Sources, Agreements, and Challenges*

Development ethicists assess the ends and means of local, national, regional, and global development. National policymakers, project managers, grassroots communities, and international aid donors involved in development in poor countries often confront moral questions in their work. Development scholars recognize that social-scientific theories of "development" and "underdevelopment" have ethical as well as empirical and policy components. Development philosophers and other ethicists formulate ethical principles relevant to social change in poor countries, and they analyze and assess the moral dimensions of development theories and seek to resolve the moral quandaries lurking in development policies and practice.[1]

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Sources

Several sources exist for the moral assessment of the theory and practice of development. First, activists and social critics, such as Mohandas Gandhi (beginning in the 1890s) in South Africa and India, Raúl Prébisch (beginning in the 1940s) in Latin America, and Frantz Fanon (in the 1960s) in Africa criticized colonialism and orthodox economic development.[2] Second, as discussed in Chapter 1, since the early 1960s, American development scholar, critic, and development practitioner Denis Goulet—drawing inspiration from the work of Louis-Joseph Lebret and Albert Hirschman[3], Benjamin Higgins, and Gunner Myrdal[4] and American sociologist Peter Berger—pioneered what we now call "development ethics" by arguing that development theory, policy, and practices should be subjected to ethical assessment. Both Goulet and Berger insisted that what was often called development was bad for human beings and that both ethics and development would benefit from interaction.

In Chapter 1, I identified a third source of development ethics: the effort of primarily Anglo-American moral philosophers in the late 1970s and the 1980s to deepen and broaden philosophical debate about famine relief and food aid.[5] Beginning in the early seventies, often in response to Peter Singer's utilitarian argument for famine relief (1972) and Garrett Hardin's "lifeboat ethics" (1974), many philosophers debated whether affluent nations (or their citizens) have moral obligations to aid starving people in poor countries and, if they do, what are the nature, bases and extent of those obligations.[6] We

saw in chapter one how three Colorado State University professors in the late seventies designed a course that sought to go beyond the Singer's seminal approach and the theoretical debate that it stimulated. By the early eighties, moral philosophers, such as Nigel Dower, Onora O'Neill and Jerome M. Segal, had come to views similar to those of the Colorado State University professors: famine relief and food aid were only one part of the solution to the problems of hunger, poverty, underdevelopment and international injustice.[7] What is needed, argued these philosophers, is not merely an ethics of aid but a more comprehensive, empirically informed, and policy relevant "ethics of Third World development." The kind of assistance and North/South relations that are called for will depend on how (good) development is understood.

A fourth source of development ethics is the work of Paul Streeten and Amartya Sen. Both economists have addressed the causes of global economic inequality, hunger and underdevelopment and addressed these problems with, among other things, a conception of development explicitly based on ethical principles. Building on Streeten's "basic human needs" strategy, [8] Sen, as discussed in Chapter 1, argues that development should be understood ultimately not as economic growth, industrialization or modernization, which are at best means for the expansion of people's "valuable capabilities and functionings:"

> The valued functionings can vary from such elementary ones as avoiding mortality or preventable morbidity, or being sheltered, clothed, and nourished, to

such complex achievements as taking part in the life of the community, having a joyful and stimulating life, or attaining self-respect and the respect of others.[9]

These four sources have been especially influential in the work of Anglo-American development ethicists, such as Sabina Alkire, Nigel Dower, Jay Drydyk, Stephen Esquith, Des Gasper, Denis Goulet, Desmond McNeil, Daniel Little, Onora O'Neill, Thomas Pogge, Stephen Schwenke, and the author.[10] When practiced by Latin Americans, Asians, Africans and non-Anglo Europeans, development ethics also draws on philosophical and moral traditions distinctive of their cultural contexts. See, for example, the work of Oswaldo Guariglia and Bernardo Kliksberg (Argentina); Tarso Genro (Brazil); Cristián Parker and Manfred Max-Neef (Chile); Luis Camacho, Jorge Luis Chavez, and E. Roy Ramirez (Costa Rica); Kwame Gyekye (Ghana); Ramón Romero (Honduras); Reiko Gotoh (Japan); Asunción St. Clair (Norway); Adela Cortina, Jesús Conill, Emilio Martínez Navarro, and Marta Pedrajas Herrero (Spain); Wilhelm Verwoerd (South Africa); Godfrey Gunatilleke (Sri Lanka); and John Peter Opio, A. Byaruhanga Rukooko, and Joseph Wamala (Uganda).[11]

Presenting work by these and other thinkers, one anthology and two textbooks in development ethics appeared in the period 2002-2004: Bernardo Kliksberg, ed., *Etica y desarrollo: La relacion marginada* (2002);[12] Daniel Little, *The Paradox of Wealth and Poverty: Mapping the Ethical Dilemmas of Global Development* (2003)[13]; and Des Gasper, *The Ethics of Development* (2004).[14] Three professional organizations have been

formed: the International Development Ethics Association (founded 1987); the Human Development and Capability Association (founded 2000); the Inter-American Initiative on Social Capital, Ethics, and Development (2000), with its network of more than 80 universities.[15] Courses in development ethics have been or are being taught in about twenty universities in at least ten countries.[16] Short courses in development ethics are being considered in international financial institutions.

Such publications, groups, and courses indicate that development ethics has become—like environmental ethics or bioethics before it—a recognized field or multidisciplinary "discipline." I put the last word in quotes because development ethics, as I shall argue in this and the next chapter, should not be an exclusively an academic inquiry. Rather, it should bridge the gap between theory and practice and does so with interaction in both directions.

Areas of Consensus

Questions

Although they differ on a number of matters, development ethicists exhibit a wide consensus about the commitments that inform their practice, the questions they are posing, and the unreasonableness of certain answers. Development ethicists typically ask the following eleven types of questions:

- What should count as (good) development or development success? What are

clear examples of "good" development and "bad" development? How well are various regions, societies, and locales doing in achieving "development?" Development ethics emerged due to dissatisfaction with conventional wisdom with respect to "development," and it thrives on questioning how good and better development should be conceived.

