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**Collected Papers
of the
Ford Foundation
Interdisciplinary Research Seminar
on Ethical Issues in International Development**

Spring and Fall Semester
1999 – 2000

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Coordinator

with

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Introduction

In the last fifteen years or so development ethics has emerged as a recognizable field of study with its own scholarly association and an increasing number of thematically self-identified publications (Gasper 1996). Discussions in this period of time in this field have progressed from such theoretical issues as the nature of human development, the extent to which human rights can be said to be universal, what the limits of sovereignty might be and what the obligations of developed and developing nations are to each other, to issues of a more applied nature that concern the details of education and health policies and the administration of international aid programs. Participating in these discussions have been philosophers, economists, planners, and on-the-ground development project administrators, among others. (See for example, Nussbaum and Sen 1993 and Glover and Nussbaum 1995.) The editors of this volume, a regional planner and a philosopher, have had both a professional and personal interest in these discussions and so were delighted to have the opportunity to conduct an interdisciplinary graduate seminar on ethical issues in international development. Funds for the seminar were provided by a grant from the Ford Foundation to the Arms Control, Disarmament, and International Security Program at the University of Illinois at Urbana–Champaign (UIUC).

The seminar was held in the Spring term of 1999 and addressed through readings and guest speaker presentations the following themes: development and human well-being, economic development as human development, sovereignty and intervention, objectivity of cosmopolitan ethical judgements, international recognition of human rights, the human capabilities approach to development ethics, culture and development ethics, development and the environment, Huntington's "Clash of Civilizations" and Asian responses, democratic responses to multiculturalism, and local government corruption in the administration of international aid programs. The seminar attracted students from the disciplines of anthropology, geography, law, medicine, philosophy, political science, and urban and regional planning. Faculty participants from economics, education, philosophy, planning, political science, religious studies and the campus program on Women in International Development either led sessions of the seminar or took part in discussion for part of the term. Students were required to submit and present research papers, the best of which are collected in this volume.

In "Liberal Ethnocentrism, Pluralism, and Culture: Examining an Enduring Problem," Rawdon Waller examines Richard Rorty's liberal ethnocentric theory. Rorty argues that it is reasonable to embrace and have confidence in liberal western values and to use those values as a standard to assess other cultures, even while we acknowledge their contingency and recognize that it is impossible to defend those values in an objective and non-circular way. In response to various objections that he explains, Waller calls for a tempered, tentative reformulation of Rorty's views. The objections include the charge (from Seyla Benhabib) that Rorty ignores the extent to which a global community is being created and the charge (from Michell Moody-Adams) that he ignores the possibility of a neutral non-coerced conversational ground among cultures. Also that he fails to recognize that even liberal ethnocentrists might benefit both from seeking a neutral vocabulary that would be acceptable to other groups and from making themselves more open to cross-cultural dialogue and comparison.

In "From Development Ethics to Medical Ethics: 'Capabilities,' 'Well-Being,' and the Conceptualization of Health Care," Bjorn Westgard appropriates some central concepts in development ethics with the aim of putting them to work in medical ethics, and especially with a view to developing a deeper conception of health. In particular he focuses on some aspects of Partha Dasgupta's understanding of 'well-being' and on Sen's and Nussbaum's conceptions of 'capabilities.' Along the way he contrasts this approach to what the health care system should be aiming for with approaches that emphasize the availability of commodities, the maximization of satisfaction, and provision for basic needs.

In his contribution to this volume, Raja Shankar takes up the issue of when people have a right to secede. He argues that the right to secede is a secondary or latent right that may be exercised only when more primary rights are threatened. Shankar frames his discussion in terms of the increasingly interdependent world, the emergence of widely recognized human rights, and the need for widely accepted criteria for when secession is justifiable. He delineates what criteria must be met for justifiable secession and what institutions must be in place in order for the right to be enforced, expresses caveats about the approach he espouses, and identifies other issues that remain to be investigated.

David O'Dowd concludes the collection with an examination of corruption in developing nations. He provides an operational definition of corruption, traces its evolution in the practice of international development, and discusses the role of the development practitioner in combating corruption. O'Dowd then considers causes and effects of corruption and the emergence of its cross-national condemnation. After discussing current efforts to combat corruption, he concludes with some thoughts on what effective programs may require.

These four papers provide evidence of both the richness, complexity, and importance of issues under discussion in development ethics and what can emerge from graduate seminars in which expertise from across the disciplines is brought to bear upon these issues.

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Information on the Contributors

Rawdon Waller is currently attending law school in Australia. He is thinking about combining his training in law with a degree in philosophy (main interests: ethics and philosophy of mind) or medicine, or even both. He received the University Medal at Macquarie University in April 2000. He was accepted to study law at Oxford earlier this year, but declined the invitation.

Bjorn Westgard is a graduate student studying both medicine and anthropology through the Medical Scholars Program at the University of Illinois at Urbana–Champaign. His research is concerned with the intersections between public health and local practices in Senegal, West Africa. He is also exploring interactions between biomedicine and other complementary and alternative therapies in the United States, particularly as these reflect social, epistemological, and ethical transformations in managed care medicine and American society.

Raja Shankar, who holds a master's degree in urban planning from the University of Illinois at Urbana–Champaign, is now pursuing a Ph.D. in international development planning at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He has recently interned with the World Bank. *Liberal Ethnocentrism Versus Cultural Autonomy*.

Is Richard Rorty a Poor Man's Sociologist?

Rawdon Waller

Introduction

In this paper I will be examining Rorty's liberal ethnocentrism, a philosophical hypothesis founded on a pragmatist account of moral truth and moral objectivity. It is an hypothesis that has been proposed with the aim of helping us navigate a middle course between what *Rorty* sees as the horns of the universalist-relativist dilemma; a choice, *for Rorty*, between a Platonic or essentialist understanding of morality, and what he sees as the more rationally and anthropologically defensible accounts provided by relativistic theories, yet which nevertheless pose a threat to moral confidence and for that reason also warrant rejection. Rorty regards both theories as outmoded: "they are remnants of a vocabulary we should try to replace" (Rorty, 1989, 44). The question with which I shall be concerned for the greater part of this paper is, "Does liberal Ethnocentrism deliver a philosophically feasible alternative to either of these two theories?" I will argue that in fact Rorty's pragmatist arguments for his ethnocentric exhortations, in their *strictest* interpretations, do not provide such an alternative.

Beginning with an outline of Rorty's account of Pragmatism, I explicate his account of moral truth and objectivity, thereupon exploring the implications his interpretation of these notions has for the confidence we place in our fundamental normative values, in particular, the values of the *liberal societies of the West*. I shall outline Rorty's argument for why the justification of one's normative values can only ever come from an "inward," circular reference to those values, and why the terms we use to praise them can only be drawn from our own parochial normative vocabularies—in a word, why we must be *ethnocentric* about our fundamental values, even in light of the contingency of them.

As an important adjunct here, I should like to point out that just whether Rorty is identifying typical liberal *substantive norms* (like "headhunting is wrong"), or instead, highlighting actual (dialogical or other) *practices* of liberal societies that give rise to the "right" sorts of substantive normⁱ in discussing the values of liberal societies and the like, is something Rorty is not all that clear on himself. In any case, this does not affect my general stance in this paper. For, even if he *is* only talking about liberal *practices*, nonetheless, such practices are no less "normative" than any substantive principle (although they might plausibly be understood as being more *fundamental* to liberal societies).

Rorty, that is, is still arguing that these practices *should* be upheld to the *exclusion* of other types of non-liberal practice. Such "foundational" or fundamentally liberal practices still afford, at least in Rorty's opinion, a means by which to distinguish, *at that fundamental level*, liberal from non-liberal cultures, and are practices so central to the identity of liberal communities that: a) they cannot be relinquished and must be upheld to the exclusion of other competing foundational procedures; b) foundational practices of other non-liberal cultures must meet the standards of these liberal ones if they are to be as desirable to liberal societies as the ones liberal societies already possess.

For the purpose of being as charitable as possible to Rorty's arguments in this paper, I shall be assuming that he is talking about "normative ground rules" when he mentions such things as "whatever emerges from the conversation of Europe" (Rorty 1982, 156), or "Socratic conversation" (Rorty 1989, 46), or the "Socratic virtues" (Rorty 1982, 173). I will for most of the paper, however, be using the term "values," and occasionally, "principles," to refer to these fundamental procedural ideals or ground-rules. This is done for the sake of verbal efficiency, as well as to reflect Rorty's ambiguity on this matter.ⁱⁱ

After completing the exposition of Rorty's arguments for liberal Ethnocentrism, I proceed to examine several objections mounted against these arguments that address them on two quite distinct levels.

The first sorts of objection challenge certain problematic assumptions, sometimes implicit, sometimes explicit, that we find in Rorty's deployment of the notions of a "culture" and an "ethnos," and I offer these objections in response to the strict or *narrow* interpretation of Rorty's arguments I alluded to above. These

types of presupposition, I argue, motivate Rorty to see liberal culture as an “island unto itself”: an entity impervious to both normative and non-normative inter-cultural influences. However, as I contend, these presuppositions are confuted by empirical arguments that make reference to the ever-expanding circle of modernisation in the political, agricultural, economic, and various other spheres of human endeavour, a global event which has brought the world’s cultures—both “traditional” and modern—into complex normative and non-normative confrontations with each other. It is these manifold confrontations, I argue, that belie the view that cultures are “islands unto themselves,” and which falsify the other theses about culture I believe Rorty upholds, at least, in his most non-critical liberal “mode.”

The second type of objection I raise concerns not so much the sociological or philosophical presuppositions of Rorty’s arguments for liberal Ethnocentrism as is does the problematic *corollaries* of these presuppositions. Here I argue (*pace* Michelle Moody–Adams) that the “moral introversion” of the liberal ethnocentrist *may* tend to place almost a priori restrictions on what is and is not possible in terms of cross-cultural dialogue, restrictions which seem to preclude the beneficial effects such dialogue can have, not only in terms of social reflexivity and the avoidance of unchecked ethnocentrism, but also in terms of the role it can play with respect to the notion of “moral progress.” Again, this objection directly targets Rorty in his most non-critical or confident “mode” of ethnocentrism, a “mode” that although may not be a *logical consequence* of Rorty’s position, nevertheless *prima facie* seems to follow from much of what he says.

It is a *tempered* version of Ethnocentrism that I suggest may finally offer a practicable alternative to Normative Relativism and Moral Absolutism, modified by the objections of Michelle Moody–Adams and Seyla Benhabib, and consistent with the Pluralism of Moody–Adams and Nicholas Rescher.

Pragmatism

Pragmatism, Rorty tells us, is “simply anti-essentialism applied to notions like ‘truth,’ ‘knowledge,’ ‘language,’ ‘morality,’ and similar objects of philosophical theorising.” (ibid., 162) According to the pragmatist, *moral* “truth” is taken to refer to what any one group or culture accepts as *good to believe*, or is defined for any particular culture “*by reference to the various detailed practical advantages*” that may come the way of that culture by virtue of their holding the beliefs they do (Rorty 1989, 43).ⁱⁱⁱ It is a notion of which “there *is* nothing deeper to be said: truth is not the sort of thing, which *has* an essence.” (Rorty 1982, 162) “All that can be done to explicate ‘truth,’ ‘knowledge,’ ‘morality,’ ‘virtue,’” on the pragmatist’s account of these terms, “is to refer us back to the *concrete details of the culture* in which these terms grew up and developed.” (ibid., 173. My italics) Moral “truth,” we might say, is not a quantity measured by the degree of correspondence between *it* and something like a Platonic, non-corporeal, atemporal realm of moral *Forms* apprehended through enlightened ratiocination.

Thus for example, when in arguing against another culture’s normative convictions we offer the appeal that our convictions correspond to the “moral truth” of the matter, rather than a lucid apprehension of something like a Platonic realm of moral Forms, the pragmatist prefers to regard this as simply a *compliment* we pay “to the beliefs which we think so well justified that, for the moment, further justification is not needed” (Rorty 1989, 39.) But being “well justified” does not equate to “justified for once-and-all” and “across all cultures.”

From Truth to Humanity and Objectivity: The Pragmatist’s Extension of Anti-Universalism

A corollary of Rorty’s anti-essentialist Pragmatism, is that it is not only restricted to the notions of “truth” or “morality.” Anything which is construed as having an essence, or can be regarded as an “object of philosophical theorising” (Rorty 1982, 162), is a due target of such scepticism, and the notions of *humanity* and *objectivity* are no exception (Rorty is never clear if this entails that a *non-essentialist* form of moral objectivity might be possible, however).^{iv} As Rorty puts it, there is nothing “which stands to my community as my community stands to me, some larger community called ‘humanity’, which has an intrinsic nature.” (Rorty 1989, 59) In the same way that Rorty inveighed against the idea of “transcendental absolute truth,” so too he rejects the notion of a common, transcendental concept of “humanity” upon which could be based

a concept of universal moral principles, as well as the notion of a “God’s-eye” view of moral knowledge and moral truth; a notion of objectivity that represents a morally neutral “ahistorical standpoint” that can be “illuminated by the natural light of reason.” (Rorty 1989, 45) For the pragmatist, “there is no such thing as *presuppositionless critical reflection*, conducted in *no particular language* and *outside of any particular historical context*.” (ibid., 54).

At this point, it seems as though Pragmatism could go the way of *Meta-Ethical Relativism*. For, like the relativist, the pragmatist too believes that nothing can be said about the *intrinsic* nature of moral truth apart from what a particular culture believes it is *good* to believe. Both theories reject universalist or essentialist notions of the good, humanness, and objectivity. Furthermore, both types of theorist reject *Normative Relativism* (or at least the more crude varieties of the theory), insofar as they *reject* the claim that any system of normative values are as good or as justifiable or as true as any other (a claim which makes normative Relativism self-refuting, as the old Protagorean objection has it).

Where, however, does this leave the community who accepts the pragmatist’s scepticism about morality and yet at the same time wishes to maintain its normative practices and convictions? What prognosis does Rorty offer as regards the moral confidence of communities that adopt a pragmatist theory of morality?

Liberal Ethnocentrism, Liberal Ironists and The Turn Away from Meta-Ethical Relativism

Pragmatism noticeably diverges from Meta-Ethical Relativism, and even more so, from the path followed by varieties of Normative Relativism, however, in its endorsement of an *ethnocentric privileging* of the normative principles *of* and the particular interpretation of the moral “truth” possessed *by* one’s own culture *over* and *against* the normative principles of other, foreign cultures (a *substantive* non-meta-ethical position). The pragmatist purports to be able to employ notions like “moral truth” “in the way moral *realists* do” (ibid., 42)—not only as a term of commendation for the normative beliefs of one’s own group or culture, but as a standard by which to assess incompatible belief systems of other cultures, thereby enabling the possibility of cross-cultural criticism and the avoidance of moral doubt and nihilism.

In describing the post-Pragmatism moral status quo, Rorty suggests that the individuals of such a community adhere to their normative values as always while nonetheless consciously having “a sense of the *contingency* of their language of moral deliberation’ and thus of their community.” Rorty describes such individuals [in the case of the “western” world] as “liberal ironists” “people who combine commitment [to community and the principles that inhere in that community] with a sense of the contingency of their own commitment.” (ibid., 61) For Rorty’s liberal ironists, ethnocentrism is “as good as it gets”—it is a compromise between what *they* see as an empirically adequate description (offered by Relativists) of the meta-ethical status of moral claims (*viz.* that there is no one single right or true morality) and the problems generated by advocating an overly zealous Normative Relativism that offers no guarantee that one’s world will not be destroyed (c.f. Rorty 1989, 82) and the equally troubling and counter-intuitive consequences of moral nihilism.

In more detail, Rorty argues that we, as western liberals, should take truth, good, bad, and the like, to be “whatever emerges from the conversation of Europe” (Rorty, 1982, 156). For Rorty, the tolerance for the belief systems and practices of other non-”liberally-minded” groups, urged by variants of normative Relativism (or “moral isolationism”), is “an *impossible* tolerance” (Rorty 1989, 43). According to Rorty, *not* all beliefs are equally morally good or justifiable or true: “the fact that nothing is immune from criticism [given the redundancy of the transcendental notion of ‘objectivity’] does not mean that we have a duty to justify *everything* . . . there are lots of views we simply cannot take seriously.” (ibid., 44.). And even though there may be no absolute criteria by which to adjudge the “truth” or “foundedness” of the beliefs of one’s culture, nevertheless, Rorty argues, “this should not lead us to repudiate . . . the ideas of Socratic conversation, Christian fellowship, and Enlightened science,” in short, what might be thought of as the intellectual, social and political *practices* of *our* community, the community of the liberal, “secular modern West” (ibid., 46–7).

Justifying Liberal Ideals: Is Circularity the Only Way?

Rorty affirms that the terms the liberal ethnocentrist employs in justifying and extolling his or her “western” liberal normative values, to the *exclusion* of competing *non-liberal* normative systems and vocabularies, will be “drawn from the vocabulary of the liberal societies themselves.” (Rorty 1989, p.43) In justifying “our” western democratic values to other societies who do not share such ideals, all we can do, says Rorty, is “employ *our* criteria of relevance, where *we* are the people who have read and pondered Plato, Newton, Kant, Marx, Darwin, Freud, Dewey, etc.” (Rorty 1982, 174) We can only say that truth and justice lie in the direction marked by the successive states of European thought . . . This means that the pragmatist cannot answer the question “What is so special about Europe” save by saying “Do you have anything non-European to suggest which meets *our* European purposes better” (ibid.)

As he says elsewhere, justification for our liberal values “has to be in some vocabulary, after all, and the terms of praise current in primitive or theocratic or totalitarian societies will not produce the desired result.” (Rorty 1989, p.47) As I suggested above, this sort of circular justification for liberal ethnocentrism may be seen as a function of Rorty’s desperate desire *not* to forfeit his confidence in his parochial normative values or make the turn to moral nihilism—a “last ditch” effort by him to defend the normative ideals of the “secular modern West.” (ibid.)

Offering a summary of his arguments for liberal ethnocentrism as I see them, Rorty wants to say that there are certain typically liberal *fundamental practices* or “normative ground rules” (like that of free and uncoerced dialogue, or unencumbered expression of political opinion, for example) that we should be *ethnocentric about*, values that we should *assign privilege to* in confronting foreign (normative) procedures, procedures through which further typically liberal substantive normative principles (whatever they might be) may come to be formulated. By “assigning privilege to,” I mean the act of *favouring* our practices over those of other *non-liberal* cultures (a simple dictionary definition of “privilege” being employed here). To favour our liberal practices in this way is to thereby *exclude* the fundamental normative ground rules of other cultures as possibilities for our own use (c.f. “*there are simply lots of views we simply cannot take seriously.*” (ibid., 44). This, I want to argue, is the most plausible unpacking of the notion of “ethnocentrism.”

