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## Review of *Ethics*. Sarah Banks (Ed.). Reviewed by Jennifer R. Zelnick

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southwest Uganda. She talked extensively with project managers and others living in these villages. Her reporting allows her to compare Sachs' grand design against the realities on the ground. The setbacks were legion: the rains fail, economic opportunities are lacking, fertilizer prices soar, and both expectations and resentments rise. The MVP headquarters in New York insisted that farmers plant drought-resistant maize, but the villagers just don't like the taste, and so on.

The lives of those in The Millennium Villages have indeed improved, according to various metrics, but progress has also been made elsewhere in Africa. How much is attributable to the MVPs? Unfortunately, we can't know because Sachs was uninterested in supporting rigorous, independent evaluations such as randomized control trials. Experienced development experts, explains Munk, are almost universally skeptical of what they consider the unsustainable nature of the MVPs, and they are personally offended by the man's megalomania and dismissal of their concerns. The rub is this: whereas Sachs advocates big ideas and comprehensive solutions to African poverty, development economists such as Esther Duflo advocate modest, empirically-grounded strategies. In addition, recent Asian experience demonstrates that rapid economic growth is the best way to reduce extreme poverty. Foreign aid, as far as we know, cannot foster economic growth, but it can help improve lives.

It is a case of hubris versus humility, but perhaps social change needs both. Despite Jeffrey Sachs' grandiosity, missteps, and rough edges, there is much to be learned from the story of a brilliant, passionate visionary obsessed with ending extreme poverty in our time. In this fine book, Nina Munk has brought the man and his mission to life, giving us much food for thought.

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Sarah Banks (Ed.), *Ethics*. (Critical and Radical Debates in Social Work, I. Ferguson & M. Lavalette, series editors). Policy Press (2014). \$15.00 (paperback).

*Ethics*, edited by Sarah Banks (who also contributes the

lead essay), is a brief volume with a substantial aim: to reframe an international discussion of social work ethics. This 96 page volume (83 without the references) is part of a series edited by Ferguson and Lavalette that aims to reignite an activist/radical approach to social work that “located the problems experienced by those who sought social work support in the material conditions of their lives and attempted to develop practice responses which challenged these conditions and their effects” (Series editors’ introduction, p. xi). Like other series volumes on topics ranging from Poverty and Inequality, Mental Health, and Children and Families, Ethics is structured by a lead essay, 8 response essays of about 5 pages each, and concluding remarks from the lead author. This very satisfying approach forces respondents to get right to the point of their critique, allows the readers to digest a debate in one sitting, and skillfully frames a topic of profound importance to the social work profession—namely the scope of its ethics in the era of managerialism and austerity.

Banks’ lead essay, “Reclaiming Social Work Ethics: Challenging the New Public Management,” describes a resurgent interest in ethics (what some have characterized as an ethics “boom”) in terms of two competing agendas. On the one hand, contemporary social work ethics have been employed to criticize the “worst excesses” of New Public Management (NPM); on the other hand, ethics (and more particularly ethical codes) have been part of the NPM project. For example, social workers have argued for the need to reclaim professional authority (against for example, standardized practices) from the position that professional expertise and ethical practice demands that social workers challenge and resist “inhumane, degrading and unjust practice and policies” (p. 13). At the same time, increasingly lengthy ethical codes have been used to discipline social workers and create ethical guidelines that speak to the demand for public accountability.

Banks thinks that social work ethics have been coopted by managerialism, and that the problem is rooted in traditional ethics’ focus on the professional autonomy of the social worker and the individual relationship between the service user and the social worker. Thus, Banks argues for a “situated ethics of social justice” that encompasses what others have termed an “ethics of care,” and lays out a set of preliminary values (radical

social justice, empathic solidarity, relational autonomy, collective responsibility for resistance, moral courage, and working in/with complexity and contradictions) aimed at strengthening ethics against cooption and reclaiming them.

The 8 short response essays are written by authors from a variety of countries (United States, United Kingdom, South Africa, Japan and Canada) with a variety of viewpoints. Each response extends and/or critiques different aspects of Banks' argument and proposal. Beckett's chapter ("Managerialism: Challenging the New Orthodoxy"), for example, takes issue with Banks' presentation of managerialism as a "straw man to attack" that lays too much blame on the current trends towards efficiency and accountability ("what is wrong with trying to make the best use of limited resources?"). This critique will resonate with many readers, including students and practitioners that have a more moderate perspective, and it is a real strength of the book that it allows the reader to follow a debate and develop her or his own critique. Of additional interest is the fact that authors from multiple countries weave in discussion of the development of their countries' ethical codes and degree of privatization. Thus, this book provides a comparative, cross-national perspective on the topic of social work ethics without requiring that the reader be an expert in the countries represented.

This book would be a great addition to social work education, in particular courses in ethics, policy, or international social work. Its low cost and brief yet in-depth presentation seem ideal for generating discussion and making curriculum more contemporary. Of note for U.S. students and curriculum is the discussion of NPM, a topic that generally has not been named or discussed much. This volume frames the discussion NPM from an ethical perspective and could serve as a useful introduction to analysis of the impact of privatization on social work practice for U.S. social work students.

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