- Should we continue using the concept of development instead of, for example, "progress," "economic growth," "transformation," "liberation," "sustainable livelihoods,"[17]or "post-development alternatives to development"[18]? How, if at all, does (good) development differ from "modernization" or "developmentalism?" "transformational development" (USAID), or the "Washington Consensus"?
- If by "development" we mean good socioeconomic change, what fundamental economic, political, and cultural goals, and strategies should a society or political community pursue, and what commitments or principles should inform their selection?
- What moral issues emerge in development policymaking and practice and how should they be resolved?[19] Should gender equality and women's empowerment be promoted in cultures with traditions of male dominance? Should anti-corruption strategies take priority over long-term efforts at poverty reduction and participatory democracy?[20] Should USAID personnel refuse to demote birth control (condoms) to a secondary status compared to policies of abstinence and

marital fidelity? Should USAID personnel refuse to demote birth control (condoms) to a secondary status compared to policies of abstinence and marital fidelity?[21] Should citizen decisionmaking in development projects and societal governance be permitted, encouraged, or required?

- How should the benefits and harms of development be conceived and distributed? Is some composite measure of development success basic, such as economic growth or economic efficiency, or does social justice require equal negative liberty (Nozick), equal political liberty and maximizing the opportunities of the least well off (Rawls), getting all above a minimally adequate threshold (Sen), reducing degrading forms of inequality, or strict economic equality? What category, "currency" or "metric" is relevant for distributive justice? GDP (income), utility, subjective happiness (Graham and Pettinato), social primary goods (Rawls), access to resources (Roemer), basic human needs (Galtung, Max-Neef, Streeten), negative liberty (Bauer and Nozick), free agency or autonomy (Sen, Crocker), capabilities and functionings (Sen, Nussbaum, Crocker), or human rights (Pogge, Vizard)?[22] If human rights are important, should they include positive socioeconomic rights as well as civil and political rights?
- Who (or what institutions) bears responsibility for bringing about development? A nation's government, civil society, private enterprises, or the market? What role—if any—do or should more affluent states, international and global institutions, nongovernmental associations, and poor countries themselves have in

development or poor nations? What are the obligations of a rich sovereign state for its own citizens and are these duties more demanding than its duties to all human beings, especially the poor in other countries?[23]

- Regardless of the identity of duty-bearers, how should we understand development responsibilities? Are moral duties based on divine commands, social pacts, general positive duties of charity (which permit donor discretion with respect to specific beneficiaries), specific duties to aid (any needy rights-bearer), negative duties to dismantle unjust structures or halt injurious action, or duties to make reparation for past wrongs? Is the duty of "Do no harm" enough or should citizens and development agents also consider positive duties to aid; and, if so, how should the duty not to harm be weighed in relation the duty to do good? Is the duty to aid distant peoples a cosmopolitan duty of *justice*, which makes no distinction in duties to compatriots and others, or a humanitarian duty to rescue or assist, which is less demanding than a duty to one's fellow citizens (Nagel)?
- What should be counted as the virtues and vices of various development agents? How good or obligatory is honesty and how bad or permissible is deception? Should USAID and other donor agencies have a code of ethics or conduct for its personnel? What is the evidence with respect to the role of similar professional codes in improving conduct? Is a code likely to do more harm than good? Would the prohibitions of such a code encourage employees to act in questionable ways just up to the threshold of permissible conduct, thereby encouraging problematic

conduct? What would a defensible ethical code look like? Who should decide on such a code and by what process? Should it be imposed from the top or deliberated from the bottom? How should a code be enforced? How does an ethics of professional virtue or conduct relate to an ethics for assessing policy and institutional arrangements?

- What are the most serious local, national and international impediments to and opportunities for good development? How should blame for development failures be apportioned among global, national, and local agents? What are the most relevant theories and forms of globalization and how should the promise and risks of globalization be assessed from a moral point of view?
- To what extent, if any, do psychological egoism, moral skepticism, moral relativism, national sovereignty and political realism, religious or political fundamentalism pose a challenge to development ethics?
- Who should decide these questions and by what methods? What are the respective roles of appeal to authority, philosophical reflection, constitutional constraints, public deliberation, donor deliberation, and "learning by doing"? How should development ethicists assess and improve their methods and in relation to what standards?

Answers

In addition to accepting the importance of these questions, most development ethicists share at least ten beliefs or commitments about their field and the general parameters for ethically-based development. First, development ethicists typically agree that—in spite of global progress with respect to outlawing or reducing slavery and achieving higher living standards—many experience persistent and grave yet avoidable deprivations in contrast to the few who live in elevated affluence. Development ethicists start from judgments about what Dewey would call a "problematic situation": many people throughout the world undeservedly and needlessly suffer or die. These deaths may be either agonizingly slow, due to poverty of various sorts, or rapid but brutal due to ethnic and military conflict, repressive governments, or fragile states. In our affluent world, these unacceptable sufferings and deprivations need not continue, should be halted, and people everywhere should have a chance for a good life. Pogge's cool expression of moral outrage is typical of many who share his sentiments:

> How well are the weak and vulnerable faring today? Some 2,800 million or 46 percent of humankind live below the World Bank's $2/day poverty line—precisely: in households whose income per person per day has less purchasing power than in $2.15 had in the US in 1993. On average, the people living below this line fall 44.4 percent below it. Over 1,200 million of them live on less than half, below the World Bank's better-known

> $1/day poverty line. People so incredibly poor are extremely vulnerable to even minor changes in natural and social conditions as well as to many forms of exploitation and abuse. Each year, some 18 million of them die prematurely from poverty-related causes. This is one-third of all human deaths—50,000 every day, including 34,000 children under age five.
>
> Such severe and extensive poverty persists while there is great and rising affluence elsewhere. The average income of the citizens of the affluent countries is about 50 times greater in purchasing power and about 200 times greater in terms of market exchange rates than that of the global poor.[24]

Moreover, development ethicists contend that development practices and theories have ethical dimensions and can benefit from explicit ethical analysis and appraisal. Although important, trying to ascertain what events and conditions exists as well as their likely causes and effects should not take the place of morally assessing what has been, is, and could be. Ethical commitments are lenses that reveal or highlight the moral dimension of human actions, institutions, and their consequences. It is indispensable to understand the causes and consequences of such things as poverty, corruption, repressive governments, and state fragility. It is another thing to evaluate the morally salient features of those phenomena, decide whether alternatives would be morally better, and ascribe responsibilities to various actors. For example, does the economic growth supposedly generated by a given development strategy get translated to expanding important

opportunities for a society's most vulnerable citizens? Ethical assessment of past policies and present options enables people who are active in development endeavors to keep their eyes on the ball of reducing remediable and undeserved human death and suffering. Many people work in development in order to make the world better, but the conceptual frameworks that guide them are largely concerned with technical means rather than morally urgent ends. Development ethics is a way of thinking that puts moral questions and answers in the center of thought and action.