The reason *why* we want to be ethnocentric is because, even though we can admit that no normative values are right for all times and across all cultures, nonetheless, we do not want to accept nihilism and thereby relinquish *our* values, values that, at a gut-level, we think are better than anything else on offer, and certainly better than nothing at all.^v

Irrespective of the possible attraction of Rorty’s attempts to rescue moral confidence from the clutches of Relativism and Nihilism, however, I believe the theory he offers us is, *in its strongest form*, philosophically unacceptable. This is because of the factitious nature of the notion of “culture” he implicitly relies upon in propounding his arguments, a shortcoming that writers of the likes of Benhabib and Moody–Adams have provided trenchant criticisms of, and to which I shall now turn.

The Global Community of Interdependence and the Effects of Modernisation: Benhabib’s Response

Seyla Benhabib takes issue with Rorty’s liberal ethnocentric exhortations on many points, the first of which being what she refers to as the “poor man’s sociology” he displays in his arguments for the position.

Rorty and Poor Man’s Sociology

Commenting on the uniform approach she believes many philosophers take in debating the issues that arise in exploring the moral ground between the two outmoded extremes of Relativism and Universalism, Benhabib opines that [v]ery often cultures are presented as hermetic and sealed wholes; the internal contradictions and debates within cultures are flattened out; the different conceptual and normative options which are available to the participants of a given culture and society are ignored . . . and the significance of cross-cultural dialogue is minimised. (Benhabib 1995, 240; c.f. Moody–Adams, 207)

To maintain such presuppositions as these is, as Benhabib sees it, to preserve the notion of culture in the sense of what is merely “*an imaginary unity and oneness*—a certain *monism* of cultures.” (Benhabib 1995, 245)

Benhabib is critical of Rorty's Liberal Ethnocentrism on precisely these grounds, arguing that such problematic sociological presuppositions are manifest throughout his writings: in his persistent reference to notions like “western liberal society” and the isolable “western democratic ideals” he claims inhere in that type of society; to the notion of a “secular modern West,” “the conversation of Europe,” “states of European thought,” and “*our* criteria of relevance, where *we* are the people who have read and pondered Plato, Newton, Kant, Marx, Darwin, Freud, Dewey, etc.” (Rorty 1989, 43–50; 1982, 160–174)

And I would (cautiously) tend to agree. It may indeed be possible to attempt to rebut the charge of Benhabib here by drawing our attention back to the fact that, for Rorty, liberal ethnocentrists are *ironists* who combine their commitment to their preferred normative values with a sense of the contingency of that commitment, thereupon objecting that such ironists would express *favour* at Benhabib's anti-monist views. That is, it is open to a Rortyan liberal ironist to argue that in conceding the contingency of the “truth” of his or her normative prescriptions, s/he also recognises that there are more normative options open to him/her than just the ones “internally” available, in turn suggesting a recognition of the non-hermetic nature of “culture.” In response to this counter-argument, I would argue that Rorty's persistent reference to liberal society—the society whose normative values he wants us to be ethnocentric about—seems to presuppose that there exists such a thing as a *unitary* liberal culture, a way of life that exhibits a high degree of *cohesion* and *integration* in its normative values, with the result that this proposed “liberal culture” of the “secular modern West” (Rorty 1989, 47) is thereby amenable to individuation from other “non-liberal” cultures, and is something that can draw individuals together into a “we” of the kind of remarkable univocality Benhabib reasonably denounces.

In a little more detail, I think the claim that Rorty relies on these problematic claims in his arguments is a claim proven by the *confidence* Rorty has in the norms of his liberal ethnos, confidence that is characteristic of being an “ethnocentrist.” Rorty is so confident, not only that the values of a liberal society are the *right* ones, but that there will be no other style of values that would even come close to meeting “our European purposes,” that he favours his liberal practices to the exclusion of other normative practices, as we have seen. Such confidence in his parochial liberal values says to me that Rorty regards foreign normative values as being *fundamentally* different or incompatible, a claim which makes sense, seeing as though we are talking about the “normative ground-rules” that are *fundamental* to a culture's actually formulating substantive normative principles. Positing such fundamental inter-cultural differences in normative values, however, seems in turn to presuppose the problematic claims Benhabib talks of—those cultures are sealed wholes.

Again, it is important for me to note that I am not arguing that Rorty ever makes these problematic claims *explicitly*. Nor am I contending that such a view is the *only* consequence of Rorty's arguments. But what I *am* claiming is that, on the balance of probabilities, his arguments presuppose them. I make this claim in light of the fact that they *explain so well* Rorty's ethnocentric confidence in liberal normative procedures, and moreover, that his posited fundamental inter-cultural differences (which, recall, we can read off of his ethnocentric confidence) afford reciprocal Legitimation for those presuppositions; that is, they help explain why someone would want to accept those sociological generalisations. Whether a more cautious ethnocentric endorsement of liberal values might not avoid such a criticism is a further question to which I shall turn below.

Why Cultures are Not Monistic Entities, Hermetically Sealed off from Each Other

Granting that Rorty seems to support this cultural monism in arguing for liberal ethnocentrism, what are the difficulties involved in upholding such a “doctrine of cultural integration” (Moody–Adams 1997, 44)?

Benhabib, in explicitly rejecting Rorty's implicit acceptance of the assumption of *cultural hermeticism*, contends that

[i]n his continuing references to the “we” and “us,” to “them” and “our” group, Rorty seems to ignore that most of us today are members of more than “one” community, one linguistic group, one *ethnos*. Millions of people the world over engage in migrations, whether economic, political, or artistic... (Benhabib 1995, 243; c/f. Mayer,^{vi} and Moody–Adams 1997, 205–6)

As she suggests a little later on in her chapter, Rorty’s prescriptions simply fail to “do justice to . . . the complexities of cross-cultural communication, multiple identities and planetary interdependence in today’s *global civilisation*.” (Benhabib 1995, 243) As Moody–Adams suggests, they fail to do justice to the “proliferation of multinational corporations, the accompanying growth in migratory or ‘transnational’ labour, and the widening influence of international markets” that create manifold interdependencies that make it “ever more difficult to avoid serious cross-cultural conflicts of moral interpretations.” (Moody–Adams 1997, 206)

Likewise, Benhabib talks of a current “global situation” in which, “through the global realities of immigration, travel, communication, the world economy, and ecological disasters,” and in “the imperatives of nations states to survive in a world economic system, to maintain growth, to participate in international means of communication, production, commerce . . . not to mention armament” (Benhabib 1995, 244), there are created real *confrontations* between cultures, both non-normative and normative. This is a situation of “inevitable” *global* modernisation in the technical, economic, communication “and military organisational domains” and “world-wide reciprocal exchange, influence, and interaction” (ibid., 240); a situation in which, *contra* Rorty, any postulated clear-cut lines of demarcation between supposed “cultures” become blurred, to the point where “every ‘we’ discovers that it is part of a ‘they.’ . . . a community of interdependence” (ibid., 243–250).

That the world’s cultures have indeed become interdependent in this manner is something Benhabib thinks can be clearly seen from specific case studies.

For instance, she talks of the effects of “political and moral modernisation” (ibid., 253) on Third-World national liberation movements, which, “[d]espite their ‘anti-Western’ rhetoric, many . . . [have been] carried out in the name of Western principles of modernity, and some form of democratic rule.” (ibid.) For Benhabib, to omit these instances from the “narrative of political and moral modernisation” (in an endeavour to construe this narrative as a uniquely western event) would be “one-sided and inadequate.” (ibid.)

Yet another instance Benhabib takes to be support for her view, is the existence of multiculturalism and “multiculturalist” national policies in countries such as Australia, New Zealand, and USA, countries where “the presence of more than one ‘we’ community within the limits of the same political constitution is the norm.” (ibid., 241)

Benhabib also cites the work of Martha Chen and her case study of the women of Bangladesh and rural North India. Using this study to bolster her arguments as I have presented them above, Benhabib suggests that the sort of *social reflexivity* and *internal criticism* observed to have begun appearing around the mid-seventies in Bangladesh, especially on the part of *women* of lower castes in certain Bangladeshi societies, represents “one of the sociological constants of the transition from tradition to modernity” (ibid., 238), a transition in this case achieved when the women of the lower castes, who were already *participants* in their society, also acquired the standpoint of *observers* of their own ways of life, an acquisition founded on achieving “a critical distance” from their culture’s normative standards and on a subsequent challenging of that normative order (Benhabib 1995).

For Benhabib, all three of the above examples embody the “realities of global interdependence, the formation of multiple identities, and the universal interaction of cultures and ways of life.” (ibid., 247)

The crux of the argument here against the “poor man’s sociology” of Rorty and others is that, if modernity *qua* world-wide phenomenon is creating a global community of interdependence in the various ways described above, then it would seem ludicrous to maintain that cultures *qua* sets of normative and non-normative practices are “hermetically sealed off” from one another, and that cross-cultural dialogue (in some form) is minimal. In such a *global* climate of manifold dialogical and other interactions, cultures cannot be regarded as “tranquil islands” impervious to both non-normative and normative influences from the outside. As Benhabib puts it, the community with whom one “solarises”—Rorty’s “ethnos”—“has a shifting identity and no fixed boundaries.” (ibid.) Rorty’s clinical dividing up of the world into ethnically

individuated western and non-western cultures—into an “us” and a “them,” therefore, is more accurately understood to be a naïve oversimplification of the reality of the *global interaction* of cultures (c/f. Geertz 1986, 262).

Something which is of import in mentioning at this juncture, and which Benhabib perhaps fails to spell out, is that these interactions do not *have* to involve normative exchange: there is no *logical* connection between the effects of modernisation and normative change. I think we can infer from the above references to “modernisation” that these can occur in diverse “spheres” of human life—from the modernisation of the implements used to reap harvests, through to economic reform, which are both non-normative inter-cultural or inter-national exchange types of exchange. However, what I think Benhabib wants to argue, and what I think she is justified in arguing, is that such exchanges sometimes, perhaps even often, have deeper cultural ramifications, effects that impinge upon perhaps the most fundamental “level” of human experience: the normative one. It is for this reason that Rorty’s liberal ethnocentrism can be seen as possibly resting upon an erroneous conception of “culture.”

Having said all this, I should qualify these criticisms with the following caveat, and this is that, while it is one thing to deny cultural hermeticism, that cultures are unitary monads whose norms are promoted with immaculate univocality, it is a wholly different and far more contestable thing to deny culture altogether. I should opine that it is quite obvious that the task of delineating one culture from the next is still a *possible* one, a claim that is surely vindicated by, for example, the prevalence of global racial violence, violence that has its foundation in a “property” of the individuals involved that is rightly describable as “cultural.” While cultures may not be perfectly monadic or isolated, unitary agglomerations of individuals who univocally affirm a consistent, cohesive system of normative values, nevertheless it does not follow from the fact that deciding who is liberal and what constitutes typically liberal fundamental ground-rules is an impossibility in the face of ever-increasing global inter-cultural exchange.

Where does this leave us in relation to Benhabib’s arguments above? I would not see such an assertion as contradictory to Benhabib’s position: even though it might be true that “most of us today are members of more than one *ethnos*”, there undeniably exist isolable ethnic groups nonetheless. Nor would I regard Benhabib’s global interdependence arguments as logically precluding the possibility of one culture’s version of “the good” or “right” being better than other competing versions of that concept. This suggests that if we were to temper Rorty’s arguments by suggesting that in privileging one’s own cultural normative ground rules, one should do so tentatively, with a degree of inter-cultural “give and take” and perhaps an even greater sensitivity to the *contingency* Rorty himself recognises *vis-à-vis* the reasons one presents to oneself for privileging those rules in that way, then his position would become far more tenable, and Benhabib’s arguments a little less alarming. If indeed this modification to his theory were acceptable to Rorty, it might successfully avoid being interpreted as favourable to cultural monism.

I shall briefly explore these modifications again a little further on. In any case, taking a strict and unadulterated view of Rorty’s position still leaves it open to Benhabib’s “objection from cultural monism.” It also seems vulnerable to Michelle Moody–Adams’ arguments that explore the consequences of such a theory of morality.

Pragmatic Self-Absorption, and the Proscription of Uncoerced, Cross-Cultural Conversation and Comparison: A Further Problem

We have seen with respect to the case of Bangladesh that these pressures took the form of economic and (consequently) normative ones, to the point where the “pressure” became so great as to warrant internal conflict and change. However, when different cultures encounter and confront each other, whether this be due to global effects modernisation or not, the “pressures” placed upon the individual members of those cultures can be far more problematic. As Moody–Adams argues, the types of pressures experienced depends upon the particular manner in which a culture comports itself when faced with such encounters, whether nation states or tribal villages. It is from this claim that Moody–Adams attacks Rorty’s “self-absorbed ethnocentrism” (*ibid.*, 28), not for its lack of a sound philosophic-anthropological foundation, but for the disturbing consequences it makes possible.

As Moody–Adams asserts,

[w]hen diverse groups . . . are unwilling . . . to find neutral and *uncoerced* conversational ground, the human costs . . . can be devastating. But in actual practice, diverse groups do sometimes agree to accept some “vocabulary” as . . . neutral between previously competing vocabularies. Moreover, the possibility of such agreement presupposes a mutual readiness to see initially unfamiliar “others” as capable of sharing, or perhaps even already sharing, at least some of the beliefs and values of one’s current ethnos. (ibid., 27)

It is worrying, then, that Rorty’s prescriptions urge us (i.e. liberals) to *ignore* the possibility of such agreement and inter-cultural sharing of beliefs and values on the premise that ethnic boundaries, at the fundamental level of normative procedures, are impenetrable, and on the premise that inter-cultural agreement (when debating about these fundamental principles) arises only when other cultures accede to the conditions of liberal communities (the pragmatist, recall, replies to the question “What is so special about European normative ideals?” only by asking whether the non-European has “anything to suggest which meets our European purposes better?” (Rorty 1982, 174).

As Moody–Adams puts it, Pragmatism of the kind Rorty supports:

dangerously divides the world into “us” and the “others” in a way that renders *cross-cultural* conversation difficult if not impossible because it assumes that one can say in advance who is a member of one’s ethnos and who is simply beyond the pale. (Moody–Adams 1995, 27)

As I have attempted to establish, however, the community or “ethnos” with which one shares one’s beliefs and language—that group one calls “us”—only *contingently* constitutes one’s *culture*, inasmuch as who belongs to that culture can come to change under conditions such as those I have been discussing. The important principle here is that exactly who comes to constitute “us,” and who “*them*,” is not something that can be determined simply by reference to the lines marked out by “culture,” which, in turn, seems to show Rorty’s liberal ethnocentrism to be “premature” and therefore unjustified.

It is premature because, as an act of *moral self-absorption*, it blatantly *precludes* the engagement in unself-righteous comparisons *between* different ways of life and values that are a prerequisite for the constructive cross-cultural and uncoerced dialogue that can lead to the normative “progress” Rorty himself advocates, progress that can “make it possible for human beings to do more interesting things and be more interesting people” (Rorty 1989, 42). Just think about the example cited previously concerning the critical reflexivity of the women of Bangladesh’s underclass. They are surely finding their lives “more interesting” since adopting more “western,” liberal normative practices. Perhaps we might become “more interesting people,” or lead happier lives, or feel more content in the propriety of our normative practices, or even come to be aware of the shortcomings of our parochial normative values (something discussed below), if we were to adopt, or at least critically *consider* adopting, some of the normative values of societies and cultures other than our own. Making oneself (or one’s culture) more open to cross-cultural dialogue and comparison (such a possibility as this last is, I take it, the motivation behind the common exhortation to “get out and see the world”).

Ethnocentrism, however, denies us this opportunity: it tells us to accept our normative values even when this might mean forfeiting an opportunity to “progress” through endeavouring to diversify these values; it forecloses on the possibility that foreign normative values might not be that “bad,” or at least, not that *incompatible with*, “our” own.

An unsettling consequence of the foreclosure of such potentially fruitful cross-cultural dialogue and normative comparison is the epistemic disadvantage it produces. Such disadvantage does not escape the attention of Rorty himself, who admits that one way of interpreting what the pragmatist is saying is to take him or her to be arguing for the claim “that *we* are in a privileged situation by being *us*” and that “truth can only be characterised as ‘the outcome of doing more of what we are doing now’” (Rorty 1982, 174). Rorty, in an expression of what seems like self-doubt, poses the self-critical question, “but what if the ‘we’ is the Orwellian state?” As Rorty himself suggests, there seems to be “something terribly dangerous” (ibid.) about a theory of morality which exhorts us “to extend the reference of ‘us’ as far as we can.” (Rorty 1989, 37)

Now of course, the sorts of normative values advocated by something like an Orwellian state are anathema to those advocated by liberal societies: liberals take their principles to be paradigms of rationality and beneficence, after all. The concern Rorty voices here is not so much directed to *liberal* ethnocentrism, but, rather, the ethnocentrism that privileges far less benign normative values (values an “Orwellian” state would represent). The problem, however, is that, in the absence of any inter-cultural debate, specifically geared to addressing whether or not *our* fundamental liberal normative values really *are* the best sorts of norms we could endorse, it becomes difficult to tell just how close we might be approaching something like the “Orwellian” state Rorty is so mindful of.

As “liberals,” we would like to think that the fundamental normative practices of our society are the best thing for the world. Unfortunately, this is what many political despots have probably also thought of *their* fundamental normative practices. There are, however, other examples far closer to home: the “Jim Crow” segregation laws that divided black and white Americans in the 1950s, pernicious laws that were enforced “right under the nose” of a “liberal” society, as it were, laws that apparently seemed to a significant number of Americans to be morally defensible.

Moody–Adams expresses the essence of my argument here rather nicely when she suggests that “[c]onflicts between competing moral interpretations are . . . sometimes the only effective means of rationally compelling both human cultures and individuals to confront the *limited* and *fallible* nature of the moral interpretations they have come to accept” (Moody–Adams 1997, 196),^{vii} although I would perhaps use the term “debate” as opposed to “conflict.”

And while I am not suggesting that something like the “Jim Crow” laws were archetypal substantive liberal norms, or that the practice of free and open discourse is a principle that threatens the well-being of the individuals of both “our own” and other societies in the way that a practice like killing those who disagree patently is, nonetheless, perhaps there are *other* “fundamental liberal practices” that are not so *prima facie* appealing. Part of the trouble here is that Rorty is annoyingly mute on just what does go towards constituting a system typical liberal practices, and so we just cannot know. In any case, the “moral” of my story here is quite quotidian: it is the moral behind our parents’ exhortations to “get out and see the world” and avoid the “closed-mindedness” of parochial ways of thinking and valuing; behind the platitudinous urging to “put yourself in someone else’s shoes,” and to “try and see someone else’s view for a change.” The moral is that there is an almost *intrinsic* value in confronting, comparing, and considering the values and general “world-view” of the “other” as viable alternatives to our own: the value of equanimity and greater self-understanding in relation to others.^{viii}

I must qualify what I am saying here: I am *not* suggesting that Rorty advocate the paradigmatic liberal practice of free and open dialogue and debate to the point where he accepts principles that proscribe this valuable normative procedure. What I *am* suggesting is that he adopt a more open comportment to the fundamental normative practices of other cultures, not to the point where this open comportment is *self-refuting*, but, at *minimum*, to the point where dialogue and debate about whose normative values are the best, or the most acceptable, is less ethnocentric and more open to inter-cultural exchange, and, who knows, may even lead to Rortyan “progress,” or at least avoid the ethical pitfalls associated with a lack of “corrective feedback” that comes through such openness to “the other.”

