the people in the countries they occupied. These occupied countries were seen as peripheral to the homeland, and their major purpose was to supply the colonizer with natural riches, as far as the colonials were concerned. The role of the colony was to serve the occupying country by providing cheap raw materials and even cheaper labour to the colonial power. Little thought by the occupiers was given to the welfare of the host people; in fact, many of the local inhabitants were not seen as human, and if they were given that status, they were believed to be a substandard or primitive people. Servitude and slavery were thought to be legitimate and condoned throughout many parts of the so-called modern world. Only when it suited the colonizer were social programs, mainly rudimentary healthcare, provided to the locals. This healthcare was not necessarily provided in a spirit of benevolence, but so those in servitude could be more productive in their work for their colonial masters.

That said, the picture of poverty in the developing world is changing. On some measures, it is said that poverty is abating in a number of the countries in the developing world. China, India, South Africa, and Brazil are good examples where gross domestic product (GDP) is increasing. Whether or not all citizens in these countries are benefiting from this GDP growth and their general quality of life is improving is questionable, however. The changing nature of social progress and policy in the developing world is important to recognize. All countries are unique with a set of exceptional problems and potential solutions, but some concerns are shared throughout the world.

Engaging citizens in the development of policies that affect them is critical to sound policy formation. Community building and citizen participation are critical to social policy development and are major contributors in the pursuit of democracy and social justice. Most discussions on the subject

identify democracy as a vital link in the social policy universe. Other than simply stating that it is important, identifying how democracy is enhanced or achieved through social policy construction is often neglected, but I focus on it in some depth later in this book. Engaging the populace in the development and provision of social policy is an essential characteristic of the policy construction process. Theoretically, citizen engagement occurs at all levels of policy making, including at the international, national, and local levels. However, it is most likely that, beyond voting for national representatives or in belonging to a political party, most of us engage with democracy at the community and local levels, and it is here where most citizen action occurs. It is in communities where our lives are lived and the provision of social policy gets played out. Although senior-level governments are the most likely developers of social policies such as healthcare, social assistance, and housing, it is usually the local government that implements these policies at the community level. The local community is the space where social policy gets delivered. Additionally, discussions about the adequacy of social policy and the required changes to it should be generated at the community level if these programs are to be bottom up and not top down. It is in the community where needs are identified and the best ideas about how to satisfy those needs get created. Community building is not just a byproduct of social policy but a development goal in its own right.

The idea of community building has become the mechanism for playing out the notions of democracy and social justice at the local level. In addition to the responsibility of government to create social policy, civic institutions have become features on the social policy landscape and active in its development and delivery. Whether or not this has always been in the best interests of society is a matter of debate, but it is a reality nonetheless. It is generally thought that the creation and delivery of social policy is a partnership between governments and civil society. The balance in that relationship is always a concern and needs to be constantly debated and adjusted. A major contributing factor to community building is research and social impact assessment. This part of the process is not always recognized and often circumvented in community-building activity.

Social impact assessment and research are critical to sound policy development. This book may be slightly different from other social policy texts in that it addresses social impact assessment and research as methods for determining what ought to exist in the long-term future, as well as for dealing with present conditions. Most texts addressing research and impact assessment form a here-and-now perspective. Social policy needs to address the large-scale social and human problems looming on the horizon in addition to attending to present and immediate difficulties. It needs to be active in advancing the human condition, and not simply focus exclusively on the historic situation or current inadequacies. Social policy in this book is not only meant to be remedial, but also developmental, which can generate a profound influence on how research and social impact assessments are completed and interpreted. This volume