In addition, development ethicists tend to see development as a multidisciplinary field that has both theoretical and practical components that intertwine in various ways. Hence, development ethicists aim not merely to understand the nature, causes and consequences of development—conceived generally as desirable social change—but also to argue for and promote specific conceptions of such change. In backing certain changes, development ethicists assume that choice among alternatives is real and that some choices are better than others.[25]

Furthermore, although they may understand the terms in somewhat different ways, development ethicists are generally committed to understanding and reducing human deprivation and misery in poor countries and regions. Development ethicists persistently remind development agencies that development should be for human beings rather than treating humans merely as tools (or "social capital") for development. Assessment of development policies and projects should emphasize impacts on preventing death as well as relieving suffering and loss of meaning. A consensus increasingly exists that

development policy makers and donors should seek strategies in which both human well-being and a healthy environment jointly exist and are mutually reinforcing.

Another matter of agreement is that most ethicists are convinced that what is frequently called “development” —for instance, economic growth—has created as many problems as it has solved. “Development” can be used both descriptively and normatively. In the descriptive sense, “development” is usually identified as a high rate economic growth where growth is understand in relation to a society’s achievement of high and improving (per capita) gross domestic or national product (GDP, GNP). So conceived, a “developed” society may be either celebrated or criticized. In the normative sense, a developed society—ranging from villages to national and regional communities as well as the global order—is one whose established institutions realize or approximate (what the proponent believes to be) worthwhile goals. These goals include the overcoming of economic and social deprivation. In order to avoid confusion, when a normative sense of “development” is meant, the noun is often preceded by a positive adjective such as “good,” “authentic,” “humane,” “just,” or “ethically justified.”

Development ethicists also agree that development ethics should be conducted at various levels of generality and specificity. Just as development debates occur at various levels of abstraction, so development ethics should assess (1) basic ethical principles, such as justice, liberty, autonomy, solidarity, and democracy; (2) development goals and models, such as “economic growth,” “growth with equity,” “a new international economic order,” “basic needs,” and, most recently, “sustainable development,” “structural

adjustment," "human development" (United Nations Development Programme),[26] "transformational development" (USAID), and "development as freedom" (Sen); and (3) specific institutions, projects, and strategies.

Most development ethicists also contend that their enterprise should be international or global in the triple sense that the ethicists engaged in this activity come from many societies, including poor ones; that they are seeking to forge a cross-cultural consensus; and that this consensus emphasizes a commitment to alleviating worldwide deprivation.

Although many development ethicists argue that at least some development principles or procedures are relevant for any poor community or polity, most agree that development strategies must be contextually sensitive. What constitutes the best means—for instance, donor aid or withdrawal, state provisioning, market mechanisms, civil society and their hybrids—will tend to vary in relation to a political community's history and stage of social change as well as on regional and global forces, such as globalization and international institutions.

Finally, this flexibility concerning development models and strategies is compatible with the uniform rejection of certain extremes. Ethically-based development is inclusive development: it offers and protects at least a minimally adequate level of development benefits for everyone in a society—regardless of their religion, gender, ethnicity, economic status, sexual preference, or age. Moreover, most development ethicists would repudiate three models: (1) the maximization of economic growth in a

society without paying any direct attention to converting greater opulence into better human living conditions for its members, what Amartya Sen and Jean Drèze call "unaimed opulence;"[27] (2) a society unconcerned with the (growing) gap between the haves and the have nots; and (3) an authoritarian egalitarianism in which physical needs are satisfied at the expense of political liberties. That said, development ethicists do and should enter into dialogue with theorists and practitioners who favor societies and projects that are authoritarian, hierarchical, opposed to governmental redistribution, and subordinate individual rights to community stability.

Controversies

In addition to these points of agreement among development ethicists, one also finds several divisions and unsettled issues. One unresolved issue concerns the scope of development ethics. Development ethics originated as the "ethics of Third World Development." There are good reasons to drop—as a Cold War relic—the "First-Second-Third World" trichotomy. However, no consensus exists on whether or how development ethics should extend beyond its central concern of assessing the development ends and means of poor, traditional, or nonindustrial societies. Some argue that development ethicists should criticize human deprivation wherever it exists, including in rich countries and regions since they too have problems of poverty, powerlessness, and alienation and so properly fall within the scope of development ethics. Some argue that perhaps the

socioeconomic model that the North has been exporting to the South results in the underdevelopment of both. Moreover, just as the (affluent) North exists in the (geographic) South, so the (poor) South exists in the (geographic) North.

Yet others—let us call them "restrictionists"—restrict development ethics to poor countries by arguing that attention to Northern deprivation, on the one hand, or consumerism, on the other, diverts development ethicists and agents from the world's most serious destitution (in poor countries) and the ways in which rich countries benefit from the current global order.