Accepting the “Force” of Culture

The ideas of this last paragraph might set alarm bells ringing at this point: “if Rorty exhorts us to privilege Western liberal norms over others, surely he would be on Benhabib’s and Moody–Adams’s side, so what’s the big fuss?”, I here you ask. The big fuss originates, as I have argued, in the leanings towards cultural monism implied in Rorty’s writing, and in the dangerous parochial zealotry that leaves his ethnocentrism open to the objections Moody–Adams mounts (recall that Rorty argues that “there are lots of views we simply cannot take seriously” (*ibid.*, 44) because they do not represent norms “which meet *our* European purposes.” (Rorty 1982, 174) We know that Rorty does not accept an incommensurability or radical incompatibility theses about cultures: “the distinction between different *cultures* does not differ in kind from the distinction between different theories held by members *of a single culture*.” (Rorty 1989, p.48) Judging from this statement, it seems Rorty would concur in affirming that the normative practices of different cultural groups differ only *by degree*, and not *fundamentally* or beyond means of resolution. And

again: “cultures are not to be thought of on the model of alternative geometries. Alternative geometries are irreconcilable.” (ibid., 40)

But Rorty's reliance upon a strong, seemingly immutable “us” and “them” dichotomy in arguing for his liberal ethnocentric views implies a division that installs such deep divisions between cultures that it seems to presuppose, if not an incommensurability thesis about culture, then at least a deep incompatibility that *prima facie* contradicts, or *could* come to contradict (at some point in time when liberal norms take a turn for the worse—c/f. my “Jim Crow” argument above) the very principles which Rorty identifies as typically liberal.

This returns me to the brief alternative to Benhabib's arguments I proposed above: that the facts of (and problems by) global interdependence and interpenetration do not logically preclude one culture's version of “the good” or “right” being better than other competing versions of those normative concepts or rules. As I suggested there, a *tentative* and perhaps not so overly confident liberalism of the species Rorty endorses would be congenial to the sort of open and non-coercive discourse writers of the likes of Benhabib and Moody–Adams describe, while nonetheless retaining the respect for the *reality* that is human culture. As Moody–Adams affirms, “[i]t is certainly true that every culture develops patterns of normative expectations . . . which help structure the formative experiences of each person in a given culture-bearing group” (ibid., 56; c/f. Charles Taylor 1989, 31–7; 1995, 228–235)^x. Being imbibed from childhood with culturally-based values will undoubtedly and “profoundly influence the character of even the most fundamental desires and purposes likely to be manifested in human action.” (Moody–Adams 1997, 56)

Nonetheless, the *fact* of “enculturation” does not thereupon entail that, as liberals, we should always think we are right: Rorty's position, if its is going to provide a workable response to Benhabib's and Moody–Adam's (rather obvious) objections, *cannot afford to be construed* as a “relax-and-enjoy-it” ethnocentrism (Geertz 1986 in Moody–Adams 1997, 26). Arguing from the other side though, there is no reason why Rorty must be committed to a doctrine of cultural monism or “immaculate cultural hermeticism,” even if he does at times seem to rather lazily lean towards this view of cultures. In short, if Rorty could keep his cultural distinctions, and his critical preference of certain (namely Western liberal) cultural norms over others, while at the same time allowing that “a variety of mediating influences will complicate the notion that some dominant ‘cultural influence’ shapes the individual personality” (Moody–Adams 1997, 307), I see no reason why liberal ethnocentrism might not endure its denunciation from the anthropological quarter of philosophy.

Perhaps Rorty's ethnocentrism thus modified might be regarded as somewhat more akin with the Pluralism prescribed by writers like Michele Moody–Adams and Nicholas Rescher.

Ethnocentrism and Pluralism: A Practicable Combination?

As I argued above, moral debate or “conflict” (as Moody–Adams refers to it) can be important for the *regulation* of the normative principles a society comes to advocate—it can keep any threat of the despotism that might arise in the name of “ethnocentrism” “in check,” as it were. It can also lead to the sort of “progress” Rorty talks of; as Moody–Adams puts it, moral inquiry “most often *develops* through moral disagreement and conflict” (Moody–Adams 1997, 195), conflict that arises as a result of the preservation of diverse normative systems. And although it cannot be denied that the moral conflict being praised here can sometimes escalate to the point where one community's or even nation's political stability is threatened, nonetheless, I believe that such a despicable eventuality is more likely to arise when the sort of open, non-coerced, non-violent, *discursive* confrontation prescribed by Pluralism is *not* practiced, a claim most easily justified, to reiterate an insightful observation of Moody–Adams, by a reflection on the limited and fallible nature of humanity.

Now, I concur with Rescher in believing that the best way to procure such benefits as these, is to comport ourselves towards other cultures and nations in a manner that reflects “a general harmony of constructive interaction” (Rescher 1993, 3), behaviour that requires us acquiesce to the difference of others, while respecting their autonomy, “conced[ing] their right to go their own variant way within the framework of such limits as must be imposed in the interests of maintaining that peaceful and productive communal

order that is conducive to the best interests of everyone alike.” (Rescher 1993, 3; c/f. Hazlitt 1964, 290–6) Rescher, like myself and Moody–Adams, reject the *ideal* of global consensus. Instead, he prescribes that a notion like “damage control” be our guiding ideal; that we accept the fact of *dissensus* (agreement to disagree) while always being aware that available options *could be worse*. Such a *pluralist* hypothesis, Rescher believes, will adequately allow for an avoidance of both “dogmatic absolutism on the one hand and relativistic nihilism on the other.” (Rescher 1993, 4) What is more, if we accept Michael Stocker’s argument that monistic theories like Pragmatism *preclude* the sorts of “virtuous” conflict I have been extolling, allowing only for *Akratic*-type conflicts (see Stocker 1990, 260–77), then the pluralist’s exhortations become even more attractive, given that they offer us the most feasible means by which to acquire the benefits that can be reaped as a result of such open debate and confrontation.

But even if I am right here in claiming that Pluralism can be *universally beneficial* in these ways, nonetheless, is it possible maintain a general harmony of constructive interaction while also honouring the autonomy of other cultures?

Moody–Adams, for example, argues that “a way of life that involves the use of violence or other non-argumentative efforts to coerce others” acceptance of it *is outside the critical pluralist’s understanding of acceptable ways of life*. A critical pluralist may consistently claim, still further, that at least some moral convictions *must be respected as uncontestable* . . . [for instance] a conviction that everyone is entitled to an equal chance to participate in moral debate. (Moody–Adams 1997, 203) This last conviction was implicit in Rescher’s notion of respecting cultural autonomy. It is *explicit* in Benhabib’s postulation of “the right to equal participation among conversation partners and the right to suggest topics of conversation, to introduce new points of view” (Benhabib 1995, 251), normative guidelines that, contends Benhabib, apply *cross-culturally* and to *all humanity*. It is also the conviction which I suggested gives Pluralism its initial attractiveness.

It is Pluralism in *this* sense which I believe Rorty’s liberal ethnocentrism, when tempered by the objections of Benhabib and others, most closely comes to resemble: a theory of morality that recognises the value and reality of culture, and in doing so insists, perhaps ethnocentricity, upon one preeminent norm: cultural autonomy, equality, and whatever it takes to ensure such a fundamental rule is applied to and for the benefit of all cultures.

That this kind of Pluralism is kindred with the tentative ethnocentrism I have described above is evidenced by Moody–Adams’s own statement that Pluralist values “clearly embody a preference for *one* particular kind of culture over others” (Moody–Adams 1997, 213). *A la* Rorty, Moody–Adams affirms that “a critical moral pluralism is *not* . . . indistinguishable from cultural imperialism. After all, the members of any cultures under scrutiny can simply reject the values linked with the acceptance of pluralism. . . . This may well be the only way to accord overriding moral importance to the range of cultures which reject the presumption” (ibid.).

Of course, to some this may appear to be a flagrant about-face on the part of Pluralism: if some ways of life really are unacceptable because they contravene certain principles advocated by the *tentatively ethnocentric* pluralist that are held to be “uncontestable” and which thereby ground cross-cultural criticism and even intervention, then Pluralism seems to approach closer to the original Rortyan liberal Ethnocentrism than writers like Rescher and Moody–Adams would like to believe. If, however, the pluralist moves to escape the charge of cultural imperialism by “accepting the unacceptable” viz. allowing the rejection of some central tenet of his or her theory, then Pluralism appears to be redolent of the very self-refuting features that *Normative Relativism* is criticised for.

However, as I have attempted to demonstrate, Pluralism, as akin to a modified version of Rorty’s liberal Ethnocentrism, tempered by emphasising the permeability (and also the reality) of cultures and the contingency of culture-based norms, gives us a moral theory that is not simply co-extensive with a crude cultural imperialism. If one does not “buy” this response, and complains of blatant self-refutation, I can only respond by declaring my preference for ignoring such a counsel of absolute or “foundational” moral justification, choosing instead to promote what I believe is the only *practicable* manner in which to resolve cultural disagreements in relation to a culture’s normative ground rules. Perhaps this remains an unacceptably crude “solution” in the eyes of some philosophers. Nevertheless, it *is* a practicable alternative for resolving moral conflict.

Conclusion

What I hope should have become obvious from the earlier paragraphs of this paper is that, seeing cultures as islands unto themselves, impervious to *meaningful* inter-cultural dialogical and other types of interactions, and insulated from the normative options that become disclosed *through* such interactions, is both a naïve and indefensible view to hold, for all the reasons I gave in those paragraphs. As I next attempted to demonstrate, Rorty's liberal ethnocentrism, *at its most parochially vehement*, may not give rise to the sorts of social conditions that can help generate the fruitful normative exchanges that make for moral "progress."

However, taking on board the objections of Benhabib and Moody-Adams, and in the spirit of the Pluralism espoused by Rescher and Moody-Adams, I firmly believe Rorty's liberal ethnocentrism offers the sorts of social conditions that conduce to the "moral vitality" (ibid, 203) and moral development of cultures, as well as the benign regulation of a culture's fundamental norms and practices, that no other moral theory may.

It would be unfortunate if, as I noted, some philosophers regarded the "ethnocentric pluralist's" commitment to the preservation of "pan-cultural autonomy" as a commitment to acts of imperialistic cross-cultural criticism and possibly even coercive intervention. But I do not believe that a suitably modified version of Rorty's liberal Ethnocentrism entails such a repugnant consequence. Moreover, if we heed too closely such fastidious counsels of the absolute justificatory kind, we are simply not left with much of an outlook onto the moral landscape, and this, I suggest, represents a far more desperate ethical quandary which the moral philosopher must turn to face if s/he does not accept the tenability of the alternative I have endeavoured to formulate in this paper.

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From Development Ethics to Medical Ethics: “Capabilities,” “Well-Being,” and the Conceptualization of Health Care

Bjørn C. Westgard

Introduction

The present paper represents a personal and pragmatic project that I hope will, nevertheless, have broader implications for more general understanding of development ethics and development theory. My interest in applying development ethics to the realm of health and health care arises out of a desire to progressively build my own professional work on firmer philosophical grounds. My endeavor is therefore “practical” in the sense that Des Gasper, borrowing from Goulet, has outlined. As a critical medical anthropologist my own profession consists in simultaneously bringing broad critical theory to both the academic, social-science approach and applied, biomedical study of health and health maintenance as a socio-cultural domain around the world. This braiding of science and humanism in ethnography and analysis derives largely from medical anthropology’s dual roots in academic anthropology and applied international development work.

In bringing a critical medical anthropology approach to recent issues in health care, others in my profession have most recently worked to problematize Western biomedicine’s claims to any “universal” status, while also arguing for a newly revalued domain for culturally appropriate “ethnomedical” systems. Consequently, the relative advances, failures, and excesses of Western biomedicine and a variety of ethnomedicines have increasingly been compared and evaluated. However, attempts to negotiate the waters between these two ethnographic and analytical foci have been somewhat hampered by a reluctance to either (1) abandon Western biomedical notions of health or (2) correspondingly advocate for the replacement of biomedicine with other local ethnomedical systems. I am interested in applying aspects of Partha Dasgupta’s understanding of “well-being” and Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum’s conceptions of “capabilities” to the domain of health and health maintenance in order to find a means for negotiating between draconian Western universals and a paralyzing cultural relativism.

Therefore, my aim in this paper will be; first, to outline previous commodity and welfare approaches to health care and their deficits. Second, I will then discuss the ways in which Sen’s and Nussbaum’s “capabilities” framework can suggest a space for Dasgupta’s somewhat more concrete discussion of “well-being” in order to overcome such deficits and point toward means of measurement. Finally I will draw out what I believe are the implications of such a development ethics perspective for expanding the domain and pertinence of medical ethics. To be most useful (particularly for my own work) it is my understanding that both medical ethics and development ethics should be broadly applicable to health care resource management and policy in both the “developed or “first” world (say, the United States) as well as in the transitional countries of the “developing” or “third” world.

Medical Ethics and the Quality of Life

Much of my thinking on this issue was originally stimulated by Dan Brock’s essay, “Quality of Life Measures in Health Care and Medical Ethics,” and Sen and Nussbaum’s edited volume, *The Quality of Life*. I support many of the ethical premises that Brock brings from the field of medical ethics to understanding medicine’s role in “the quality of life.” However in trying to specifically approach the views of all of the authors introduced above, I have felt it necessary to shift my own viewpoint on ethics and health away from Brock’s positions. First, I am beginning from the premise that contrary to Brock’s exercise applying medical ethics knowledge to understanding the quality of life is not as fruitful an endeavor as applying a philosophical understanding of “a quality life” to the ethics of medicine. The result of such an endeavor may very well be a hybrid that expands

the purview of conventional medical ethics while also articulating the broad strokes of a “capabilities” development ethic to the detail of the contingent processes that it purports to permit within the loose outlines of its conceptions.

Development Ethics to Medical Ethics

The medical ethics approach that Brock brings to the question of the quality of life is uniquely limited by its original development for problems within the curative Western biomedical setting. Brock’s essay takes a specific domain of behavior and ethics and tries to extend it to a broader domain. Indeed there are similarities here in the way of medical ethics and the capabilities approach that I will be discussing later, considering a person’s capacity for and exercise of self-determination. However, in the sense that this is a more particularistic framework and exercise, I believe current medical ethics approaches are most useful in delimiting the boundaries of a broader ethical endeavor that acknowledges local and contextual plurality (O’Neill 1996, 102). That is to say that, while invaluable in the medical arena, this specific area of concern is less useful, generally, than is the general or even universal schema (in the case of capabilities) of development ethics for at least some ethical considerations in medicine.

The Expansion of Biomedicine

The difficulty arising from Brock’s starting point can also be seen from another angle. It should first be pointed out that medical ethics has primarily dealt with questions of curative medicine not preventative, public health, or environmental. Nevertheless medical ethics, particularly as it is displayed in Brock’s article, is concerned with individual human functioning, specifically basic or primary biological functions, a concern initially in accord with the capabilities approach that I will be seeking to apply below. The problem arises when an extension is made from outlining medicine’s role in ensuring these “primary functions” to its role in ensuring “individual-specific functions” and “desire satisfaction.” Here my concern derives from studies in critical medical anthropology that have examined the extensive growth, use, and abuse of Western biomedicine. These studies effectively critique the over-emphasis on capital-intensive medical procedures, and the expansion of biomedical therapy into the realm of the social, a domain in which over-medicalization becomes of greatest concern. Brock’s extension of medical ethics’ relevance mirrors this trend in Western biomedicine and Western “universalizing science” in general.

I am interested (1) in a more limited notion of health as the bedrock of functioning in a capability approach and (2) in health care as a foundational mechanism in maintaining these aspects of development (Griffin 1993). Moreover understanding health care as a means to maintaining health, itself a platform for other capabilities, leads to an argument for a less extensive, but more effective deployment of medical resources (as in public health, for example). Such a deployment would enable, but not necessarily guarantee the use of culturally specific healing responses and the development of individual-specific functions. Thus it is possible to include the “primary functions” of Brock’s argument under the basic “capabilities” of Sen and Nussbaum’s. Doing so may help us to get at the ways in which medicine and health can get at an “absolute core to both well-being and deprivation” while allowing for “specific means of provisioning as relative to historical and cultural context” (Sen 1985). Furthermore outlining the role of health care and medicine in the capability approach to development ethics, it is also possible to provide concrete, although merely initial and general suggestions and corresponding measures of well being as delineated by Dasgupta. Before coming to this point, it is necessary to look at two significant veins of alternative approaches to the ethics of human development.

Alternative Approaches

Among the most commonly cited alternative approaches to development ethics are the commodities approach and the utilitarian or welfare approach. Although this is a crude delineation of very nuance conceptualization, it will suffice to merely sketch the general poles between which Sen and Nussbaum have navigated their philosophy. It has been noted that, in their effects, both commodity and utilitarian approaches achieve nearly the same ends, although by different means. However, before discussing this convergence, I will try to outline both their significant weaknesses and the opportunities, somewhat overlooked or neglected by Sen

and Nussbaum, that these offer to further development of a “capabilities approach to development ethics particularly in its application to the domain of health and health care.

Commodity Approach

One of the ways to get at the fundamentals of development ethics is to look for certain bundles of goods or commodities that are intrinsically good to have (Crocker 1992, 590). To a certain extent, this body of ethical theory can be likened to the “preference satisfaction theories” identified by Brock (1993, 96). The most sophisticated formulation of this type of theory comes from John Rawls’ *A Theory of Justice*. In its recognition of both certain necessary rights and freedoms as well as the material basis of much of human well being, this is a necessary aspect of development ethics. However, this viewpoint has been criticized for falling into an overly simple reliance upon commodities as ends rather than means. As Sen has pointed out, “commodity command is a means to the end of well being, but can scarcely be the end itself” (Sen 1985). This also ignores the fact that there is a differential value of these commodities for different individuals. For example, “being adequately nourished can result from radically different diets. Being in good health can be promoted by different proportions of good food and preventive or curative medical care” (Crocker 1992, 591).

