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## **Review of *Civic Service Worldwide: Impacts and Inquiry*. Amanda Moore McBride & Michael W. Sherraden, Editors. Reviewed by Barbara J. Robles.**

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of Social Problems in 1951, a topic mentioned intermittently in several chapters. Also, although due deference is given to issues of race, gender, and class in several of the thematic chapters, the volume neglects the sustained work of William Jules Wilson and Frances Fox Piven, both past presidents of ASA and both committed to social justice. The present volume, however, serves as a long-awaited and necessary first step toward a historians' history of the discipline. It concludes with an invaluable 117-page appendix of readings and resources, brief biographical sketches of contributors, and a detailed index.

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Amanda Moore McBride & Michael W. Sherraden, (Eds.). *Civic Service Worldwide: Impacts and Inquiry*. Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 2007. \$49.95 hardcover.

This book covers an array of research agendas, providing us with a much needed reference volume on Western approaches to Civic Service. The volume also provides readers with a cogent argument for more theorizing and empirical evaluation of existing civic service movements. Because it seeks to inform us about the current civic service movements worldwide as well as calling us to use more social science methods in assessing these movements, it raises expectations concerning future global research agendas. The need for more research and wider dissemination of public knowledge of civic service movements is without a doubt urgent. This book is an excellent starting point but leaves those of us interested in non-Western civic service approaches wanting a second volume that addresses the various forms such civic service takes as well as a comprehensive blueprint for working with communities using non-imported organizational structures and culturally relevant approaches.

The book is divided into five main sections that cover the most salient aspects of civic service: the rise of civic service, the policy and domestic effects of civic service, the implications of civic service for life-cycle outcomes, the international bridging

potential of civic service, and finally, the scope of the impacts and measurement methods needed to fully assess civic service as a field of inquiry. The authors contributing to the various sections clearly understand the role of civic service in nation-building and nation-development. Each chapter brings new information, either by tracing historical legacies and precursors to current civic service initiatives and programs or by descriptive analysis of civic service programs in various countries and international collaborative initiatives. All leave the reader better informed and with a compelling vision of what we still have to learn about research methodologies applied to civic service outcomes. Perhaps the most important and urgent debate among civic service researchers is the need for standardizing evaluation approaches and methodologies in order to fully ascertain the remarkable role of civic service in the lives of individuals, communities and nations.

Sections two and three provide a thorough understanding of an array of programs and initiatives across countries (Israel, Nigeria, England, Denmark, Chile, and the United States) and across continents (Africa and Latin America). Some civic service programs began as an off-shot of military service that morphed into education support service programs. The transformative nature of civic service programs creates a compelling vision of the future in its inclusiveness of volunteers across the life-cycle. The consequence of such broad-stroke inclusion has been not only the recruitment of a demographic cross-section of volunteers but an equally inclusive broad demographic of civic service recipients. The powerful consequence of such inclusiveness is the strengthening of democratic worldviews and actions. This is not an insignificant outcome for in such beginnings lie the potential for popular support for conflict resolution described in section four.

Section four covers the important topic of cross-border and international civic service. The growing cross-country collaboration in civic service programs creates the possibility for an entry point for increased future preparedness of societies to the realities of globalization and economic coordination. What is addressed in this section, but not fully explored, is the adverse effect that institutional structures and funding sources create in the form of maintaining a North-South,

developed-developing imbalance of power within the civic service organization. These social and economic nation-state realities create an inordinate barrier to equitable participation in collaborative international civic service organizations. Additionally, such realities call into question the nature of how international civic service institutions are created: will they look like developed nations' organizations? Or will they reflect the characteristics of developing nations' institutions with their priorities and cultural characteristics? Or perhaps as a consequence of inclusive collaboration, the new civic service organization becomes a hybrid of the two? The power inequities between countries can create stoppages to full participation among the trans-country partners. Moreover, the pressures associated with outcomes are firmly promoted by funding sources of international civic service initiatives and they too, play a powerful role in how these international organizations form and develop an organizational culture of their own.

The final section of the book addresses the issue of research methods, approaches and implications both for policy and for evaluation of impacts. I wholeheartedly agree with both chapters in this section that there is an urgent need for a more complete and deeper understanding of the role civic service plays in the health and wealth of individuals, organizations, communities, regions, nations and global society. I further agree with the need for parsimony, as the authors of these two chapters suggest. Manageability and universality is critical to the development of indicators, metrics, evaluation techniques and interpretation of empirical findings. However, the recognition that different disciplines provide us with a variety of perspectives on the development and impact of civic service needs to be preserved in any research paradigm and model typology. Missing factors can provide important clues to the sustainability of civic service in isolated and forgotten communities. McBride and Sherraden remind us of the care needed in developing a standard research framework when they allude to the 'paucity of research' on the impact of civic service initiatives on the served.

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