My own view is that restricting development ethics to "developing" countries is defective in four ways. First, and most obviously, the production processes, consumption, trade, and foreign policy of rich nations often has an enormous impact for good and ill on poor countries and their inhabitants. To be concerned about poor people in poor countries requires both assessment of current policies and practices of rich country inhabitants and governments and ethically-based proposals to improve them. Accordingly, in Chapter 7, as part of development ethics, I apply an agency-focused version of the capability approach to assess and improve Northern consumption with respect to the developing world. Moreover, restrictionism falsely assumes that the most severe deprivation occurs in poor countries when in fact, as Sen points out, "the extent of deprivation for particular groups in very rich countries can be comparable to that in the so-called third world."[28] Further, Northern and Southern poverty reduction are linked; migrants from the South making money in the North send valuable remittances to their families back home but may also drain the South of able workers and displace workers in the North. Finally, "best

practices" learned from development in the South may be applied to destitution in the North (as well as vice versa). For example, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID)—albeit in a poorly funded and now defunct program called "Lessons without Borders"— attempted to apply lessons learned abroad to destitute US cities. Development agents in different societies often face similar problems—such as unemployment, racism, violence, and powerlessness—and benefit from innovative ways of solving them.

A second unsettled question with respect to the scope of development ethics concerns how widely a net development ethics should cast with respect to the topics it addresses. It is controversial whether development ethicists, concerned with rich country responsibility and global distributive justice, should restrict themselves to official development assistance or whether they also should treat such topics as international trade, capital flows, migration, environmental pacts, terrorism, civil conflict, state fragility, military intervention, humanitarian intervention, and responses to human rights violations committed by prior regimes. The chief argument against extending its boundaries in these ways is that development ethics would thereby become too ambitious and diffuse. If development ethics grew to be identical with all international ethics or even all social ethics, the result might be that insufficient attention would be paid to alleviating *poverty and powerlessness* in various poor communities. Both sides agree that development ethicists should assess various kinds of North-South (and South-South) relations and the numerous global forces, such as globalization, that influence poverty as well as economic and political inequality in poor countries. What is unresolved, however,

is whether development ethics also should address such topics as those listed when—or to the extent that—these topics have no causal relationship to absolute or relative poverty or powerlessness. In any case, these above listed issues are enormously important and ethicists, whether or not they put "development" before their title, should be among those to confront them.

Development ethicists also are divided on the *status* of the moral norms that they seek to justify and apply. Three positions have emerged. Universalists, such as utilitarians and Kantians, argue that development goals and principles are appropriate for all societies. Some particularists, especially communitarians and postmodern relativists, reply (sometimes committing a genetic or ad hominem fallacy) that universalism masks ethnocentrism and (Northern or Western) cultural imperialism. Pro-development particularists either reject the existence of universal principles or affirm only the *procedural* principle that each nation or society should draw only on its own traditions and decide its own development ethic and path. (Anti-development particularists, rejecting both change brought from the outside and public reasoning about social change, condemn all development discourse and practice). A third approach—advanced, for example, by Seyla Benhabib, Jesús Conill, Adela Cortina, Nigel Dower, Jonathan Glover, Martha Nussbaum, Amartya Sen, , as well as the author[29]—tries in different ways to avoid the standoff between the first two positions. Proponents of this view insist that development ethics should forge a cross cultural consensus on general goals relevant for any society, among which is the principle that a society should be free to make its own development choices among a plurality of fundamental norms. Further, these norms are sufficiently

general to *requir*e sensitivity to societal differences.

One should also ask a further question related to the universalism/particularism debate: to what extent, if any, should development ethicists propose visions committed to a certain conception of human well-being or flourishing, and how "thick" or extensive should this vision be? There is a continuum here: at one end of the range, one finds a commitment to individual choice, tolerance of differences, and public deliberation about societal ends and means; on the other end, one finds normative prescriptions and institutional (including constitutional) guarantees with respect to the specifics of a good or flourishing human life but less tolerance for individual and social agency.

As I will argue in later chapters, most plausible is a "threshold" view that identifies an adequate level of agency and well-being that should be open to everyone, regardless of their citizenship. This threshold functions as a "platform" for individuals and communities freely to decide their own conception of the flourishing human life, its elements and their weightings. One reason for this approach is that it will be easier to get cross-cultural consensus for a "moral minimum" than for a more robust conception of the good life. Another reason is that such an approach both respects the rights of individuals and communities to determine (within limits set by their respect for the like agency and well-being of others) their own conception of the good and enhances the "domain of public reasoning."[30]

Even supposing that development principles have some substantive content (beyond the procedural principle of self-determination that each society or person should decide for itself), there remain disagreements about that content. If one accepts that

societal development concerns human development, one still must explore the moral categories crucial to human well-being and development. Candidates for such fundamental moral notions include, as we have seen, utility (preference satisfaction); subjective happiness, social primary goods, such as political liberty, income, wealth, and self-respect; negative liberty; basic human needs; autonomy or agency; valuable capabilities and functioning; human rights, and compassion or care.

Although many think that a development ethic ought to include more than one of these moral concepts, development ethicists differ about which among these them ought to have priority. The alternative that I favor, as will become clear in Parts Two and Three, endorses the development of an understanding of *minimally adequate or sufficient level of human agency and well-being* (not flourishing) that combines, on the one hand, a neo-Kantian commitment to autonomy and human dignity, critical dialogue and public deliberation with, on the other hand, neo-Aristotelian beliefs in the importance of physical health and social participation. Development duties might then flow from the idea that it is extremely important that all humans have the right to an adequate level of agency and well-being, and persons and groups have the duty to secure and protect these rights as well as restore them when lost. Donor agencies, such as the World Bank and USAID, should consider the merits of such a rights-based and agency-focused approach to development.

One also finds, as we saw above, an ongoing debate about how development's benefits, burdens, and responsibilities should be distributed within poor (and rich) countries and between rich and poor countries. Utilitarians prescribe simple aggregation and maximization of individual utilities. Rawlsians advocate income and wealth

maximization for the least well-off (individuals or nations). Libertarians contend that a society should guarantee no form of equality apart from equal freedom from the interference of government and other people. Pogge broadens the libertarian notion of harm (and rights) and argues that rich elites and nations should refrain from harming the vulnerable and compensate those who have been harmed. Singer continues to challenge development ethicists and citizens everywhere with his argument that if affluent nations and individuals can relieve suffering and death without sacrificing anything of comparable moral worth, they are morally obliged to do so. Capability ethicists defend governmental and civil responsibility to *enable* everyone—even those who are citizens of other countries—to advance to a level of sufficiency (Sen, Crocker) or flourishing (Nussbaum, Little) with respect to either agency or valuable functionings (or both). Nagel distinguishes a stronger duty of justice that governments owe to their own citizens (and fellow citizens owe to each other) and a less stringent duty of beneficence that such governments and citizens owe to citizens of other countries.