Indeed, health is not even addressed in the commodity approach, which is more applicable to health care as an available commodity. A given amount of health care or nutrition is not intrinsically good, it is only good in so far as it enables certain human functioning’s. To the extent that these are dependent upon individual factors or environment, a commodity approach to development ethics is not sufficient. Similarly, a commodity approach does not help us to deal with cultural and other differences in the means of providing for basic goods. This is notably salient in recent considerations of ethnomedicines in contrast to the standards of Western biomedicine. It has been noted that Western and other health systems may be quite effectively integrated to provide adequate preventative and curative health care in a context that resembles only slightly its two forbears. Furthermore, a commodity approach, particularly with regard to health care, may ignore the fact that too much of a commodity can be a bad thing. In this case medical intervention, as poignantly noted by Illich and others (Illich 1976; Dutton 1988), can be as harmful as illness itself.

However, some aspects of this approach are still reconcilable with the capability approach. In fact, Sen himself has pointed out his relationship to the sophisticated thinking of John Rawls, particularly with respect to rights and liberties (Sen 1984, 339). With regard to biophysical states, there is much to be recuperated of the commodity approach in applying development ethics to “beings” and “doings.” Rawls’ conceptions for the distribution of primary goods are notably valuable, although only as applied to a limited domain of human development. For our purposes, the difference principle as applied to a minimum of social and natural primary goods is particularly useful in relation to the provision of the resources necessary for basic health (Rawls 1972, 285). This concept can be applied to the distribution of nutritional resources and health care provided (1) it is expanded to include the variability of individual health, and (2) it is understood that any distribution of natural and primary goods complemented by a distribution of rights and liberties is only part of the picture of human flourishing. Yet, beyond a commodity approach, there is that of a utilitarian or welfare ethic that remains to be discussed before coming to the value of “capabilities.”

Utility Approach

A utilitarian or welfare approach to human development argues for the value of certain conscious human experiences such as “happiness.” This is in accord with Brock’s identification of “hedonist” theories of ethics (1993, 96). According to this type of theory, human development comes about through a maximization of certain utilities seen as states such as “happiness.” This view therefore takes both a consequential point of view, that actions are right depending on the rightness of their consequences, and a welfare aggregation method, that rightness and goodness can be seen as the sum of a society’s individual utilities, to determining ethical action (Sen 1984). A utilitarian approach is more useful than a commodity approach for development in that it conceptualizes such development in terms of people’s experiences and not in terms of certain primary goods (Sen 1985, 23), but this approach has also been criticized for significant gaps as well.

However, this theory has been criticized for conceptualizing individuals merely as passive receptacles for a quantity of “happiness” and thereby leaving little room for human agency’s role in achieving such a state or in achieving other states of human existence that are not reducible to conscious experience. With regard to health and health care, a utilitarian approach neglects the many states in human functioning that are not immediately concerned with such experience, “such as having diseased or healthy lungs, and particular activities, such as studying philosophy or playing tennis” (Brock 1993, 96). Furthermore, there is a large range of positive conscious experience that is notably antithetical to an individual’s health. This includes, for example, the extended experiences of being inebriated or physically excited. Also, certain lifestyles that might well be in accordance with the maximization of “happiness” or other conscious states are also antithetical to an individual’s continued biological functioning. This applies to, again, the regular consumption of a variety of drugs and chemicals or, more to the point, to a diet of steak, potato chips, and soda. However, it is not my intention to sort out the intricacies of maximization associated by the different aggregate “utilities” of these various outcomes, but rather to point out their rather tense relationship to attempts to justify health as conceptualized in medical ethics.

The critique made above is linked to the critique of the utilitarian approach made by Sen and restated by Crocker as the “small mercies” point. Both point out that an increase in happiness, for those who are impoverished, may not have much to do with actually improving their state of affairs. That is to say that “small mercies,” a dollar in the beggar’s cup, may do something to increase happiness on the part of the beggar, but have little to do with actually increasing his well-being. In this way, subjective changes in happiness may mask a remarkably static situation with regard to objective deprivations (Crocker 1992, 601–602). Having shown the deficiencies of such an approach, it is possible to move to the immediate precursor to the capabilities and functioning’s approach being propounded here in relation to health and health care.

Basic Needs Approach

The basic needs approach is the immediate precursor to Sen and Nussbaum’s conceptions of capabilities. Indeed, Sen has called his development ethics a richer basic needs approach. This approach contributes a subtle emphasis upon the most immediate and basic needs of people. However, this approach also attempts to go beyond an understanding of human and societal development as the increase in aggregate utility or commodity availability. The basic needs approach to development looks to satisfy certain basic needs of all humans. It is this outlook that has had a huge impact in the domain of health care in the developing world. It has been most specifically related to the World Health Organization’s goal of “Health for All by the Year 2000.” In fact, this paper’s goal of articulating a role for health care in the capability approach is merely a modification of the basic needs view.

However, the basic need approach has been criticized for too easily falling into a commodity approach that stresses the satisfaction of a bare minimum of needs in terms of a uniform availability of certain bundles of commodities. The approach therefore falls into the weaknesses of the commodity approach discussed above. The basic needs approach therefore allows for looking at the provision of a bare minimum and no more, particularly with regard to food or medicine. It is important to understand that such bundles of needs satisfying goods cannot be specified absolutely; they are individual-specific. Furthermore, the provision of commodities according to basic need assumption presumes certain passive recipients of these. Such a distribution does not take into account the active role of individuals in their own development. That is to say that human development occurs so much as individuals become able to do things, rather than able to have things done for them (Sen 1984). With regard to health and health care, this approach has spurred great progress, while nevertheless failing to take into account that, for example, basic vaccinations, although an aspect of basic physiological need in relation to health, do little for an individual with an abscess in their leg. There is therefore a need for a broader perspective.

Yet, there is something of the cruder basic needs approach that must be retained in any approach that attempts to deal adequately with human functioning’s. Many of the criticisms above can be overcome with a change in focus. As Crocker has noted, “the ‘passive’ connotations of the BNA can be replaced with expressions that suggest recipient activity, without denying the liberating role that external help can play.” In addition, primary functioning’s in biological terms are still vital to any understanding of human capabilities.

Sen and Nussbaum's approach has gone beyond this, but there is a way in which health and health care may be conceived in terms of basic needs as one part of the larger scheme of the "capabilities approach." That is to say that "basic needs" captures the way that, beyond subjective preferences for commodities and conscious experiences, certain fundamental requirements are at the basis of any human functioning. However, it is to the "capabilities approach" and more recent conceptualizations of "well-being" that the nuance of this view finds necessary for progress in the arena of human and societal development.

Capabilities and Well-Being

The capabilities ethic, as developed by Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum, can be considered as one example of the "ideal theory" type upon which Brock eventually settles his argument (1993, 97). The exploration of development ethics for general theory upon which to embark upon an ethical organization of health care therefore brings us to a similar point as Brock's reverse endeavor. Capability theory allows for aspects of both Commodity and Utilitarian approaches. It should also be recognized that it allows for a continuing development of the basic needs approach. As developers of the basic needs approach have attempted to provide grounds and opportunities for physical, mental, and social aspects of human development, so the capabilities ethic continues in this vein. It remains to discuss the characteristics of the capability ethic, after which we can then begin to draw out some of the implications of the capability approach for health and the organization of health care to maintain it.

General Conception

As described by Crocker, Amartya Sen maintains that "a truly developed society would enable human beings to be and do, and to live and act, in certain valuable ways" (1995, 153). Sen explores the ethical value of human beings' achievements of certain "functioning's." These achievements, in the large, represent the unification of commodities and human agency in the attainment of functioning more crudely put and certain conscious experience. In this sense, the capability approach unifies some of the strongest aspects of previous approaches to development ethics. Moreover, these functioning's must also be conceptualized as the end result of certain capabilities of the individuals who carry them out. This is to say that the goal of development must not lie only in the actualizing of certain functioning's, but in the development of the potentials for such functioning's. These potentials are what Sen and Nussbaum understand to be human capabilities, which they place at the center of their ethic.

However, these two authors differ in how they envision these potentials. Nussbaum appears to view capabilities as general and internal powers of an individual (Nussbaum 1988). In contrast, Sen appears to view capabilities as the possibilities or opportunities for functioning's. Sen's view is undoubtedly more complex than this, but if we understand his view as one of actual options for action, we can better trace out the objections that favor Nussbaum's conception. It is not possible to side with Sen on two points noted by Crocker (1995, 167–86). First, ethically valuing actualized functioning's as realized possibilities lead to a stress on "doings" to the detriment of "beings." Second, capabilities viewed as "possibilities facing the agent" represents the other fault, which in combination of the first ignores the importance of actual abilities in turning possibilities into actualities. These criticisms would seem to lend more credence to Nussbaum's conceptualization of capabilities. Yet, there remains a place for Sen's vision of capabilities as a reworking of "basic needs."

It is not my intention to further engage the differences in these two authors' conceptions of "capabilities." I do nevertheless side with Nussbaum's view, particularly in relation to health matters. Nussbaum's understanding of internal capabilities squares nicely with conceptions in the health arena, and particularly with Brock's conception of "primary functions" (Brock 1993; Crocker 1995). Nussbaum's assessment of capabilities also proves more useful for the pragmatic task of realizing them. She specifically views bodily states as being ontologically primary to other capabilities, whereas Sen, in his attempt to overcome the limitations of the basic needs approach, views bodily states as inherently less valuable than other good capabilities and functioning's. The ability to choose to actualize valuable functioning's is therefore inherently linked to physiological abilities. Similarly Brock notes that response to illness through the exercise of self-determined choice in the service of protecting or restoring quality of life is one of the most important practice examples of the significance for

overall assessments of the quality of life of how to achieve the reasonable accord between aims and accomplishments that happiness requires (Brock 1993).

Although Brock's unification of three bodies of theory may not meld completely with a capability approach, if we were to include "health" in this citation, we would be very close to at least part of Nussbaum's conception. As with other areas to which this approach might be applied, this proximity of understanding is most evidenced by an examination of Nussbaum's developing list of "Human Capabilities" with regard to health.

Health and Nussbaum's list

Proceeding from her understanding of capabilities as residing in choosing individuals, Martha Nussbaum has worked upon elaborating upon a list of capabilities that are to be considered in ethical development. Prominent among these capabilities are many that can be subsumed under health and maintained by proper nutrition and health care, in a broad sense of both curative and preventative. In one of its most recent incarnations, Nussbaum's list includes capabilities such as

1. **Life.** Being able to live to the end of a human life of normal length, not dying prematurely or before one's life is so reduced as to be not worth living.
2. **Bodily Health.** Being able to have good health, including reproductive health; to be adequately nourished; to have adequate shelter.
3. **Bodily integrity.** Being able to move freely from place to place, secure from violent assault, including sexual assault and domestic violence; having opportunities for sexual satisfaction and for choice in matters of reproduction.
4. **Senses, Imagination, and Thought.** Being able to use the sense, to imagine, think and reason – and to do these things in a "truly human" way, a way informed and cultivated by an adequate education, including, but by no means limited to, literacy and basic mathematical and scientific training. Being able to use imagination and thought in connection with experiencing and producing works and events of one's own choice, religious, literary, musical, and so forth. Being able to use one's mind in ways protected by guarantees of freedom of expression with respect to both political and artistic speech, and freedom of religious exercise. Being able to have pleasurable experience and to avoid non-beneficial pain (Nussbaum 1999).

Even at first glance, it is obvious the extent to which health and thereby health care of some kind are necessary to Nussbaum's accounting for the capabilities to be developed in a quality life. Although the rest of her list expands capabilities into concerns beyond the self, this section of her list of capabilities provides a rationale and guideline for objectively measuring basic "functions" of individual health and for delineating the basic structures of health care that are necessary to maintain them. While this accounts for the "primary functions" described by Brock, it significantly curtails the role of medicine in what he sees as desire satisfaction and individual-specific functioning's. Because the "capabilities" approach is an attempt to deal with individual variation, however, the latter will necessarily be addressed in relation to types of health care and their ethical distribution. There is still something to Kass's viewpoint that health is "a natural standard" (Brock 1993, 98) and not entirely a moral value, although many in medical humanities would disagree.

The argument is simple: following a capability ethic, health care should be part of the mechanism to maintain biological capabilities and functioning as the enabling grounds for other capabilities and functioning's. It is therefore possible to provide and outline some standards for basic bodily functioning without having to specify on other aspects that expand into the more properly social, mental, and spiritual domains of life. This would seem to suggest the basics of a broad minimum of primary public and preventative health care. Yet, the fact that genetics and environment affect health lends it a degree of chance and differential impact with regard to individuals, therefore also indicating that some degree of more intensive curative medicine is still necessary. However, while Sen and Nussbaum have elaborated upon the philosophical grounding of "capabilities," they have merely made broad suggestions without outlines for the ways in which corresponding development may be attained. Part of the reason for this has been a conscious attempt within to maintain a certain contextual

pragmatism in their development ethic. However, one can also find room within their ethic for more “basic” aspects of capabilities and for a more delineated role of the state in maintaining and measuring these. Although the articulation that follows may be strained, it nonetheless points toward necessary further developments of the “capabilities” ethic and the implications of development ethics for medical ethics and health care.

“Well-Being” Within “Capabilities”

By highlighting the room that exists within “capabilities” for the basic aspects of “well-being,” particularly as Dasgupta discusses them, it will be possible to get a better sense of the conception that I am trying to highlight. I am here using Dasgupta’s formulation of “well-being” as a bridge, albeit temporary, between the “capabilities” development ethic and a more developed conceptualization of medical ethics and health care. In significant ways, Dasgupta’s “inquiry” into the nature of well-being via the nature of destitution can move the above development ethic to a more concretely conceptualized way of approaching basic capabilities and functions, particularly physiological ones. The aim of his inquiry is to outline “formal constructions built on physiological foundations” from which one can argue that “there need not be a trade-off between growth and redistribution if redistributing polities are judiciously chosen” (Dasgupta 1993, 20). That is to say that there exists a certain bedrock of what Brock calls “basic [biological] functions” that must necessarily be created and maintained by any development. What remains then is to show how this program is similar, minimally perhaps, to that of Sen and Nussbaum. This can be shown, first, by looking at DasGupta’s reconciliation of rights-based and utility-based approaches to well being in a single approach that admits much of the flexibility and contingency of “capabilities.” Second, Dasgupta’s outline of both a two-tiered schema of positive rights to fundamental goods and services, as well as the role of negative rights with that schema, begins to look suspiciously similar to Nussbaum’s enumerated conceptual framework for capabilities.

Compared to the philosophical formulations of Sen and Nussbaum, Dasgupta’s inquiry looks more directly at the role of the State in (1) resolving conflicts between individual and group interests and (2) regulation and coordination of “the activities of individuals and groups in an interrelated world . . . so that shortages do not occur in some commodities [for example] and surpluses in others” (ibid., 23). He is therefore broadly interested in de-ontological conceptions of “rights,” on the one hand, and consequential conceptions of “utility” on the other. Dasgupta shows however that both of these conceptual paths ultimately attain some of the same ends. He shows that de-ontological reasoning can admit of aggregate considerations, if we consider that it is the *extent* of trade-offs in aggregate utility considerations that are pose problems (ibid.,31). Within aggregate considerations of welfare, Dasgupta then emphasizes the value of admitting “no trade-offs when the utility level of a person assumes low enough values” (ibid.,33). Therefore, utility and rights can be reconciled, according to Dasgupta, if there is an allowance made for trade-offs “between rights and other goods such as welfare—provided of course that the trade-off rate is very small in appropriate regions of the space of state of affairs” (ibid.,35). The leads him to “abandon the dichotomy based upon whether ethical theories are want-regarding or ideal-regarding” (36). It also brings him to the concept of basic commodity needs.

All of this is to say that, in this move, Dasgupta’s conception comes closer to the richer formulation of “basic needs” by Sen. commodities, social institutions, freedoms and rights as “instrumental” (ibid.,15). In his appeal to the concept of needs, the former finds use in viewing “commodity consumption as an input, political and civil liberties as the background environment, and welfare and individual functioning’s as an output vector, of what is in effect a complex ‘production process’” (ibid.,37). This becomes useful for health and health care in that one can think of a person’s health as an output and the commodities and service and the background environment that go to determine a person’s health as inputs, and thereby to think of this socio-biological transformation process qualitatively. In the same way we think of the production of material commodities by means of commodities and resources (DasGupta 1993, 14).

Dasgupta points out that, in contrast to past usage, basic commodity needs need to be recognized individual-specific and fluctuating, but that the concept also conveys the urgency necessary for the proper consideration of destitution by the State and other institutions. This is akin to the pragmatic flexibility that is built into Sen and Nussbaum’s conceptions of “capabilities.” Even more similarity can be seen in Dasgupta’s outline of what actually goes into human well being and flourishing.

We have seen how the difference between de-ontological and consequential reasoning is elided by Dasgupta's approach to basic needs. What is more interesting, though is Dasgupta's actual commentary upon these needs. He notes that the meeting of certain needs is a prerequisite for the continuation of human life, in that life is not possible without them. However, he also recognizes that for life to truly be of quality, or considered as an example of human flourishing, other commodities are necessary. According to Dasgupta, "this suggests that, roughly speaking there are two tiers of goods and services. The first tier, the one that makes living possible, comprises basic needs. The second tier consists of goods that are instrumental in making life satisfying" (Dasgupta 1993, 40). It is the primarily the provision of the first that Dasgupta sees as the role of the State, although there is also room for the provision of the second. Because he is approaching "well-being" via destitution and because he is concerned with current states of deprivation around the world, Dasgupta has more concern for the first "tier" of commodity needs.

Dasgupta also incorporates "negative rights" into his conception, a development that, like Sen's own work, maintains some of Rawls' emphasis upon certain freedoms and rights as "primary goods." However, Dasgupta is less clear about how to conceptualize these negative rights, noting that "we do not as yet possess a general theory of social contracts, one that would offer us a taxonomy of substantive theories of justice" (Ibid., 49). We can begin to rely on Nussbaum's list for the most clearly elaborated content of this positive conception. By contrast, the true benefit of Dasgupta's argument comes first in arguing that general well-being and economic growth are not at odds in a society and that therefore certain basic physiological functions, in all of their individual-specificity, must be the prioritized, although not singular, goal of any development. Second, Dasgupta points to concrete measurements for this bedrock of physiological "well-being," measurements that will briefly pointed to below. Finally, his formulation admits of the need for a broader conception of "well-being" beyond "basic needs." Dasgupta's conception includes, therefore, an area of basic and guaranteed positive and negative rights, with the possibility of a spectrum of other aspects of life beyond these that fade into the conceptual mist, those being in the domain of capabilities, aims, and achievements. This articulation is similar to Sen's defense and elaboration of basic needs (Sen 1984, 515).

My brief and somewhat tenuous point in this section has been that an elaboration of the more concrete implications of the "capabilities" approach to development is needed in order to relate it to medical ethics and the conceptualization of health care's role in development. Although Sen has done significant work in the area of measurement, a certain concreteness has been lacking, at least with regard to health, and it is for this reason that I have touched upon Dasgupta's inquiry into "well-being." If the capabilities approach has been an attempt to move beyond entirely prescriptive universals to an ethic that admits a certain amount of cultural relativity, but that still maintains minimally definable universals, Dasgupta's look at aspects of physiological well-being may constitute the backbone of one such minimal universal. Thus combining the two, by nestling Dasgupta's "well-being" inside Sen and Nussbaum's positive conceptions of "capabilities," allows us to turn to more precise policy matters. It signals ways that health care could be used in both providing for and lending measurement to the most basic physical "capabilities" and in thereby providing a platform from which others could be developed or realized. Is also gets at something that both Sen's and Nussbaum's capabilities approach and DasGupta's considerations of well-being, in their fixing of ideal, but flexible goals for ethical development, fail to address, namely the attainment and complication of such goals. It is these potentials and obstacles that I would like to discuss below.

Ideal Ethics and Ideal Health Care

If, as I have been arguing, Sen and Nussbaum's "capabilities" development ethic can be (1) placed among the "ideal" conceptions settled upon by Brock and (2) seen to have relevance for medical ethics, then we can begin to consider what the ideal combination of these two might look like. From the two contexts for which both bodies of ethics have been elaborated upon; we might also draw a rough outline of the context for which a hybrid ethic might also be relevant. This is not to put the cart before the horse. It is to show, rather, that my argumentation to this point has been guided by a need to find an ethic applicable to societies "in transition" as well as "developed" societies and to "curative" as well as "preventative" health and health care contexts. To the extent that the divisions among these may blur, within and between societies or medical procedures for example, the reasoning for a unified ethic becomes that much stronger.

Potentials

Dasgupta has elaborated the reasoning behind “the singular responsibility of the State to ensure that positive-rights goods, such as health care and primary and secondary education, are within the reach of all” (1993, 498). Yet, like Brock, he merely indicates “health care” as a necessity and does not specifically point out the ramifications of state responsibility for “well-being” and for the conceptualization of “health care.” Nor do Sen and Nussbaum’s general philosophical conceptions lay the concrete groundwork. However, it is possible to extrapolate from their “capabilities” development ethic to the exigencies of health and health care contexts. Their ethic has evolved to not only meet the needs of development situations, but also to provide a framework for conceptualizing and directing those situations from the outset. Medical ethics has proceeded in a somewhat similar manner, but the ramifications of ethics have not gone been the narrow curative context. It has evolved and been developed to meet the needs of increasingly difficult and capital-intensive medical procedures and resulting contexts of decision-making. It is for this reason that Brock’s scope-broadening endeavor is a laudable one.

More valuable than an attempt “to infer the account of a good life at the level of basic ethics theory from the ethical frameworks for treatment decision-making advocated for and employed in medical practice” (Brock 1993, 133) is an understanding of medical ethics in terms of a quality of life. Brock recognizes this (1993, 116–117), but looks only at indexes that expand the role of medicine. He does not place medical ethics within the larger context of general human development, but vice versa, although by “primary functions” he implicitly recognizes the necessity of the biological “well-being” that I have here placed at the core of “capabilities.” When we place health and health care as a modular component within a larger development ethic, we arrive at a conceptualization of health as a basic right and health care as the means of maintaining that right. This in turn points to the need for a more broadly effective use of health care, as health maintenance, but a more scaled back use of those capital-intensive and curative measures aimed at disease elimination. This puts the development of public health above the development of medicine.

There are basic and somewhat crude measures that such a public health system could be employed to maintain. The World Health Organization, for example, measures the progress of different nations. It allocates resources according to the degree of progress toward attaining goals: ninety percent of births that weigh more than 2,500 grams, an infant mortality rate of 50 per 1000, an average 60 or more year life expectancy, and a 70 percent or more literacy rate for the population. In his inquiry, Dasgupta also identifies some of these as well as others, including height for age and weight and daily nutritional intake. While one might like to admit certain culturally relative differences into these measurements, there is evidence that differences are less culturally relative factors than they are indicators of periodic nutrition, sanitation, and health care deprivation in some form during childhood (Dasgupta 1993, 82–83). Thus such a conceptualization of health care is must necessarily wedded to a conceptualization of food welfare, for which I have neither the time nor expertise to enter into. Nevertheless, we are again at a core of basic physiological standards.

However, curative medicine is not to be written off so hastily. If we are to pay attention to what Brock identifies as “individual-specific functions” or even to some “primary functions” that are in jeopardy, such as mobility after an accident, then there must continue to exist a network for curative health care as found in the medical and surgical specialties. This would no doubt follow from working to maintain the “capabilities” included in Nussbaum’s list. It also follows from both Sen and Nussbaum’s understanding and accommodation of individual variability within and among societies. What is simply being suggested, following both the “capabilities” approach and the discussion of “well-being” above, is that certain basic physiological capabilities must be assured by development before those more complex aspects of disease and dysfunction that are dealt with by curative health care. In both “developed” and “developing” societies, it would involve a strong emphasis on the former and a weaker emphasis on the latter.

Obstacles

However, such a conceptualization of health care, not to mention development according to the “capabilities” ethic, is not without obstacles to its implementation. I would like to briefly touch upon two of these. The first obstacle exists in the development of an allocation and a rationale for allocation of health and health care resources that fits the ethic mentioned above. The second obstacle exists in attempting to implement such an

allocation under the conditions of democratic institutions (at best) and the nation-state as a global actor. To list these two situations as obstacles is not to suggest that they are to be avoided or gotten rid of. It is merely to suggest that the philosophical grounding, of both development ethics and any hybrid medical ethics, run up against the hard gears of institutions and bureaucracy when they are taken to the ends of implementation.

To look again at the example of the World Health Organization, its allocations are currently governed by a type of egalitarianism across nations that guarantees that, under each new budget allocation, each country will continue to be at least as well off as it has been previously. Yet, there also exists room for a type of utilitarian allocation, where those nations whose health problems are most easily eliminated are given a priority for health funding, which is essentially a situation of getting “more bang for the buck.” However, this is not a purely “population-weighted” allocation, but one that is influenced by the borders of the nation state. All of the “well-being” measurements mentioned above, as well as the current organization and allocation of resources within the World Health Organization, take place with respect to nations. Even suggestions of a “leximin” allocation (Roemer 1993) that would give priority to the most destitute follow the logic of nation-states. Dasgupta recognizes that the weaknesses of this kind of measuring are thus inherent in our current system, which says “nothing directly about the distribution of well-being within a country, even though the quality of life ranges widely even within a locality let alone a country” (Roemer, 1993, 125).

A conceptualization of “health care” that is extrapolated from the “capabilities” approach to both development and medical ethics would seem to indicate what has been called a “modified leximin” allocation. If a “leximin” allocation gives entire priority of resource allocation to the worst off (Roemer 1993, 353), a “modified leximin” would do so without jeopardizing the maintenance of a range of curative health care (Seabright 1993). I do not intend to suggest any more about the exact extent of that “range,” but I do intend to suggest that such an allocation rule would combine aspects of the egalitarian, utilitarian, and leximin strategies above. It is also a distant implication, at the policy level, of something akin to Rawls’ “difference principle” that, when used in the implementation of “capabilities” strategies, brings Sen’s ethic back into touch with Rawls’. The difficulty remains in shifting allocation from one community to another. For what democratic institution, at whatever level of society, would voluntarily give up its resources to another? To answer this question, we might begin to consider Gasper’s discussion of “charity and obligation” (1999) or Nussbaum’s current work on the obligations and responsibilities of internationalism (1999). Still, problems with allocation exist not only in current practice, but also in the very units of decision-making. There is therefore a need for new measurement variables and allocation strategies that operate without regard to national boundaries and follow health possibilities within and across regions, shifting allocations accordingly.

Conclusion

The approach taken by Brock, with which I started this paper, has attempted to take medical ethics and apply them to a more general conception of human well-being, the quality of life, and development. Yet, in moving from medical determinations of basic physiological functions to more extensive considerations of individual-specific functions, and then moving even farther toward “desire satisfaction,” Brock takes the applicability of medical ethics too far. Although this is a valuable exploratory endeavor, medical ethics as it is currently configured is best left to the domain of its greatest pertinence; namely curative and intensive medical care decision-making situations. I have tried to suggest that there is an entirely different scope of health care, having to do with preventative medical care and public health measure, that is not covered by medical ethicists’ approaches. Therefore my aim has been to show that in spite of efforts to the contrary (Brock 1993, 117–126) medical ethics may not be entirely applicable to the larger range of human development and experience. Some hybrid project within development and medical ethics might increase the relevance of both for the type of questions that Brock attempts to answer.

In this paper, I have tried to sketch some of the outlines of what such a project might look like or work to conceptualize. What I am proposing following what I see as the implications of “capabilities” and “well-being,” am not unlike the target of Brock’s endeavor. Following Nussbaum, we begin to look at positively enumerated aspects of a basic right to health care, with health needs and proper biological functioning being individually variable, but biologically measurable. This early conceptualization of “health care” also hints at more of a holistic consideration, including a public health system and a moderation of curative health care. This would be

to relieve suffering, prevent premature death, restore ability to function, increase opportunity, and show empathy and compassion without guaranteeing more extensive rights to drugs like Viagra or to extreme pregnancy and fertility drug options. Such a view looks beyond health care as a commodity or a means to increase utility and toward health care as a tool for maintaining health and basic biological “well-being” as a platform for the more complex functioning’s of the “capabilities” approach.

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When do people have a right to secede?

Raja Shankar

When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable Rights that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness.

Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shewn, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed.

But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security.

Declaration of Independence of the Thirteen Colonies
(Congress, July 4, 1776)

The declaration of independence is perhaps one of the more well known expositions of the reasons that led a people to separate from their mother country. It is not the least remarkable for recognizing the need for making explicit these reasons to the international community as it existed then. In doing so, it has created for posterity an eloquent and succinct *raison d'être* for government, and for separation from it when the argument for the same ceases to exist. Two centuries later, when we are faced with demands for self-government or secession, we can still turn back to this declaration and draw from the seed therein the roots and branches of reason that enable us to understand and resolve such demands.

I endeavor, in this paper, to answer the question posed in the title of this paper: When do a people has the right to secede?

While I shall draw out an argument for the right to secede, I must emphasize here that the approach that I take does not consider the right to secede to be a primary or a basic right such as the right to life or the right to liberty. The right to secede is a secondary right, a latent one, that gets activated only under special conditions such as when primary rights of citizens are threatened in the present setup. I shall identify and describe these special conditions in this paper.

This paper is divided into four sections. The first section shall lay out the reasons for the development of a set of moral and practical criteria – the special conditions mentioned above – for the right to secession. In today's increasingly interconnected world, one part of the world cannot be a mute observer of what is happening in another part. If the international community has to take certain measures in cases of human rights abuses or other extenuating circumstances in particular areas of the world, then these actions have to be based on well developed and widely accepted guidelines.

The second section shall develop the set of moral and practical criteria for the right to secession to come into force. Not all of these criteria have to be met for the right to exist. If certain combinations of these criteria are met to a reasonable extent, then the right can come into force. The right combination and the reasonableness of the extent would have to be decided separately for each case. I shall describe one way to do this.

The third section shall talk about international institutions and procedures that need to be in place for the right to secede to be recognized and enforced, or on the other hand denied. This is important, as any set of

criteria is useless without a body that uses it to make decisions. It is also important, in this instance for such a body or a sister one to have the power and the capability to enforce such decisions.

Finally, I shall point to certain drawbacks of the approach developed in this paper, and describe future work that needs to be done in this regard.

The Necessity of Criteria

The most burning issue in the world today is that of Kosovo in Yugoslavia. For the first time in modern history, since the peace of Westphalia, a significant part of the international community has attacked a nation-state for discriminating against a group of people within its borders. This is perhaps the first time that the sanctity of nation-state sovereignty over domestic matters has been denied, and greater importance has been given to human rights. The recent past includes the examples of Bosnia and Rwanda, where the international community was called upon to act, which it did belatedly with some success in Bosnia. The international community totally failed Rwanda. Other cases of internal conflicts include the Basque country in Spain, Northern Ireland and Scotland in the UK, Quebec in Canada, and Kashmir in India and Pakistan. Not all of these conflicts are similar in nature or urgent or violent. But the larger international community has been involved in varying degrees in each of these conflicts.

Such international involvement by the international community has to be based on some criteria. Outside nations should not involve themselves in the internal matters of other countries on an ad hoc basis. Such involvement could entail conflict and may not resolve the problem. It is important for some sort of broad consensus to exist before the international community takes action in local contexts. This broad consensus existed in the case of Iraq's aggression against Kuwait, and the West's role in Bosnia. The same consensus eludes Kosovo, which might have dangerous implications.

It is necessary in a world where there are many sovereign independent actors for some sort of a consensus to exist in international actions. This consensus is sometimes brought about by the power of strong nations like the US, but this is not a healthy trend, and other nations may rebel even in cases where the US or the West is right. A good example is Yugoslavia, where the cooperation of the Russians might have led to greater pressure on Milosevic. It can be argued that Russia would not go with what the NATO countries wanted, thus NATO had to take unilateral action.

But it can also be said that this disagreement exists in a moral and legal vacuum in the international arena on such issues. While the sovereignty of nations is established by international law, there are no guidelines to deal with issues of internal conflicts where certain sections of the population might be brutally repressed by the regime. It is this vacuum that needs to be filled if there is to be an international consensus on outside interference in domestic affairs, especially in the case of secessionist movements within countries.

It is important to develop criteria for secession not only to aid oppressed subnational groups but also to deny legitimacy to flippant or petty demands for separation. This is especially important as some countries foment trouble in others in the name of human rights or the right of a particular group to secede. International guidelines can also hold such countries responsible for such activities, and action may be taken against countries that support secessionist movements that are not recognized by the international community as a whole. Even if direct action cannot be taken against such countries, these countries would not be able to overtly support secessionist movements that do not meet the international criteria.

Moral and practical criteria for the right to secede

Much conflict in the world is due to the aspiration of sub-national groups^x to a nation of their own. Kosovo, Ireland, Basque country, Scotland, Kashmir, Quebec, Chechnya, Corsica, Palestine, Kurdistan the list goes on. Some of these conflicts such as Kosovo have taken thousands of lives and displaced even more, others such as Quebec in Canada have been more peaceful. But all of these conflicts share the property of a people of common identity in some dimension wishing to express their identity through independent self-government.

The larger nations or countries of which these people are constituent do not always take kindly to such demands for independence. Perhaps, with the exception of Quebec and Scotland, all other demands of independence have met with stiff resistance, and often violent suppression. It is not that all these countries are

authoritarian in nature, many are democratic with a majority against the secession of the minority. It is obvious then that there are two points of view in the very least, one of those wanting to secede and form a nation of their own, and the second of those who maintain that these groups cannot secede for various reasons.

In this section, I shall identify and describe the conditions under which those wanting to secede are justified and should have the support of the international community in their efforts. But first, I must address some basic questions about the right to secede. As I have said before, the right to secede is not a basic or primary right. It is more of a secondary right, which comes into force when other primary rights are inaccessible to the members of a group in a particular setup. For example, if a government cannot guarantee the right to life or the right to liberty for a particular group of people, then that group has the right to separate and form a new government for themselves.

One objection to this thesis is that the right to secede flows from the right of self-determination, which is a basic or primary right. But this objection can be overcome if one realizes that the right to secede and the right of self-determination are not synonymous. Self-determination for each individual means having the capability to choose from various different ways of life. This would include the right to be educated in the manner they want, to be able to have the opportunity for the types of employment they want, to be able to have a say in how they are governed and so on. Right to self-determination does not mean the right to have a government of your own. This would be ridiculous and impracticable as any individual can then declare an independent state on her property. So self-determination does not mean having one's own government, but being able to have a reasonable control over one's destiny. And of course, if the right to self-determination as defined here is denied to members of a group, then that group's secondary right to secede gets activated.

There is of course another way to look at the right to self-determination, which is to look at it as a collective right. This overcomes the absurd proposition of everyone having the right to a government of his or her own choice, but leads to other problems. What is the critical mass of such a group? How do they obtain their identity? These problems can be resolved, if we consider this collective right, just as the individual one, not as a primary right but as a secondary one. Then this right can arise from the several different criteria that are presented in a later section such as the persecution of a group, cultural preservation, or correction of historical wrongs. In these cases, the primary collective right could be one of self-preservation or that of cultural expression.

Risks of secession

While identifying criteria for the right to secede, it must be kept in mind that secession is a costly business, and should not be accepted for trivial reasons. In fact, I believe that the costs are so high that the conditions under which separation is acceptable should be stringent, especially in the case of complete independence. Secession is often accompanied by violence, which entails huge costs in human life and suffering. It hurts both sides deeply. This can be seen in the cases of Kosovo, Bosnia, the Basque country, Northern Ireland, and Kashmir. Another important risk of secession is the cost to the minorities in the separated part. Just as the separated part was a minority in the united country, it may have a minority now. This minority might be exploited or discriminated against. It is important to provide safeguards for such minorities.

There are also economic costs associated with secession. Generally, the economies of the mother country and the seceding part are so intertwined that separation hurts both sides. This can be seen in the erstwhile breakup of the Soviet Union. When India was partitioned in 1947, India had all the jute mills, while East Pakistan had all the raw material. It took some time for both sides to recover. In some cases, it may not even be economically viable to have two separate states rather than one.

Apart from these costs, the security and the importance of the mother country in international forum could be affected adversely. The citizen of a country also has certain legitimate expectations about the structure of the country he lives in. This expectation should not be changed for trivial reasons. (Buchanan, 1991, 88)

This is not to say that there are always costs to secession. Under one of the criteria discussed later, that of a mutually consented divorce, many of these costs could be mitigated, and especially the loss of human lives avoided. Scotland and Quebec could represent such cases. Nevertheless, it is important to stress the costs of separation in most cases, as the issue of secession cannot be considered flippantly.

Legitimacy of government

Before I describe the criteria for the right to secede, it is important to understand the basis of government. For this I again turn to the passage from the Declaration of Independence I quoted earlier. It says,

All men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable Rights that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.

The legitimacy of a modern day government lies in the welfare of its people. Governments are needed for societies to regulate themselves, to reduce conflict, to take care of externalities, and to provide such goods and services for the general welfare that cannot be provided privately. If a peaceful prosperous society could exist without government, we would not have a need for it. But we know that it is not possible, and that society has to organize itself and give coercive authority to a body, the government, for the benefit of its members. From the legitimacy of a government also arises the basic reasons when that government is no longer acceptable to a group of people, who can then separate and form a government of their own. In the next two subsections, I shall list these reasons, which I have divided into two sets - moral and practical.

Moral criteria

The following moral criteria, if they exist to a reasonable extent, can activate the right to secede:

History

If the territory of a nation or an independent group of people has been unjustly taken over by another state, then the occupied nation or group has a right to secede. Examples where this type of justification holds are plenty. All the former European colonies in Asia and Africa had a right to secede from the colonial powers. The republics in the erstwhile Soviet Union had the right to secede, and they did do so justly. But I must mention a caveat here. There has to be a moral statute of limitations – a certain period of time that has elapsed, after which the claim of the group who was there before cannot hold

(Buchanan, 1997, 311).