Many development economists and policy makers are personally concerned with distributional and other ethical questions. Such questions, however, are often only implicit in the development economics literature and development policymaking documents. A notable and encouraging exception is the World Bank's *World Development Report 2006: Equity and Development*: "equity considerations must be brought squarely into the center of both diagnosis and policy."[31]

When silence on distributional issues occurs, development ethics should insist not only that policy makers confront the gains and loses that various policies bring to specific

individuals and subgroups but also challenge development professionals and citizens to deliberate explicitly about which distributions of burdens and benefits are *most justified morally*. When development professionals do take up the question of distribution, development ethicists should applaud the effort but also argue that it is not enough to offer empirical evidence that "equity"--conceived, for example, as individual's having "equal opportunity to pursue a life of their choosing and be spared from extreme deprivations in outcomes"[32]—is efficacious in promoting efficiency or aggregate growth. Development ethicists should also challenge policy makers and citizens to forge, through fair processes, normatively appropriate ideals of economic and political justice. For "equity" is not only instrumentally valuable but is also good or right in itself. Rather than taking refuge in a doctrine of value neutrality or a narrow construal of their institutions' "mandate" or "comparative advantage," policy professionals should debate with citizens on the merits of substantive concepts of justice as well as procedures for deciding this question.[33]

A controversy also exists in development ethics with respect to whether (good) societal development should have—as an ultimate goal—commitments other than to the present and future human good. Communitarian ethicists ascribe intrinsic value—equal or even superior to the good of individual human beings—to such human communities as family, nation, or cultural group.[34] Others argue that non-human individuals and species, as well as ecological communities, have equal and even superior value to human individuals.[35] Those committed to "ecodevelopment" or "sustainable development" often fail to agree on what should be sustained as an *end in itself* and what should be maintained as an indispensable or merely *helpful means*. Nor do they agree on how to surmount

conflicts among environmental and other competing values. Economist Joseph Stiglitz clearly recognizes that these and other moral disagreements are sometimes implicit in factual or policy disagreements:

> There are important disagreements about economic and social policy in our democracies. Some of these disagreements are about values—how concerned should we be about our environment (how much environmental degradation should we tolerate, if it allows us to have a higher GDP); how concerned should we be about the poor (how much sacrifice in our total income should we be willing to make, it if [sic] allows some of the poor to move out of poverty, or to be slightly better off); or how concerned should we be about democracy (are we willing to compromise on basic rights, such as the rights to association, if we believe that as a result, the economy will grow faster).[36]

Each development ethic and theory of justice offers insights at both the broad policy level and at the level of specific interventions. Although these moral frameworks seldom provide definitive or specific answers, they do call attention to candidates for fundamental ends in the light of which many current strategies and tactics might turn out to be morally questionable or even morally reprehensible. The moral theories provide lenses that enable us to see ourselves, our duties, and others in new and compelling ways. They can reinforce moral motivations and thereby shape both citizen and professional conduct.

An increasingly important disagreement concerns not values directly but the roles in resolving moral conflicts of, on the one hand, various experts such judges (and the constitutions they interpret), political leaders, donors and their technical experts, philosophers, or development ethicists, and, on the other hand, popular agency of various kinds. On the one hand, popular participation and democracy are suspect insofar as majorities (or minorities) may dominate others and insofar as people's beliefs and preferences are deformed by tradition, adapted to cope with deprivation, and subject to demagogic manipulation. Moreover, experts often excel at "know how" if not "know why." Finally, in addition to facilitating deliberation by others, ethicists can give advice and take stands without falling into self-righteous moralizing and finger-wagging. On the other hand, rule by experts or guardians can lead to new tyrannies, and many experts facilitate ways in which "recipients" of development can be in charge of making and implementing their own development goals.

As I argue in detail in later chapters, Sen rightly calls for development institutions to reorient their approach from one of providing goods and services to passive recipients to one of enabling countries and their citizens' genuine opportunities to be authors of their own lives and development path:

> The ends and means of development call for placing the perspective of freedom at the center of the stage. The people have to be seen, in this perspective, as being actively involved—given the opportunity—in shaping their own destiny, and not just as passive

recipients of the fruits of cunning development programs.[37]

Such an “agency-centered” development perspective implies, I argue in Part Four, a deepening and broadening of democracy that includes but goes well beyond a universal franchise coupled with free and competitive elections. Crucially important is the engendering of venues—within both government and civil society—in which citizens and their representatives can engage in deliberative give and take to solve common problems..

I argue in Part Four that the theory and practice of deliberative democracy, grounded in the ideals of agency, dialogue, reason giving, and reciprocity, has much to offer development ethics. Rather than focusing exclusively on free and fair elections, as important as they are, the theory and practice of deliberative democracy emphasizes social choice through public discussion that aims at solutions—solutions that nearly everyone can accept—to common problems. A political practice as well as a normative theory, deliberative democracy, I argue in Part Four, is informed by and informs promising experiments in democratic governance occurring in Porto Alegre and almost 250 other cities in Brazil, in Kerala, in India (an Indian state of 40 million inhabitants), and in Chicago, Illinois, among other places.

Finally, controversy also exists among development ethicists with respect to which agents and structures are to blame for the present state of global destitution and unequal opportunity and responsible for societal change. Charles Beitz states the empirical aspects of the issue well: “There is a large, complex, and unresolved empirical question about the relative contributions of local and global factors to the wealth and poverty of societies.”[38]

Some development ethicists, such as Pogge, emphasize that affluent countries dominate if not completely determine the global order, which as a result unjustly tilts against poor countries.[39] This global order and the process of globalization amounts, claims Pogge, to a "strong headwind" against which any poor community must struggle and which is largely responsible for development failures: "national policies and institutions are indeed often quite bad; but the fact that they are can be traced to global policies and institutions."[40] Other development ethicists and policymakers ascribe development failure much less to global and foreign sources and much more to national and local causes—such as elite capture of power, widespread corruption, and the lack of democratic institutions.