Otherwise, there would be numerous conflicts and claims of nationhood that would not be practicable. For example, if the Indians were to demand their country back from the United States, that would not be practicable as we cannot just make 270 million people disappear.

So how do we work out the period of the limitations? I think we cannot have a rigid time period but would have to decide from case to case. This can be done using several conditions. If the takeover is just a generation or two old, and it is still fresh in the memory of the dispossessed, then they have a right to get their state back. If the takeover is older, but the aggressor nation has not settled the conquered land with its citizens and the conquered land still has a majority of the original group, then the occupied state has a right to independence. If the occupying nation has settled the conquered land with its citizens, and the original citizens have been displaced and are living as refugees, then also they have a right to return. If the displaced people have assimilated in a new context and a lot of time has passed, then they may not have a claim to the territory of their ancestors. But one thing must be kept in mind. Much of what has happened in the past cannot be changed. But the international community can refuse to recognize the legitimacy of future forced resettlements, such as in West Bank by Israel or in Tibet by China. Such resettlements should not be legitimized even by the passage of time or it will provide an incentive to other occupying countries to settle occupied areas with its citizens.

Infringement of fundamental human rights

This is one of the strongest justifications for the right to secede. If a government continues to abuse the fundamental rights of a group of citizens on any basis then that group has the right to withdraw recognition to that government and create a new one for itself. As mentioned above, the legitimacy of government lies in the welfare of its citizens. If a government continuously works against the welfare of a particular group, they have the right to separate.

The most obvious cases are when a government denies the right to life or the right to liberty to a group of people. If a government kills, terrorizes, or in any way makes it difficult for citizens to live peacefully, then the

persecuted citizens should be able to approach international forum to secure their independence from such government. Infringements of other rights such as the right to equality and the right to justice are less obvious. But if these are carried on in a sustained and prolonged manner, these can be identified by the international community, and they can recognize the right to secede for the persecuted group.

Economic exploitation or discrimination

This criterion is less obvious than the previous one. Governments may be moving resources from one region to another in the name of distributive justice. If that is the actual reason then the right of the more prosperous region to secede is questionable. If governments could not redistribute resources, they would be handicapped in the handling of their responsibility for public welfare.

But there are instances when there is a sustained outflow of resources from one region to another. This is especially obvious if the region from which the resources are being extracted is the poorer one, for example the Asian and African colonies. In cases such as this and others where there is a disproportionate outflow of resources for a long and continuous period of the time, the affected areas can declare themselves as victims and demand autonomy to use their resources, or in extreme cases, even independence.

Cultural Preservation

This is a weaker criterion than the criteria based on the infringement of human rights. Nevertheless, there could be situations where members of a certain ethnic or cultural group might fear that they may lose their culture and be submerged in the majority culture. In some of these cases, the right to secede may be activated. One has to be careful here. Cultures are not static, but they keep evolving over time. Different cultures interact with each other and social, economic and technological forces. Some cultures may flourish while others may die out. In such cases of natural decline of cultures, the right to secede is not justified.

Only in cases, where the government actively tries to extinguish a minority culture in favor of a state approved one, does the right to secede come into play. Some examples where this might be applicable are Tibet in China, and Basque Country and Catalonia in Franco's Spain. Note that in the case of Basque Country and Catalonia, it was legitimate for them to secede when Franco was in power as he actively tried to extinguish the Catalan and Basque language and culture. Today, when these areas have substantial autonomy, and have the rights and capability to preserve and propagate their cultures, it is not clear if they can separate under this criterion.

Practical criteria

Efficiency of government

Sometimes it may be better to have different governments if they are more economically efficient and can serve the interests of people better. But this is not a compelling criterion and it very difficult to work out if separation is more economically efficient or not. This criterion may be more useful in the case of provinces within countries. For example in India, there is talk of breaking the bigger states like Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Bihar into smaller units for administrative and efficiency reasons. If the country as a whole has to be divided on the basis of this reason, it would have to be through mutual consent. It might be easier, when there is an overarching body like the EU, which might broker autonomy or separation in its constituent member states.

Geographic concentration

This is more of a practical consideration than a criterion of its own. It is easier for a group to secede when it is geographically concentrated within the mother country. Hence, geography would not pose a major barrier if Quebec were to secede. It did not come in the way of the breakup of Czechoslovakia or the erstwhile Soviet Union. On the other hand, one of the major problems in Northern Ireland is that the two communities – the Protestants and the Catholics are distributed over the area. It would be very difficult to get a territorial division in place. In fact, it was done by the creation of the Irish republic, but the existence of a significant Catholic minority in the north has not resolved the problem totally. In the case of the partition of India, Hindus and

Muslims were dispersed over the divided areas, though each had a majority of one community. But a significant minority existed in each area, and partition led to the exodus of minorities accompanied by great violence leaving half a million dead. This shows that one has to be extremely careful in those cases of subnational conflicts where there is no distinct territorial differentiation between the contending parties. Solutions other than outright secession have to be worked out.

Majority and mutual consent

This is another practical and an easier condition. It is like the mutually acceptable divorce of a married couple. If two parts of a country want to separate, that is the majority of each wants a divorce, then there is no reason why they should not separate provided they agree on the details of separation. This might be tricky, because they may have to decide on the division of territory and other resources. The international community can arbitrate in such cases and oversee a peaceful separation between the two parties. The international body involved may also collect a fee for its services.

Making entry easier

This is a criterion that comes into play when a new union is being created. Countries would have a greater incentive to join supranational unions like the EU, if there is secession clause that permits them to leave at a future date if they want to. These types of clauses exist in different unions in the world. The Soviet Union had such a clause, and Ethiopia has a similar clause in its constitution. In such cases, the separating parties could be asked to pay compensation for the costs involved for seceding if they had voluntarily entered the union. Sometimes, even when such clauses exist they are not enforceable due to the intransigence of the country's government. To take care of such cases, it could be required of member states to get their constitutions registered with the UN as a contract. The international community can then enforce the seceding clauses.

General

Not all of the above criteria have to hold for the right to secede to exist. A reasonable number should hold to a reasonable extent for the right to come into force. The reasonableness would have to be decided from case to case by the international community. Over time a case history can be built up to inform future decisions. To give an example of a combination of criteria, if a part of a country has been economically exploited for a long time, this part is geographically distinct, and the majority wants to separate, they would have a legitimate case to do so. In some cases, even one criterion could be enough if it holds to a reasonable extent. For example, if the right to life of a community is being violated, they may have a right to a separate state even if they are not geographically concentrated or other criteria do not hold. It is one of criteria on the basis of which Israel has been created. This is a justified criterion. The other one of historical belonging is more questionable in the case of Israel.

Enforcement and implementation mechanisms

It is not only necessary to have criteria for the right to secede, but it is also necessary to have international mechanisms in place to enforce the use of these criteria, and implement the decisions based on them. There could be multiple mechanisms at different levels to perform the above functions. Just as within a state, we have the legislative, the judicial, and the executive arms, at the international level we need a law making, adjudicating, and enforcing authorities and mechanisms. I shall talk about these below in the context of the right to secede.

United Nations – the legislative authority

As the United Nations is the only body in the world that consists of all the countries in the world, that would be the best body that could be the law making authority in this case. Although the UN is not a perfect body, and not fully democratic, there is no need to set up a new organization to enforce the right to secede especially when it is not clear that it will function better than the UN. The UN as a legislative body can frame the laws and rules on the right to secede based on the criteria identified above. They could actually deliberate on these criteria and

others identified by different authors, and come up at some universally accepted standards. Not only should the UN come up with laws on when the right to secede would come into force, but it should also outline the details of the adjudicating and the enforcement mechanisms.

Another role of the UN could be to require the member states to register their constitutions with it. This could then be viewed as a contract document, with the UN having the power to enforce it in the case of local disputes. Of course, the UN should also require certain minimum standards in these constitutions, as it cannot be called upon to enforce draconian or dictatorial provisions. The UN should accept the registrations of these constitutions only if they have been democratically created. This does not mean that all member states are required to register their constitutions, but those who want to do can do so. Acceptance by the UN should be a sign of higher democratic standards within the country.

Parties to secession conflicts can bring their cases before the UN. The UN can then rule on these cases based on the laws that they have developed. It can then pass on its rulings to the enforcement authority, which is detailed below.

The enforcement authority

Today, the closest thing to an international executive is the Security Council. Again, though the Security Council is undemocratic and needs reform, it is the best-placed authority to enforce UN decisions on international disputes. I shall not discuss Security Council reform here, and assume that it will become more democratic sometime in the future.

The Security Council should be the body that enforces UN decisions on secession. It could perform this role in various ways – as a mediator between contending parties, by imposing economic sanctions on recalcitrant nations, and by armed intervention. Armed intervention should only be used as a last resort, and such intervention should be by an international force comprised of contingents from member countries. In fact, the UN should have a permanent force with representation from all countries. It would then be ready to use such force at a short notice. Such a force would also have a deterrent effect on law breaking nations.

But before resorting to the use of violent force, the Security Council should try to bring about an agreement between the contending parties based on UN principles. If such agreement fails, then it should impose economic sanctions on the offending party. It sometimes takes a long time for economic sanctions to work. But only when constituent populations are in danger of their lives or the problem has become immediate for other reasons, should the Security Council intervene with an armed force.

International court

Apart from having laws and an enforcement mechanism in place, it is also necessary to have a body that adjudicates disputes on the basis of those laws. The international court can be given the powers to do so. It should have the power to rule on secession disputes. A party should be able to appeal UN decisions to the international court, which should then be able to make judgements based on international law. Its judgements should be then enforced by the Security Council.

There would then be a question of supremacy between the Court and the UN. A rule can be then made to overcome this problem. One such rule could be that the UN could overrule the Court by a two-thirds majority. Another side benefit of an international court is that it would also help in creating an international case history on such disputes, which would help inform the settlement of future disputes.

Tiers of enforcement

It is not necessary for all disputes to reach the UN. Where there are regional bodies like the EU, disputes should be able to be settled at those levels. This could be more economical and save UN resources and time. Also regional bodies may be better aware of local problems and thus be more effective in resolving them. Only if disputes cannot be resolved at a regional level, should such disputes be taken to the UN.

Another reason for having regional authorities is that some regions may desire higher standards than the UN might agree to. For example, the EU has higher standards of democracy than many other regions of the

world. In such cases, the regional body should be allowed to enforce such standards within its jurisdiction. If a region's standards fall below that of the UN, then the UN's standards should take precedence.

Just as the law creating mechanism, enforcement and judicial mechanisms can also exist at regional levels. The European Commission and the European Court of Justice are good examples. But these should function only within their jurisdiction, and for actions beyond their jurisdiction, they should have to resort to the UN.

Enforcement standards and conditions

As the international community is involved in the enforcement of the right to secede, secession must meet certain standards and conditions. The seceding part may have a minority. The international community should ensure safeguards for such a minority. In fact, the support of the international community should come with conditions. These should include the enshrinement of democratic and human rights principles in the constitutions of the seceding countries. These principles should include the protection of minorities.

In some cases, the seceding part may also be asked to pay compensation to the mother country because of the costs to the mother country. This should not happen in case the criterion is one of the violations of human rights, but in the case of economic criteria or that of mutual consent, the international community could entail payment of compensation. This compensation condition would also be a deterrent for outright secession and may allow for settlements such as more autonomy to the region. To deter frivolous cases, losing parties could also be asked to be pay compensation in some cases.

Conclusion

The above discussion might look utopian at present. I do not believe that the UN is going to come to an agreement soon on the issue of the right to secede. But that should not deter us from developing principles for such a right. Many things have happened in the world that was not expected before. There is no reason to assume that the world will not move towards greater acceptance of democracy and human rights. The enunciation of such principles is a step in that direction. Also we as academics, philosophers and theoreticians should be ready when the world community requires us.

Nevertheless, even if the UN is not going to come to an agreement soon, more advanced bodies like the EU could adopt these principles at a more regional level. If they are successful, the rest of the world might then adopt them too. There are many examples where one part of the world has learnt from another. In fact the EU is an inspiration for bodies like Mercosur, ASEAN, NAFTA, SAARC and so on.

Another issue that I must mention before I conclude is that outright secession is not the only solution in every case. Other solutions like greater autonomy or cross-national governance could work in different cases. Greater autonomy to Scotland and the North-South Irish Council are example of the above. Such solutions could be implemented in the Basque region with the Basque provinces in France and Spain having a common body without breaking from the mother countries. This is possible and practicable within the EU framework. In fact, the EU is moving towards a multilevel interconnected form of governance that goes beyond the federal or unitary models of governance. This could become a model for other regions.

Specific solutions to sub-national conflicts would depend on the context. The principles developed in this paper would help in finding those solutions. At the same time, we should document the different solutions in different cases. This would help create a body of knowledge that would allow us to apply the above principles to different contexts and come up with appropriate solutions.

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Corruption in Developing Nations: Effective Cross-Cultural Arguments

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Introduction

Corruption, especially in developing nations, is a phenomenon that requires thoughtful and diligent action by the development community. The effects of corruption—both direct and indirect—create situations that are at odds with the primary goals of many in the international development field, such as assisting in the economic, social, and political betterment of developing nations (World Bank 1997). Pervasive corruption leads to problems for development specialists trying to work in any country. For instance countries with high corruption rates are more likely to have money diverted from “society building” programs, such as education and health care, and placed into high profile and costly capital projects where corrupt activity can flourish (Morgan 1998). Even those capital projects that are built with properly designated funds can suffer when corruption causes poor quality materials or expertise to be used (Agence-France Presse 1999a). And, of particular importance to many in the field, is that international donors have realized that “aided projects in high-corruption countries are less likely to be successful” than aided projects in other countries (Olson 1998).

Corruption is a topic that has traditionally been kept under wraps by those who know the most about it—its’ illegal practitioners. However in the last few decades, and especially the last five to ten years, the topic of corruption has begun to emerge into the light (Economist 1999). The moral aspects and major historical occurrences of corruption have been written about and studied for years and now, with increasingly accurate data, the economic, managerial, and political impact of corruption is being examined and debated. An increase in media access, open government, citizen involvement, and international attention has begun to yield empirical data that can be used to further explain and understand the causes and effects of corruption, especially as it applies to developing nations.

Many international organizations, independent nations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), as well as international corporations and related businesses are creating and following rules and regulations to curb corruption wherever it is found. Because of political and economic realities, these various public and private entities are concerned with corruption for primarily economic reasons. While such international agreements and practices are an important step in condemning corruption, promoting international norms against corruption, and dealing with certain illicit transnational practices, they cannot be the primary method for dealing with corruption in developing countries. As is explained in this paper, while a working universal definition of corruption is already widely accepted and a universal condemnation of corruption is needed, there can be no single effective universal answer to deal with the problem of corruption. I believe that the accumulated corruption data from these varied anti-corruption efforts is best utilized by creating a huge database of information concerning the topic. And then allowing each country, organization, and entity to create their own answers based on the exigent circumstances that they are facing and the outcome that they desire. Such a database of information is being pursued—at least in spirit at this stage—primarily by those who deal with corruption in many varied locations and situations, such as the United Nations, the World Bank, the ICC, and other international organizations.

In this paper, I will attempt to follow an evolutionary exploration into the field of corruption. In the next section, I will put forth a working definition of corruption and take note of some historical instances of corruption. I will also talk about the international development specialist’s role in combating corruption. In section three, I will look to the causes and effects associated with corruption. In this section I will also address arguments that question the ability to create a blanket trans-societal condemnation of corruption. The fourth section will briefly address national and international efforts used to end corruption. Finally, I conclude with some thoughts on future efforts to deal with corruption in developing nations.

Defining Corruption and The Development Specialist's Role

Corruption Defined So As To Be A "Universal Wrong"

Corrupt behavior is indeed universally abhorred (Kim). One of the latest instances of corruption—and one that has made clear that it is not an issue that only concerns certain nations or private corporations—is the International Olympic Committee scandal concerning bribery and the 2002 Olympics in Salt Lake City (Carter 1999). If corruption can take hold in an organization that is usually held as a beacon for the proposition that the "best" will prevail without recourse to favoritism or other improper means, then corruption can strike anywhere. But, before we go too far, what exactly is corruption?

Corruption is an elusive concept to define. It is usually thought of as one of those "I know it when I see it" types of occurrences. The definition of corruption is, in fact, constantly changing—evolving and devolving—depending on the surrounding circumstances (Gong 1994). From one age to the next, and from one society to the next, corruption can mean vastly different things. The cultural, religious, and political ideals of a society create different concepts of corruption (World Bank 1998). Even within the same basic societal structure, the definition of corruption can change over time. And, while it may not be easy to think of one definition that encompasses such a complex topic, such a singular definition is necessary in order to carry out any sort of discussion on the topic. And, practically speaking, as exemplified throughout this paper there is a wide spectrum of corrupt activities that are universally deplored as wrong and harmful to society (Klitgaard 1988).

Corruption has been a constant companion to mankind. In approximately 1200 BC, Hammurabi of Babylon had a provincial governor conduct a bribery investigation (Alatus 1990). And as early as 3,000 years ago, Chinese writers documented government concern over corruption (Gong 1994). Pericles accused Kimon of accepting bribes from Alexander of Macedon in a trial in 463 BC (Alatus 1990). As the societies became more advanced the recording of corruption also became more specific. When Cicero tried Gaius Verres for corruption during Verres' tenure as governor of Sicily we not only know that the trial took place, but all of the gory details of Verres' reign over his subjects (Alatus 1990). When the Manchus came to power in China in 1644 AD they thoroughly explained that one of their arguments to justify their domination over the Chinese people was that they were "coming . . . to relieve the people from the inefficient and corrupt late Ming rule." (Lui 1979, 2)

While innumerable forms and instances of corruption have existed since the dawn of man, only a few of the more noticeable instances have survived in recorded form. Because of obvious limitations, only the more highly advanced ancient civilizations have left us a record of corruption in their times. And, as the victor writes history, it must also be remembered that even from these advanced civilizations, many instances of corruption are surely omitted, and perhaps some of the recorded ones were embellished in order to stigmatize an enemy for eternity. Additionally, as in modern times, if corruption was so stigmatized that it was written about in negative terms, those involved with it would have gone to great pains to hide much of it from their contemporaries (and therefore historic purview). Given these limitations, as well as the fact that the events happened in long-dead civilizations, centuries ago, why should we even bother to look at them? These historical records give further credence to the proposition that there is in fact a universally accepted set of activities that are deemed "corrupt." The ancient empires of Rome and China offer examples of the causes and effects of corruption that can be categorized similarly to corruption in many of today's developing nations (Alatus 1990).

In its worst forms, corruption creates death and misery for the innocent in order for a few to reap the rewards (Alatus 1990). Such effects can be seen by looking at Albania where recent aid packages of desperately needed supplies for the Kosovar refugees were held up so a local customs agent could extract a bribe (Snider 1990a). While large-scale corruption is easily connected to the massive resources usually associated with development projects, small-scale corruption can collectively add up to equal, or even exceed, the costs of large-scale corruption (World Bank 1997). Like the drops of water that formed the Grand Canyon, small-scale corruption is a force that must not be neglected. Therefore we must be cautious not to forget the small time corruption that is so often dismissed as either cultural or *de minimis* by some observers.

For now we will utilize a definition that appears in much of the literature and seems acceptable in encompassing what I personally would call "corruption": the abuse of public office for private gain (World

Bank 1997). As the definition clearly shows we are working only with corruption in the public realm. While private corruption certainly exists there are several reasons to limit our definition. First, any broader definition would clearly expand the scope of this paper beyond manageable boundaries. Second, in developing nations the negative impacts of corruption based in the public realm are generally far greater than those caused by corrupt activities between two private parties (Morgan 1998). Third, international development specialists are, by nature, going to be working with host governments and donor governments much of the time.

A universally recognized definition, even if rather simplistic, is necessary in order to build nation-specific anti-corruption measures around a truly international foundation. As alluded to in the introduction and as will be more fully explained later in this paper, the increasing interdependence among national economies as well as the increasingly stringent bilateral and multilateral aid program standards, require that each country control corruption for their own benefit as well as that of the rest of the world. This interdependency of economies as well as the transnational practices of modern businesses and the requirements of international organizations will increasingly require that anti-corruption efforts by individual nations recognize the need for such efforts to be legally, politically, and practically compatible with the related anti-corruption efforts of other nations. Such an international foundation is being promoted by many organizations, with more and more nations agreeing to abide by some sort of international standards.

The Development Specialist's Role in Curbing Corruption

Those who work in the international development field have unique reasons and abilities to help developing nations end corruption. The costs of corruption through decreased funding and misappropriation or misdirection of project funds directly affects most people who work in this field. Most planners in the international development field are already familiar with the tools needed to address corruption (strong institutions and political will). Many are in fact employed in areas that are directly associated with the implementation and promotion of these topics: governance, institution building, political empowerment, and so forth. To exemplify the development specialist's role and its connection to corruption, let's quickly look at a current hot bed of corruption: China's infrastructure development.

China is suffering from a lack of infrastructure that is harming its development. In an OECD conference, it was determined that as a precondition for China to achieve its optimal potential for development, "cost effective investment in transportation, energy, and education infrastructure will be critical for overcoming possibly severe bottlenecks and realizing greater domestic economic integration" (OECD 1999). Even China's Communications Minister, Huang Zhedong, has realized that "[t]ransportation is a major bottleneck in the national economy and will require efforts for several generations" (Agency-France Presse 1999d). China will spend about \$1 trillion for its energy infrastructure alone over the next twenty years. In 1998 alone China built 23,000 miles of roads, including more than 900 miles of expressways and 6,000 bridges (Agence-France Presse 1999d). To meet its incredible demand for technological and financial resources China will require assistance from the rest of the world. China must end the rampant corruption that affects the nation—especially its construction industry—because of the direct financial costs of corruption and the increasing pressure from international donors that condition aid and loans on maintaining a relatively corruption-free system. Therefore many planners, engineering consultants, and other international development specialists working on these massive improvement projects over the next few decades will be keenly aware that the life of the projects—as well as their own jobs—rely on curbing corruption.

The skills of many of these professionals will allow them the opportunity to have a great impact on anti-corruption efforts. The grass-roots knowledge of some specialists, along with their ability to see the overall picture, enable them to give sage advice on creating effective anti-corruption measures. The professionalism of these specialists who are involved in such things as governance and empowerment programs is vital for international agencies that are concerned about corruption. In a systemically corrupt environment the "outside professional" is often needed to create an effective anti-corruption program.

Corruption as A Major Impediment to Development

It is easily recognized that reducing corruption is not the only goal of government. Therefore, in an economic analysis of the situation, there is a point where the marginal unit of anti-corruption is outweighed by the need to use that energy on other non-corruption related societal problems (Klitgaard 1988). This is not to say that we are to avoid addressing small cases of corruption such as a customs agent collecting a \$10 handling fee. Rather, there may be a point in an effective anti-corruption effort when the tax collection service of a country is considered 95 percent honest and reliable, as opposed to the pre-reform period when it was only 45 percent honest and reliable. If it costs *one million dollars a year* to achieve an honesty rating in the 96th percentile, the country may be better off using that million dollars for education or, perhaps, *permanently increase* the honesty and reliability of the public works department from 60 to 80 percent.

By looking to the causes and effects of corruption, we are better able to understand how the corruption interacts with the entire web of society. Understanding any such relationship may then enable us to create answers designed to end the unwanted effects of corruption while still trying to address other concerns of the government. Western aid agencies and other international organizations have often been accused of meddling in the internal affairs of developing nations, and, alternatively, of providing funds for developing nations that are known to be extremely corrupt (World Bank 1997). With a thorough knowledge of the causes and effects of corruption, these agencies, as well as others interested in ending corruption can gain a database full of persuasive arguments in order to justify, or rectify, their policies and procedures. Again we must keep in mind that the effects, causes, and resolutions of corrupt activities must be adapted to each particular nation's circumstance.

How to Argue against Corruption

Foundations for Corruption Investigations

To study corruption we must first determine with what tools we are to identify its causes. For example someone looking at a situation through a moralist perspective may not find corruption caused by the same factors as someone who was looking at the situation through a purely economics-based point of view. The most commonly used foundations for discussing corruption are based on morality, economics, political science, and managerial-organizational theory. By far, the vast majority of corruption related research is based on moral and economic inquiries and results; however, we should not ignore the political and managerial-organizational based inquiries. All of the strategies can prove useful in analyzing and discussing corruption. However because of this paper's limited ability to address the issues I will only summarize the moral, political, and managerial-organizational methods, and spend a bit more time discussing the more "universally acceptable" economics based method.

The main theory behind most political science investigations is that corruption is only a symptom of more insidious and potentially crippling problems such as an abuse of political power, or the improper distribution of political power (for one reason or another) (Shihata 1996). Political scientists also view corrupt activities as a possible tool for entities to use for political purposes such as gaining votes, establishing alliances, or appeasing potential rivals (World Bank 1997). For these political scientists most forms of corruption are perpetuated by closed and authoritative regimes (Shihata 1996). Democratic ideals such as a free press and regular elections tend to create a society that has more transparent and responsive governments, which, in turn, tend to curb corruption (Snider 1999a).

In the managerial-organizational approach to discussing corruption, the experts tend to see corruption as a problem of mishandling organizational resources (usually public funds) (World Bank 1997). This mishandling of resources circumvents and harms the policies and directives of the organization. While the political scientists debate corruption as a symptom of underlying problems, the managerial-organizational approach sees corruption as an underlying problem that causes the unwanted effect of harming the policies of the organization.

For reasons of simplicity, I have divided the moralists into two primary camps: those who see corruption as a universal moral wrong and those that see "corruption" as completely dependent on societal variables. There is

an abundant amount of literature on both ends of this spectrum, as well as everything in between. As stated earlier, I believe that there is some sort of “core” concept or definition of corruption that is relevant across nearly all societies. The societal-based corruption argument is that corruption can only be defined by individual societal standards and, correspondingly, any trans-societal approach to dealing with corruption is “moral imperialism”. However this argument has two main things wrong with it: 1) it neglects to consider the trans-societal condemnations of similar actions defined as corrupt (Shihata 1996); and 2) it forgets that today’s world calls for certain activities (especially economically related activities) to have a universal basis (Sarin 1985).

As explained more thoroughly in 2–1 of this paper, corrupt activities have been condemned by societies across time and around the globe. Individual nations, as diverse as Malawi (Agence-France Presse 1999b), Kazakhstan (Kangas & Olson 1998), Mexico (Olson 1998), China (Agence-France Presse 1999a) and the United States (Gantz 1998), have recently reiterated their societies’ condemnations of corruption. In addition to this individualistic approach to condemning corruption, the nations of the world also recognize that there is a common duty—or at least benefit—in obtaining universal action against corruption. Recent actions by the Organization of American States (OAS), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the United Nations against corruption have included declarations concerning the interdependency of nations and the need to work together in combating corruption for the good of all. Authors from non-Western nations have also recognized the need and the justifications for developing countries to include themselves in international agreements, such as anti-corruption endeavors (Sarin 1985).

Economics based inquiry form the foundation for most discussions on corruption performed by today’s international organizations and businesses (World Bank 1997). Economic arguments are also used widely by individual nations, NGOs, and others, but for the international organizations and businesses an economics based approach appears to provide the greatest utility. That is, a defensible economics-based argument against corruption can serve the cross-cultural needs of the international entity better than a moral, political, or managerial-organizational argument, which may suffer if the moral, political, or managerial-organizational argument is not culturally valid. However, some students of corruption have problems with a purely economic approach. Gong says that economic theories of corruption do not work when talking about governments because the bureaucratic system is so different from a true market system (Gong 1994). Notwithstanding this opposition, an economics based approach can give us an extremely powerful tool to persuade those in power (in public and private positions throughout the world) that any costs in implementing effective anti-corruption measures more than offset the actual or perceived losses from permitting corruption to continue unchecked. For these reasons, I believe that an economics based argument against corruption can yield the best ammunition to win the war against corruption, especially for planners who often work with various entities at the international level. And, while I am primarily focused on using an economics based argument to rally support for anti-corruption efforts, I also feel it is impossible, or at least unwise, to exclude the moral, political, and managerial-organizational arguments in persuading individual audiences of the merits of anti-corruption policies and practices. In fact, for certain public-sector-based organizations, the non-economic arguments may prove more persuasive. However, as referred to earlier, a primary benefit of starting off with a good economics-based argument is that it should be more universally acceptable than the other methods.

Economic Based Arguments

The economics-based corruption argument is divided between those completely opposed to corruption, and those who see some economic merit in certain “corrupt” practices (Economist 1999). “Pro-corruption” economists, or “corruption functionalists”, for the most part, feel that corruption is only trying to realize true market conditions (Klitgaard 1988). That is, those who most value an item and have the money will pay the most for it. And, because, for whatever reasons, the market is not functioning properly, what we have defined as “corruption” may be a valid method to reinstate market prices. Many causes of corruption are based on this economic theory of “rent-seeking.” (Mauro 1996) Rent seeking takes many forms and creates an especially heavy economic burden for many developing nations. Most experts in the field (both pro-corruption economists and anti-corruption economists) believe that the best way to overcome many of the illicit opportunities associated with rent-seeking is to promote privatization, deregulation, and a general opening-up of economic activities in the particular country (Mauro 1996). Therefore, the World Bank, among others, feels that economic policy reform must be a core element in the fight against corruption (World Bank 1997).

In developing countries, trying to realize these true market conditions, or rent-seeking, primarily occurs when the “economic rent” of an item (product or service) is not at its true market position because of some sort of government intervention. Basically, economic rent is the difference between what a person is willing to pay for a particular item, and what the person is willing to pay for the closest available substitute item. The pro-rent-seeking approach is most notably limited by its avoidance of any non-economic reasons for ending corruption. Political, moral, and social reasons are often considered enough by themselves to end corruption (Klitgaard 1988). When corruption reintroduces market forces into a sector that had been modified-subsidized by the government, the poor are most likely to suffer (Morgan 1998). These market forces create a situation where, as is most often the case, the more wealthy in the society are placed in a more advantageous position. When the sector affected is something like health care, education, or access to political power, a market economy cannot create the social equalities that the original government modifications-subsidies were created to do (Banerjee 1996). There are also externalities caused by corrupt activities that harm a society. As will be demonstrated in § 3–2, when we look at the primary causes of corruption, we find that these causes create a myriad of actual illicit activities that, in turn, give rise to an explosion of negative effects that far outweigh any initial economic benefits.

Even when corruption does not affect a “protected interest” of a developing nation, such as health care or education, we cannot say that corruption is positive merely because certain positive results have flown from corrupt activities. To say that paying bribes helps to feed, and house many low-level and middle bureaucrats in developing nations does not alone justify the bribes. Many studies have looked at cost-benefit reports of corruption in locations around the world. Studies in Morocco, Ghana, Korea, and the Philippines have all concluded that there is no legitimate economic benefit created by corruption (Klitgaard 1988). That is, as Klitgaard (1988) points out, while the occasional act of corruption *may* have some sort of economic efficiency merit, systemic corruption is never economically efficient. Therefore when we are working at the practical level to get rid of corruption in a particular instance, we must determine what alternative methods could be used to achieve at least the same amount of “good,” if any, produced by the corrupt activity without the “bad” of bribery (Alatus 1990).

The Major Causes of Corruption

Based on an economics argument, we are now ready to look at some of the primary causes of corruption. According to the World Bank, “corruption tends to flourish when institutions are weak and government policies generate economic rents.” (World Bank 1997) When trying to address the causes of corruption, most authors on corruption utilize a model by Klitgaard (1988, 75):

$$C (\text{corruption}) = M (\text{monopoly}) + D (\text{discretion}) - A (\text{accountability}).$$

This model helps to demonstrate the connection between the potential for corruption by the public official and the control and power given to the public official. Donor agencies often use the Klitgaard model to determine the size and extent of the potential corruption in a situation (Snider 1999a). In many developing nations, the public official is given a large amount of power with wide latitude to effectuate stated policies. Additionally, the public official, either legally or realistically, often does not have to worry about getting caught and punished for any transgression or abuse of office. However, many people associated with international development aid, especially those in the World Bank, think that corruption is a purely economic problem that can be solved solely by economic considerations (Snider 1999b). While the economics based argument is useful for arguing against corruption, economics alone is insufficient to correct the problems associated with corruption in a system.

The underlying causes of corruption are based largely on weak institutions and improper government policies, these broad underlying causes, in turn, create a plethora of more tangible causes—or influences—of corruption. It is important to look at these more immediate causes of corruption, as they are manifestations of improper governance that can give us the best information on how to create corrective measures for a particular situation. Of these immediate causes of corruption, some of the more prevalent are: inadequate government wages; dual-track pricing systems; improper government intervention; a natural monopoly position over goods or services; and sociological factors that further aggravate the potential for corruption.

One of the most talked about reasons for corruption in the developing world—especially in the public sector—is the inadequacy of government wages for public sector workers (Olson 1998). Examples of opportunities to maximize economic income are prevalent throughout the developing world (Mauro 1996). According to rent-seeking theorists, the artificially low wages paid the government workers does not adequately reflect the value of their services; therefore, there is room for negotiation between the government worker and the potential bribe-giver. The person who most values the services-authorization-recommendation-etc of the government worker, will end up paying the highest bribe (or at least some bribe that allows him to ‘outbid’ the non-bribe-giver), thereby following the rent-seeking theory. The bribe-giver receives value for the dollar, and the government worker obtains supplemental income.

Some experts feel that the low pay of government workers in developing nations is better classified as an effect of corruption, rather than a true cause (Alatus 1990). Alatus cites an Indonesian official who stated that the government would be able to pay its workers a proper wage, if only taxes were properly collected (Alatus 1990, 86). However, nearly all agree that paying artificially low wages to government employees, especially those with discretionary authority and little supervision, is an open invitation to corruption. This is especially true in the tax and customs departments of developing nations.

Dual-track pricing also offers an excellent environment for rent-seeking opportunities that lead to corruption (Mauro 1996). Some prime examples have come out of China, where, until recently, separate pricing systems were in place depending on whether the goods were destined for public or private use. A major problem of Chinese reform policy after 1977 was the prevalence of official speculation. This speculation occurred when a party would buy a product at the lower state-price and then sell it at the market price. This system was allowed to develop because of the Chinese Communist Party’s (CCP’s) policies on opening up the Chinese economy that, among other things, allowed for dual-track pricing (Gong 1994). However, this system easily leads to abuses, as when the materials are diverted from their original, lower priced state-use to a more profitable market-use.

Host governments sometimes utilize their unique position to enable their own business entities to gain an improper advantage over foreign interests. It is a well-known fact that many countries assist their own citizens and corporations in obtaining some sort of economic advantage in the marketplace (Gantz 1998). However, when this government-backed advantage is clothed in secrecy and is contrary to the explicit national—and perhaps, international—laws on the subject, then it can become a case of illicit collusion between the host government and the local citizen or corporation. An example of this is where the South Korean government permitted—and assisted—some of its largest construction and supply firms to illegally obtain unnaturally high economic rents from the U.S. Army stationed in Korea (Klitgaard 1988).

Rent-seeking behavior may also be caused by circumstances not based on host government actions (for example, artificially lowering the market price of foodstuffs for political reasons). For example, the existence of limited natural resources in a country can create a natural monopoly situation for whoever obtains the rights to exploit those resources. Even without excessive regulation, such a situation will tend to increase the chances for corruption, as there will probably be more bidders than rights available. All other things being equal, there is an increased chance of corruption in a local ministry of the interior that is able to issue permits for 1,000 logging licenses, as opposed to a neighboring country with a vastly larger forested region that can give out nearly unlimited licenses.

Rent seeking is likely to occur in situations in which there are sociological factors such as tribal affiliations or familial linkages (Mauro 1996). For example, the possible benefits (monetary and social) increase, while the possible drawbacks (such as getting caught and punished) decrease when the illicit activities occur among kinsmen. These sociological factors play a large role in advancing nepotism and cronyism (Klitgaard 1988).

Some Harmful Effects of Corruption in Developing Nations

There are many different categories of effects that are caused by corruption. One of the more inclusive lists was compiled by Alatus and contains ten types of corruption effects (Alatus 1990). We will utilize this list as a guide to understanding corruption’s effects in varied circumstances.

The first effect noted by Alatus is the *Metastatic Effect* (Alatus 1990). This term is taken from the medical world and is based on the spread of malignant tumors throughout the body. Cancerous cells may reproduce in an unrestrained manner, and, while they look like normal cells, they perform only some of the normal cell functions, eventually becoming increasingly abnormal and unable to perform any of the normal functions. Metastatic corruption has plagued many historical societies, including Rome and ancient China. In 43 BC, after killing Julius Caesar, Octavian, Antony, and Lepidus needed to pay off their debts, but the treasury was broke. The three rulers of Rome ordered the death of 100 senators, and 2,000 of the richest men of Rome, thereby allowing their lands, and property to be seized (Alatus 1990, 19). This unquenchable thirst for money was in large part caused by the need to pay off the legions, and citizens of Rome. The Roman armies were constantly bribed to back one ruler more than another and the citizens of Rome were likewise constantly bribed with cheap grain, and entertainment. This corruption systematically crept out of Rome's hierarchy, and soon engulfed the outer provinces, and created havoc for the poorest of Rome's subjects, who, like poor everywhere, eventually bear the heaviest burden associated with corruption (World Bank 1997). While the fall of Rome was caused by many factors, it is rarely disputed that corruption was a major factor that, if nothing else, fueled the other causes of Rome's demise (Alatus 1990, 35). This type of corruption effect appears to be endemic in many of today's developing nations. In the most severe cases, a form of corruption known as kleptocracy occurs. In a kleptocracy, the nation is systematically looted and pillaged by those who are supposed to guide and protect it: the government and its officials. An example of such an extreme case would be Nigeria, where despite huge oil reserves, the country's leadership thoroughly skimmed all profits into their own accounts without benefiting the nation as a whole (Economist 1999). The country was left to rot while more and more of the government functions became rife with corruption (Economist 1999).