Let us appropriate and develop Pogge's "headwind" metaphor in a way that captures a view less one-sided view and one more pluralistic than "explanatory nationalism" that Pogge usually expresses about the relative and changing weight of external (global structure, rich country role) and internal (developing country role) factors in causing global poverty. Sailors know that the headwind against which they sail is an important but constantly changing and sometimes ambiguous factor and that getting to their destination requires skill and good judgment as well. The headwind is not always steady. Sometimes it gusts and sometimes it lulls (depending on the wind and whether their boat goes behind an island and is temporarily protected from the wind). Likewise, the impact of the global order and rich countries increases and decreases from time to time and place to place.

Moreover, sometimes there are crosswinds, some of which aid the skipper and some of which impede progress, and a good sailor must take advantage of the former and

adjust to the latter. Likewise, the global order opens up opportunities for poverty reduction and democratization as well as impedes them, and wise leaders and peoples discern the difference. Furthermore, the good sailor tacks back and forth in the face of the wind, taking advantage of it for forward progress and not bucking it directly. Likewise, a developing country can find ways to take advantage of and "manage" normally adverse global factors. For instance, a cutback on US aid in Costa Rica enabled Costa Rica to become less dependent on the U. S. Additionally, sometimes a headwind changes and becomes a tailwind. Then the global forces and rich country impacts coincide with and supplement internal development efforts. Finally, just as some boats are better than others with respect to resourcefulness, navigability, and stability, so some countries, owing to such things as natural endowments, governance, and human and social "capital," develop further and faster than others.

The moral of this nautical story is clear: Just as the national development efforts vary from time to time and place to place, so do the impacts of the global order and the rich countries that dominate this order. Although the wind is always a factor in sailing (sometimes more, sometimes less, sometimes good, sometimes bad, often both), so is the skill of the captain and crew (and their ability to work together). Empirical investigation is important to determine which way and how hard the wind is blowing and how best to use national skills and resources to reach a society's destination. Pogge recognizes the variability of internal factors; in his less careful formulations, however, he fails to recognize the variability and complexity of external factors, the changing balance between

external and internal factors, and the always important and sometimes crucial role of internal factors.[41]

This debate over the chief causes of development failure is closely linked to sharp disagreements over the moral appraisal of globalization, which I take up in 11, and the identification of "agents of justice."[42] Does globalization doom or guarantee good national and local development? Does globalization offer blessings and opportunities as well as miseries and risks? Is it up to developing nation-states and local communities to seize the good and avoid the bad of a globalizing world? Or should the main "agents of justice" be the rich nations, transnational corporations, and global institutions? In Chapter 11, I argue that the challenge is, as economist Joseph Stiglitz says, "to get the balance right . . . between collective action at the local, national, and global levels."[43]

New Challenges and Directions

The resolution of these controversies within development ethics should be understood in relation to the field's new challenges (and dangers) and the importance of exploring new terrain. Why are new directions in development ethics important?

First, the world itself changes. The end of World War II; the end of colonialism; the rise and fall of the Cold War and the break-up of the Soviet Union; disappearing species, global warming, and natural calamities; the advent of and blowback against neo-liberalism and increased economic integration among states; the end of Apartheid; the rapid spread and human toll of HIV-AIDs; the strengthening of a global human rights

regime; the accomplishments of national truth and reconciliation commissions and initiation of International Criminal Court; the atrocious terrorist attacks on New York, Washington, and elsewhere; the invasion and occupation of Iraq; the difficulties in promoting and sustaining democracy; the incidence of civil conflict and "failed" states—all these events present new challenges to those who reflect morally on the ends and means of national and global development.

Development ethics, I argue throughout this volume, have been and continue to be centrally concerned with understanding and combating human poverty and promoting human well-being throughout the world. Cutting-edge research addresses the issues of ill- and well-being with respect to those systematically excluded and vulnerable, such as women, the disabled, ethnic and religious minorities, displaced persons and immigrants, and the elderly.[44] Increasingly, however, development ethicists recognize that they should attend not only to the cures of multidimensional poverty but also to poverty's deep causes, such as inequality, and consequences, such as instability and conflict. Moreover, they realize that often poverty alleviation—because it can conflict with other good goals—should be linked in a complementary way with other morally urgent objectives. In so doing, development ethicists are pushing the frontiers of development and development ethics into new areas. It is not that development ethics should tackle every national and global issue. But it should address those problems that either issue in or stem from increased human poverty. Let me mention just three of them.

Since the mid-eighties, environmental ethicists and development ethicists, reflecting concerns in the environmental and development communities, have sought ways

to balance “conservation” and “development” or, in another formulation, to integrate environmental and development concerns in concepts of “sustainable development,” “ecodevelopment,” or “sustainable livelihoods.”[45] How might conflicts between “nature,” including non-human animals, and human well-being be avoided or mitigated? When conflicts cannot be avoided, what should our priorities be, how should they be decided, and who should decide?

A related issue, which I address in Chapter 7, is that of consumption and global justice. Peter Singer and Adela Cortina, among others, have insisted on the relationship between environmental damage, mainly due to consumption patterns in affluent societies, and global warming, which then leads to desertification, increased risk of flooding, famines and destitution in poor countries.[46] Although all industrial and post-industrial societies are guilty of damaging the ecosystem, it is the US that most consistently refuses to take responsibility for her “collective lifestyle”. Hence the topic of “development” and “conservation” is not just that of promoting development and conserving the environment in the South, but also that of underdevelopment in the South being causally linked—through environmental change—to “overdevelopment” or bad development in the North.

Another new direction for development ethics is that of ethical issues in reckoning with a society’s past wrongs, such as a government’s massively violating human rights and committing genocide against its own citizens or those of other countries. Often a group, nation, or region cannot advance to a better future of genuine development until it reckons ethically and effectively with a terrible past. Failure to hold past rights abusers accountable for their crimes contributes to a “culture of impunity” and disregard for the

rule of law, both obstacles to good development. Reckoning appropriately with past wrongs, in contrast, my contribute to (as well as benefit form) equitable and democratic development.[47]

Even before 9-11, but certainly afterwards, many were convinced that close causal links exist between, on the one hand, insecurity and lack of development, and on the other hand, security and genuine development. The 1994 *Human Development Report* sought to put security on the development agenda and development on the security agenda.[48] A decade later, the Commission on Human Security, which Amartya Sen and Sadako Ogata co-chaired, proposed that security issues be reframed as less about national security and more about human insecurity in the face of serious and remediable threats.[49] The US-British response to terrorism, however, arguably has continued to emphasize *national* security in the face of terrorism and has done so at the expense of civil liberties as well as national security. Just as problematic, the "war on terrorism" is distracting attention from other human ills and hijacking resources from efforts to ameliorate them. Among these are the deprivations that rights-based development aims to overcome. As Louise Arbour, the Canadian jurist and the UN's High Commissioner for Human Rights, commented as she departed from Canada's Supreme Court for her new position in Geneva:

> The all-consuming nature of the US-led campaign against terrorism is sucking the oxygen out of other initiatives. I think there are other areas of grave concern, one of which I think is the tension between civil and political rights and social, economic and cultural rights, the right to development, which is not recognized by

all as being a core human right.[50]

Yet, as many are coming to realize, poverty-reducing and humiliation-reducing development is surely one way of reducing the terrorist threat, for terrorism appeals most to those impoverished and disgraced, and good development decreases deprivations and promotes human dignity.[51]

These examples, in which development is linked with the environment, reckoning with past wrongs, and security, illustrate three ways of extending development ethics to topics traditionally considered outside development. Other such topics include trade,[52] displaced persons, migration,[53] bioethics, global financial structures and flows, and war within or between countries.

Beyond that of a changing world, new directions in development ethics are important due to three dangers that must be confronted and avoided: dogmatism, cooptation, and a certain modishness of development ethics, in general, and the capability approach, in particular. Each of these dangers threatens the critical bite and progressive evolution of ethical reflection on development ends and means.

Dogmatism occurs when an intellectual or practical movement insulates itself from a changing world and external critics. All such movements, including development ethics, the capability approach, and (as we shall see) deliberative democracy, are in danger of absolutizing past achievements instead of subjecting favorite ideas and institutions to continual scrutiny and—where called for—revision. As Richard J. Bernstein has argued and illustrated over the course of his long and fruitful career, it is precisely those ideas to

which we are most attached that we should probe for ambiguity, incompleteness, one-sidedness, and downright error.[54] There is certainly something to be said for a movement's seeking unity and coherence so as not to be dissipated and thereby lose its distinctive and critical perspective.[55] Yet, the quest for unity—like the quest for certainty that Dewey persistently excoriated—can become a straitjacket that prevents creative change. Why listen to our critics if we know we've got it right (and are certain that they are wrong)?

Development ethics, especially with the first appearance of textbooks,[56] has become a recognized discipline or field yet by that very fact may lose its critical soul. One antidote is to build fallibility, revisability, pluralism, and tolerance right into development ethics (and even *that* is no sure fire solution). Another remedy is to confront and sift through the arguments of those who oppose development ethics, for instance, those who continue to espouse supposedly value-neutral economics, those who object to overly abstract or utopian presentations and insufficient attention to questions of feasibility and implementation, and those who criticize development ethics as a tool of Northern or rich country hegemony.[57]

The capability approach, likewise, is in danger of calcification as it seeks to establish itself as a distinctive alternative to mainstream (utilitarian) development economics, Rawlsian perspectives, Kantian development ethics, human-rights based approaches, libertarianism, and champions of neo-liberalism. Capability and capabilities ethicists should confront the various critics, whether sympathetic or not, of their perspectives.[58] One of the most important of these criticisms is that the capability approach pays insufficient attention to asymmetries in social power. Some argue that Sen

fails to emphasize sufficiently local and household power imbalances, including gender inequalities.[59] Thomas Pogge argues that Sen consistently ignores global power imbalances, puts excessive explanatory weight on national and local factors of poverty, and pays insufficient attention to global causes.[60] Pogge also argues that Sen fails to spell out duties that affluent persons and nations have to change currently unjust global structures and institutions.[61] The three chapters in Part IV, Deliberative Democracy, Local Development, and Globalization, begin to assess these and other criticisms.

One healthy development within the capability orientation is the fact that Sen's and Nussbaum's perspectives exhibit increasing differences in style, intended audience, and substance. The annual conferences of the Human Development and Capability Association include many papers that evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the human development and capability approaches to development. Yet a danger exists that the capability orientation will be polarized into two dogmatic factions that unproductively argue about a "list" of universal features of a humanly good life. Fans of Nussbaum may dig in their heals and fight for one universal and prescriptive "list" while followers of Sen may just as tenaciously reject universal lists in favor of culturally-specific public discussion. It is important not to get seduced into this "Sen or Nussbaum" dichotomy. One way to do so is to identify strengths and weaknesses in both approaches. Another way is to find ways to mediate between or creatively advance beyond the two.[62] I adopt both strategies throughout the present volume, especially when I argue for (i) a convergence of the capability approach and deliberative democracy (Chapter 9) and (ii) the democratic role for lists of valuable capabilities (Chapter 10).[63]

The capability orientation is best characterized not as “Sen plus Nussbaum” or “Sen versus Nussbaum” but as a capacious family of perspectives. Sen was the first contemporary author while Nussbaum is currently the most prolific family member. Influenced by both of these thinkers, many (often younger) capability friends and relations are applying, extending, and innovatively developing the capability perspective. To do otherwise would be to create a new dogmatism and weaken the approach’s intellectual and political voice.[64]