The second type of effect is a *Clustering Effect* (Alatus 1990). This is where a center of corruption has other centers of corruption surrounding it. The two reasons for this are that one corruption center gives rise to another, and second, the naturally occurring mutual benefits of clustering. An example of a cluster is when every step along the way to getting a building built is based on bribes. From obtaining the application forms, getting the engineers seal, filing papers with the committee, getting committee approval, and getting any construction safety inspection passed. As an example, in the Ukraine—where government corruption is a major problem—the government bureaucracy now requires more than 800 permits to build a new hotel (Snider 1999a).

A *Differential Delivery Effect* is third (Alatus 1990). This effect occurs when goods or services are delivered because of a corrupt transaction. There are two types of consequences from this effect: the direct and the indirect. The direct consequences from a differential delivery effect could include a building created with inferior materials, poor workmanship, and illogical design. The indirect consequences could be a large number of people being hurt or killed if this building burnt down because of the buildings corruption-based deficiencies. A probable example of this effect recently occurred in China when 40 people were killed during a bridge collapse (Agence-France Presse 1999e). It was determined that corruption was behind the poor construction that caused the disaster (Agence-France Presse 1999e). The delivery effect can also be either transient or sporadic, or it can be consolidated in the system. When it is consolidated, the delivery effect is connected to a metastatic stage of corruption. The Chinese bridge collapse seems to be connected to a larger system of delivery effects, and as such, appears connected to a metastatic stage of corruption in China.

A *Potential Elimination Effect* is the fourth corruption effect and is caused when corruption displaces goals and values and eliminates potential alternatives (Alatus 1990). Those who profess that corruption is a "cultural norm" and is not necessarily wrong can even see this effect. In ancient Rome, whenever a new ruler came forward to try to end the corruption and bring forth some sort of "better society", they were usually quickly killed off by those who wanted to keep the status quo (Alatus 1990, 24). Looking again at our Ukrainian hotel example, the rampant corruption connected to building permits has not allowed for one new hotel to be built in Kiev since the fall of the Soviet Union (Snider 1999a). We can only speculate at the amount of business that has been lost to the newly independent country because of the lack of adequate Western-level accommodations for businesspeople and government officials.

The fifth effect—the *Transmutation Effect*—can be seen when corrupt people are considered as "heroes" or "praiseworthy individuals" (Alatus 1990). They use their ill-gotten gains to win accolades for themselves. Examples of this "Robin Hood" effect could include American mobsters, such as Al Capone. However, in the

developing world, this “hero” may be someone as simple as a corrupt customs agent who helps out his kinsmen. In China, Chu Shijian, the former head of Red Pagoda Mountain cigarettes, the number three cigarette manufacturer in the world, was convicted of corruption (Cox 1999) (Morf 1999). While officially convicted of corruption, Chu is still seen as a local hero to many people in Yunnan Province (Morf 1999). He not only built new homes and brought thousands of jobs to the poor region, but was also awarded a Lifetime Golden Globe from the Chinese government and was even officially designated as “one of the ten outstanding personalities in the history of economic reform” (Morf 1999).

The *Demonstration Effect* is where the lifestyle of the corrupt “demonstrates” that corruption is a worthwhile pursuit (Alatus 1990). It promotes corruption and causes many to be cynical and reject the “traditional” moral values of the society. For instance, in China, “[o]nce profit and loss [had] been raised to a sacred importance, Party cadres discover[ed] that by simply signing a supply order or a commerce contract, they [too] [could] reap great profits in kick-backs.” (Wing Lo 1993, 71) It is hard for a poor African peasant to accept the fact that corruption is wrong when a government tax collector who is only supposed to earn a relatively small amount grows exceedingly prosperous while at the same time the poor are asked to give more of their meager income (Alatus 1990, 45).

A *Cumulative Derivation Effect* concerns the future consequential effects of current or past corrupt actions (Alatus 1990). An engineering company corruptly obtains a contract to build a dam. Even supposing the company then proposes to build a “quality dam”, they are unqualified to do so—they only got the job because of the bribe. When the company buys steel for the dam, it orders a cheaper product than required by code and pays off the inspector. The company’s improper construction techniques later cause the dam to break. It is the cumulative effect of many earlier corrupt decisions that are magnified over time. As stated earlier, China has recently experienced examples of shoddy and dangerous construction projects that exemplify the cumulative derivation effect—as well as the differential delivery effect (Agence-France Presse 1999c). Another example of the cumulative derivation effect is when necessary government projects cannot move forward because the tax officials were bribed to reduce a taxpayer’s assessment, and thereby deprived the government of needed funds.

The eighth effect is the *Psychocentric Effect* (Alatus 1990). Rooted in society’s suffering from systemic corruption the psychocentric effect can cause a “brain drain” of qualified individuals, administrative inefficiencies, and parasitism. Alatus himself defines psychocentric as referring to “the compelling mobilization of motivations and passion for activity organized around [corruption].” (Alatus 1990, 130) As noted by the ancient Chinese historian-philosopher Wang An Shih, the corrupt will always neglect their obligations and turn their attention solely to their own corrupt activities (Alatus 1990, 126).

Alatus recognizes two poles of a psychocentric effect of corruption that promotes such negligence. The one pole is by those practicing corruption. The other is by those who are “victims” of corruption and loose faith in the system. Therefore, the practitioners of corruption spend all their energy trying to obtain bribes and the victims are resolved to accept the situation. For example, in Pakistan, 12 percent of a businessman’s time is spent on negotiating bribes (Snider 1999a). While in nearby Kazakhstan, “many citizens resign themselves to simply living with [corruption] rather than doing anything about it . . . [and] . . . ordinary citizens see no recourse.” (Kangas & Olson 1998, 13) Alatus goes so far as to say “[n]egligence is the greatest and most pervasive effect of corruption.” (Alatus 1990)

The *Climatic Effect* is where honest people are hard-pressed to survive, while all around them the corrupt are prospering (Alatus 1990). This is often an effect that is claimed to be felt by American businesses subject to the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act. Alatus notes a case where otherwise “decent importers” *had* to pay off government officials in order to conduct any business at all (Alatus 1990, 42). Referring again to our Kosovar relief supplies example, the initial point-of-contact for the aid agency, an American, was so unaccustomed to bribery that without the help of a more “worldly” colleague, the supplies might have rotted on the docks (Snider 1999a).

The final effect is the *Economic Effect of Corruption* (Alatus 1990). While some economists argue that there is no harmful economic effect of corruption (that is, corruption, if it is not actually beneficial, does not truly harm a nation’s economy), the vast majority of economists who have studied the problem disagree. Klitgaard states that corrupted procurement policies in developing nations cause those governments to pay 20–100 percent more than they would have to pay under non-corrupt conditions (Klitgaard 1988, 39). Another

example where corruption takes a heavy toll is on taxation. In India, only about 50 percent of the legally reported income are taxed (Banerjee 1996, 107). Perhaps that is because 75 percent of the tax collectors are alleged to take bribes (Banerjee 1996, 107).

Obviously, the delineation of the effects of corruption into these ten categories is imperfect. However, it is a useful place to start understanding and categorizing the harm that corrupt activities can cause society. It must also be understood that these categories are not exclusive of each other. In fact, most of the time, any particular instance of corruption will cause effects that can be placed into more than one of Alatus' categories. The usefulness of the categorization of effects will be seen when an anti-corruption effort is started. Being able to clearly demonstrate the harmful effects of corruption will aid in highlighting the harm caused as well as help in formulate an answer to the problem.

Anti-Corruption Efforts

National Efforts to End Corruption

While international agreement and assistance are needed to help most developing countries combat corruption, the actual anti-corruption effort must be tailored to suit each particular country's situation (Olson 1998). For instance, while in one country, a successful independent anti-corruption department might enjoy wide-ranging powers, large economic resources, and strong political backing (De Speville 1997) (Wing Lo 1993), a similar attempt may fail where one or more of those attributes are missing (Snider 1999b). By looking at the past experiences of different nations in their attempts to curb corruption, we can better understand links between the causes of corruption and effective anti-corruption efforts under different circumstances.

One of the most renowned anti-corruption programs ever instituted was started in Hong Kong in 1973 (Klitgaard 1988). The Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) has been credited with the impressive turn-around of Hong Kong's international image. Before ICAC, most of Hong Kong, especially the police force, was considered to be a den of corruption and illicit activities (Wing Lo 1993). ICAC was created as an independent agency with a strong legal mandate and far reaching powers of investigation and arrest. The government and the people wanted to end the corruption and no expense was spared in funding ICAC. With strong leadership, ICAC was able to drastically curb corruption and turn Hong Kong into a relatively corruption free environment (De Speville 1997).

Other nations have attempted a self-styled "ICAC-type" approach for ending corruption in their own nations, with few successes (Snider 1999b). Many of these nations are missing one or more of the key ingredients to ICAC's successful implementation: political will, independent agency status, financial backing, strong implementation statutes, and so forth. While not every aspect of ICAC must be reproduced in exact detail to achieve success, a mere window-dressing approach to implementing any anti-corruption effort is doomed to failure.

A Filipino program offers a look at a successful effort dealing with a common area of corruption—the revenue department of a developing nation's civil service. In the mid-70's, Ferdinand Marcos appointed a seated judge, Efren Plana, to head the corrupt and inefficient Filipino Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) (Klitgaard 1988). Plana's initial concepts for reform turned into six primary anti-corruption measures: (1) professionalize the agency; (2) establish internal control and administrative responsibility over revenue agents; (3) establish central control of outlying offices and rotate agents among offices; (4) establish a system of checks and balances; (5) attempt to change the legislation in order to give less discretion to individual taxing agents; and (6) establish an internal and external anti-corruption education and public relations system (Klitgaard 1988). After thoroughly studying the results of these and other past successes and failures, we should then be better prepared to create a respectable anti-corruption program for any particular situation.

International Efforts To End Corruption

Even if all nations agree on the basics of corruption (definition, causes, effects, and possible cures), there still must be installed some sort of international mechanism—be it a binding treaty, letters of understandings, and

procedural guidelines—to at least help pressure a country to comply with its own laws, if not comply with some sort of international anti-corruption law. Such an international mechanism is also likely to pressure (command) non-governmental entities to abide by anti-corruption measures. The recent positive attention received by anti-corruption efforts has resulted in some headway being made in the international political arena. Two major international agreements have been reached by the Organization of American States and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development concerning corruption. Several major international organizations, such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the International Chamber of Commerce, have also made corruption a high-point on their agendas. While these agreements and policy agendas have yet to be thoroughly tested, the early outlook is encouraging for a more universal framework to control corruption.

Conclusions and Suggestions

Who Should Help?

There can be no doubt that the anti-corruption efforts by major international players have created great impetus for further and more comprehensive anti-corruption efforts to be undertaken on both the national and international levels. However, it must also be recognized that some countries—especially some of the least-developed nations—may oppose heavy handed or condescending tactics if utilized by the more industrialized countries trying to impose “Western based” anti-corruption efforts on them. Supportive anti-corruption policies and procedures—such as those proposed by the World Bank—are more likely to win over support than more direct and confrontational measures. For instance, many developing nations—as well as many of the U.S. industrialized trading partners—react very negatively when the U.S. imposes some sort of sanctions on a country for not following the U.S. lead on an issue (Anand 1965, 19).

Let us take an example of what is (arguably) a developing country. Up until a few years ago, corruption in the PRC was seen entirely as a problem of the individual’s moral character, or as a result of outside influences. Only recently has the leadership of the government openly admitted that some of the government’s own practices have played a role in nurturing corruption. In such a situation, the more collegial approaches offered by international agencies such as the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, Transparency International, or even the International Commerce Commission will likely have a greater chance of being effective at assisting the PRC in ending corruption. It is unlikely that the PRC, or many other developing countries, would, at least at this point, want to sign onto a binding international convention against corruption. Even if the government itself is thoroughly opposed to corruption, they might feel that it is a matter for internal regulation. Additionally, or alternatively, they might believe that they are not able to live up to such an agreement at this time and don’t want to deal with the negative connotations of failing to abide by such an agreement.

Planners and other international development professionals have the best opportunity to aid developing nations in creating and implementing anti-corruption efforts. These professionals have the expertise in areas that are vital to creating an effective anti-corruption effort, such as governance, organizational management, finance, construction, and so forth. This group of professionals can also bring together the detachment that is needed to avoid the debilitating effects of cronyism and nepotism, while maintaining a necessary level of in-country experience (gained over the years) that is necessary to effectively tailor the anti-corruption effort. The international development professional is also free from most rent seeking pressures because of their usual salary levels and the increased potential for getting caught if any trans-societal corruption is attempted.

How Can They Help?

The bulwarks of an effective anti-corruption effort are strong institutions and political will. Together, these two pillars have proved themselves capable of seriously eliminating the potential (monopoly power & discretion) and increasing the risks (accountability) associated with corrupt activities. However, without one of these pillars, the other is seriously, if not fatally, weakened.

In establishing a strong institutional framework, the international development field can help the host nation in three main areas:

1. Build traditional systems of well-performing governments;
2. Strengthen the legal framework; and
3. Increase transparency and the role of the public.

To help establish this rule-based bureaucracy on a more practical level, the planner might utilize their expertise in various fields to assist the government or agency in developing specific guidelines. These guidelines should be adapted to the specific needs of the host country or agency, but the following can be used as an illustration of typical suggestions to help curb corruption.

1. Establish pay structures comparable to civilian pay scales
2. Reward individuals for honest efforts; punish those that violate the law
3. Base recruitment and promotions on merit systems
4. Alter laws so as to limit the discretion of civil servants
5. Limit protectionist measures, thereby allowing for more realistic market prices and reducing the potential for economic rents
6. Establish a system of generally accepted accounting principles to monitor compliance with the laws
7. Create a system of internal checks and balances, and demand administrative responsibility for the actions of subordinates
8. Create a public education and relations bureau, and create a public oversight organization

In setting up anti-corruption measures, the first rule to remember is that nothing will happen unless there is real political will to fight corruption. As has been seen throughout the history of anti-corruption efforts, the thing that so often destroys even the most successful campaign is a withdrawal, or even a wavering, of the political will from those in charge of the project. This can come in the form of the central government changing, or perhaps a new regional supervisor that wants to end the program. The need for political will never disappears, but, once the rule of law has been established, and adequate political, judicial, and administrative organs are in place, it will take more than a mere change in leadership to prevent an otherwise effective anti-corruption campaign from working.

Once efficient and democratic government organizations are established and the people are behind the anti-corruption efforts, a few other things must be remembered. First, it will not happen overnight. Even the most successful efforts will, initially, appear to yield little in the way of results. The BIR and ICAC examples both took a while before the public, the government, and the corrupt individuals believed in their effectiveness. The next thing to remember is that a successful effort also involves an adequate and sustained supply of manpower and money. In an existing agency, such as the BIR, resources and manpower can usually be moved around without too much trouble. However, if a new agency is to be created, adequate resources must be committed to the project or it will fail. While corruption might subside after the implementation of a successful anti-corruption program, history has shown that the danger of its reemergence never quite goes away.

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i. For instance, Rorty might be arguing that the way liberal societies think and debate predisposes them to a particular sort of moral principle (a typically liberal one), where, by 'predispose,' I mean that a certain style of dialogical/thought process whereby the best possible norms are formulated is practiced or carried out. Any principles that are formulated through such a principles that will be the best simply because the procedures which gave rise to them are liberal.

ii. I am much indebted to Catriona Mackenzie for bringing this distinction to my attention.

iii. Although just what these 'detailed practical advantages' might be precisely, is something Rorty never discusses further. We are left to wonder whether these "advantages" might be quantifiable in Utilitarian terms—the maximization of happiness, for instance. Or perhaps the social cohesion that comes through group accord (on such issues as what goes towards constituting moral truth) might be another "practical advantage."

iv. Rorty does, however, affirm that a reduced ideal of moral objectivity qua solidarity entails 'that we should think of human progress as making it possible for humans to do more interesting things, and be more interesting people, not as heading towards a place which has somehow been prepared for humanity in advance.' (Rorty 1989, 41) I take this as a fairly reliable indicator that Rorty does not view attempts to attain moral objectivity as misguided or futile, insofar as his particular brand of objectivity is just solidarity achieved through the expansion of 'us' as far as possible in the name of ethnocentrism.

v. A Hobbesian 'state of nature' springs to mind here.

vi. See Mayer's argument against the claim that tradition can serve as the foundation for arguments *against*, and as an absolute barrier *to*, universalist prescriptions (cf. Moody-Adams 1994, 21)

vii. As she continues, 'it is precisely because human beings are limited and fallible . . . that convergence on a single interpretation of the structure of moral experience (within or across cultures) would be morally quite dangerous . . . moral disagreement and conflict are essential to the moral vitality of individual cultures, and ultimately to the moral openness of humanity to the future.' (Moody-Adams 1997, 196)

viii. I stress *almost* intrinsic. I do not believe that there is not an intrinsic value to cross-cultural dialogue, simply because sometimes such dialogue and criticism can lead to feelings of resentment, and thereby engender a desire to react defensively and violently to the parties offering the criticism or comparison. It would be naïve to rule such a possibility out. However, I sincerely believe that there are many more advantages than disadvantages in endorsing such an attitude of critical, dialogical openness to others; that the advantages are more likely to be the result of such confrontations than disadvantages. I am greatly indebted to Timothy Edwards for bringing my attention to this undeniable possibility.

ix. I am sure that neither Benhabib nor Moody-Adams would debate Charles Taylor's claim that humans are essentially social or 'encultured' animals; that the orientation within the space of moral questions all humans exist in is acquired 'through dialogue, partly overt, partly internal, with others' (Taylor 1995, 231), and that these others are those to whom I am most proximally located during my 'formative' years, i.e., my parents, friends, my extended family, my teachers, in short, my community, which, in at least my own case, can be thought of as a microcosm of the *modern liberal culture* of the West.

^x By sub-national groups, I do not limit myself to groups that have territories. For example, take the case of Israel. The Jews gained a right to a nation of their own because they were persecuted in other nations, and did not have their basic human rights protected in most of the nations in which they lived. The case of Northern Ireland is more difficult, and I must admit that the criteria developed in this paper may not be fully applicable in this case.

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