We may also reinforce new directions in development ethics by applauding the way in which development ethics and, in particular, Sen’s perspectives on development have begun to penetrate international institutions and popular discourse. Sen gave lectures at the World Bank that eventuated in *Development as Freedom*, the volume that would become the most popular and accessible statement of his ideas. With Bank President James Wolfensohn, Sen coauthored an article printed in the *International Herald Tribune*.[65] Beginning in 2000, Sen has keynoted five “Ethics and Development” conferences at the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB). The Initiative on Social Capital, Ethics, and Development of the IADB sponsors these events while the Government of Norway funds them.[66] The World Bank devotes its *World Development 2006* to the topic of “Equity and Development” and in its Public Sector and Governance unit has begun an initiative, “Ethics and Leadership,” to consider ways in which development ethics might be institutionalized within developing countries and the Bank’s own operations.[67]

Those of us who have labored in the fields of development ethics are delighted to

see such institutions engage in moral (as well as economic) appraisal of development policies. With success in putting ethics on the agenda of these institutions, however, come new dangers. The critical and radical thrust of development ethics and the capability approach may be tamed or sanitized by institutions that talk ethics but keep walking as they did before. To be forewarned is to be forearmed; a great help in this regard are recent studies of the way that international institutions often have taken the sting out of progressive concepts.[68] Another way to reduce the danger of cooptation is for both insiders and outsiders—and hybrid insider-outsiders—in development ethics to apply ethical assessment to the policies and practices as well as to the rhetoric of national development and aid agencies and international financial institutions.[69] Or so I argue in the next chapter.

NOTES

1. For fuller sketches of the history of development ethics, see David A. Crocker, "Toward Development Ethics," *World Development*, 19, 5 (May 1991): 457---83; Denis Goulet, *Development Ethics,* Preface, Introduction, and Part I; "Development Ethics," in *The Elgar Companion to Development Studies*, ed. David Alexander Clark(Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar), 115---21; and Des Gasper, "Development Ethics – an Emergent Field? A Look at Scope and Structure with Special Reference to the Ethics of Aid," *Ethics and Development: On Making Moral Choices in Development Cooperation*, ed. C.

J. (Kampfen, Netherlands: Kok, 1997), 25---43; Marta Pedrajas Herrero, “El desarrollo humano en la economía ética de Amartya Sen,” Ph.D. Thesis, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Valencia, 2005, 29---45.

2. M.K. Gandhi, *An Autobiography: The Story of My Experiments with Truth* (Navajivan Mudranalaya, Ahmedabad: Jitendra T. Desai, 1927); Raúl Prébisch, *The Economic Development of Latin America and its Principal Problems*, (New York: United Nations, E/C.12/R.1, 1950); Edgar J. Dosman, “Raul Prebisch,” in *The Elgar Companion to Development Studies*, ed. David Alexander Clark (Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar, 2006), 468---73; Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961; reprint, Grove Press, 1986). For the emergence of development economics after World War Two, see Gerald L. Meier and Dudley Seers, *Pioneers in Development* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984).

3. See Oswaldo Feinstein, “Hirschman, Albert Otto (b. 1915),” in *Elgar Companion*, ed. Clark, 226---30.

4. See Paul Streeten, “Myrdal, Gunnar (1898-1987),” in *Elgar Companion*, ed. Clark, 399---404.

5. Des Gasper suggests another, more practical, 1960’s source of development ethics, namely, those practitioners engaged in moral arguments about famine and emergency relief, human rights activists supporting the covenant on social and economic rights (1966), and religious communities influenced by liberation theology.

6. See *World Hunger and Morality*, 2d ed., eds.William Aiken and High

LaFollette, (Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1996). For Singer's most recent statement of the obligations of rich nations and individuals to poor ones, see Peter Singer, *One World: The Ethics of Globalization* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002), esp. chap. 5; and "What Should a Billionaire Give – and What Should You?" *New York Times Magazine*, December 17, 2006,

7. See, for example, Onora O'Neill, "The Moral Perplexities of Famine Relief," *Matters of Life and Death: New Introductory Essays in Moral Philosophy*, ed. Tom Regan (New York: Random House, 1980); *Faces of Hunger: An Essay on Poverty, Justice and Development* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1986); "Ending World Hunger," *Matters of Life and Death*, 3rd ed., ed. Tom Regan (New York: McGraw Hill, 1993); Nigel Dower, "What is Development?—A Philosopher's Answer," *Centre for Development Studies Occasional Paper Series*, 3 (Glasgow: University of Glasgow, 1988); Jerome M. Segal, "What Is Development?" *Philosophical Dimensions in Public Policy,* eds. Verna Gehring and William A. Galston (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Publications, 2002), originally available as a working paper.

8. Paul Streeten, Shaid Javed Burki, Mahbub ul Haq, Norman Hicks, and Frances Stewart, *First Thing First: Meeting Basic Needs in Developing Countries* (London: Oxford University Press, 1981). See also Hugh Stretton, "Streeten, Paul (b. 1917)" in *Elgar Companion*, ed. Clark, 115---21; Johan Galtung, "The New International Order and the Basic Needs Approach," *Alternatives*, 4 (1978/79): 455---76; "The Basic Needs Approach," in *Human Needs*, ed. Karin Lederer (Cambridge, MA: Oelgeschlager, Gunn

& Hain, 1980); Francis Stewart, *Planning to Meet Basic Needs* (London: Macmillan, 1985); “Basic Needs Approach,” in *Elgar Companion*, ed. Clark, 14---18.

9. Amartya Sen, “Development Thinking at the Beginning of the 21st Century,” *Economic and Social Development into the XXI Century*, 531---51, ed. Louis Emmerij (Washington, DC: Inter-American Development Bank, 1997). As noted in Chapter 1, Sen’s most systematic and readable statement of his capability approach and development ethic is *Development as Freedom.* See Sabina Alkire, *Valuing Freedoms*, for the most complete bibliography of Sen’s writing on ethics and development through 2001. See also, Carl Riskin, “Sen, Amartya Kumar (b. 1933),” in *Elgar Companion*, ed. Clark, 540---45.