Development Ethics
- What? Why? How?
and why bother?

Des Gasper
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1. Why?- Issues and Cases,
2. What is Development Ethics? 3. Why Bother?
4. How Ethics can (sometimes) make a difference
1. WHY? ISSUES & CASES: Our globe
– E.g.: Pogge (2005): some realities, some comparisons

- 800 million undernourished → physical and mental stunting, & high morbidity & mortality
- 30K babies and children under 5 die every day from poverty-related causes (UNICEF)
- 2400 million without basic sanitation
- 900 million adults illiterate
- 170 million children in hazardous work
- Plus: *Development-forced displacement: 10-15 million people annually.* (Due to, e.g., urban growth, spread of enormous open-pit mines.)
Some realities, some comparisons, continued

- To attain the $2/day line for all would cost 1.2% of gross national products of high-income countries.

- Far far less than they spend on military forces, or on subsidising farmers, banks, et al. … 4 days of global military spending = cost of universal primary education.

- Less too than low and middle income countries spend on…

- National and global inequalities have rapidly increased in the past generation in many sectors
1. **‘Calculus of pain’** – 1: The gains of some groups have directly relied on planned suffering for others (e.g., forced resettlement)—‘pyramids of sacrifice’

2. Gains for some groups often generate unplanned suffering for others (→ next slide; e.g., other displacement)

3. **‘Calculus of meaning’**: how far does the acquisition of and preoccupation with material comforts and conveniences bring or jeopardise a fulfilling and meaningful life?

4. The issues of pain and meaning concern also *unborn generations and the already born children* who are not yet able to participate in societal decisionmaking. Taking their interests fairly into account, and respecting environmental fragility and constraints = the **calculus of sustainability**.
Interconnections & in-built conflicts in socio-economic development, in both *intra*-national and *inter*-national arenas

- Investment for *future* generations may be at the expense of poor people presently
- Construction of infrastructure for some people’s benefit results in *displacement* of other people
- Increased wealth of some people competes away resources in markets from poorer people → housing problems. (‘Pecuniary externalities’)
- Increased risk of *famines* when wealth from around the world starts to command resources from around the world. (M. Davis: *Late Victorian Holocausts*; current world food prices & malnutrition)
- Increased pressure of many/any sorts in a society affects *women*: the ‘shock absorbers’ – noticed only when broken → Devt ethics typically now has a strong focus on women
- Increased carbon consumption by some people (core feature of modern development) indirectly damages people in vulnerable *environments*, nationally and especially inter-nationally.
Influencing the Climate: - ‘collateral damage’
Some questions arising - 1

- Which of these conditions and effects are unfair and avoidable?
- If it’s unfair, what changes should be made?
  →
- Why does the pain and suffering arise? (= Look at causes, the past)

AND ETHICAL QUESTIONS OF:
- Whose responsibility to act? Nobody’s?
- Whose response-ability? (Look at future options). ‘Can / cannot’ is in part a moral judgement.
- Babies bear no responsibility for own situation, and have little unaided response-ability; → Nussbaum’s question (next slide). (Look at present needs)
Questions arising - 2

- **Nussbaum’s question**: (How far) Should the chance of being born in one family rather than another, and in one nation rather than another, [determine] the life chances of every new child who is born?

- Nearly all countries take at least some steps to ensure access by all children to basic goods – to balance chances of being born in one family rather than another within a country. But some people/countries deny even *intra-country* rights & duties, let alone inter-country.
Questions arising – 3

- Are national boundaries ethically relevant?
- Especially in a world that is increasingly economically globalized / unified?
- How much? In what ways?
  - For example with respect to international migration
- Consider different possible degrees of ethical responsibility:
  - For equal outcomes?
  - For equal treatment?
  - For minimum basic rights?
  - Responsibility for the effects of one’s actions
  - ...
Global social contract? (as opposed to human rights)

- Social contract theory – I seek my advantage; you seek your advantage; we negotiate a contract that gives both of us advantage.

  REFLECTION ABOUT MEANINGS OF I / WE

- No baby is responsible for its parents → the idea of a fair ‘social contract’ must be at level of the whole globe: all human beings
Nussbaum on the notion of humanity used in a theory of justice

Nussbaum: If we start from the principle of equal human dignity, why adopt ‘contract’ thinking at all – why not a startpoint that more adequately reflects our humanity? → human rights thinking

Her approach (and various others): we are ‘people who want to live with others. A central part of our own good…is to produce, and live in, a world that is morally decent, a world in which all human beings have what they need to live a life with human dignity’ (2004:12)
II. WHAT is ‘development ethics’?

1. An agenda of questions about major value choices involved in processes of social and economic development. Comparable to business ethics, medical ethics, and other areas of practical ethics.

2. The diverse body of work that has tried to address such questions, and the various sets of answers that are offered.

3. Work that uses the name ‘development ethics’ (1940s, Lebret → 1960s, Goulet → 1980s, Crocker…).

4. Activity that aims to institutionalise such work (e.g., International Development Ethics Association).
‘Stages’ for development ethics
(Gasper: ‘What is the Point of DE?’ – *Ethics & Economics* 4(2), 2006)

I. **Sensitization**: exposure -- ‘something’s wrong’
II. **Systematization**: theorizing
III. **Adaptation / application** of imperfect (and multiple) theoretical systems in complex real situations

Audiences (all of them are essential):
1. Intellectuals, students
2. Practitioners
3. Policy makers (indirectly and over long-term)
4. Wider ‘civil society’, the sea that moves around the first three
Some formulations / characteristics / foci

- How is a society moving into the future?
- Who is gaining and who is losing? (given the pervasive interconnections, intra- and inter-nationally)
- Focus on all humans everywhere
- ‘All persons and all the person’: Themes of reproduction: Environmental, Biological, Emotional, psychological (→ caring), Families → caring, Cultural. All these aspects are underweighted in an economics obsessed with production, oblivious to reproduction → pushes many things to the margin (of profitability / of attention / of survival)
- Interfaces of 1. fields of experience and 2. fields of theorizing (Fig.1 – p.8 of paper)
Some of the intersections that have generated and generate development ethics thinking
(see Fig.1 of Gasper paper for this meeting, for a much fuller version)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>POVERTY &amp; INEQUALITY</th>
<th>MIGRATION (&amp; TRADE)</th>
<th>CLIMATE CHANGE</th>
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<tr>
<td>MORAL PHILOSOPHY</td>
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<td>Debates about discount rates</td>
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<td>HUMAN RIGHTS THEORY</td>
<td>E.g. displacement by development projects / processes</td>
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<td>WELL-BEING RESEARCH</td>
<td>‘Voices of the Poor’</td>
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<td>FEMINIST THINKING</td>
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Example 1: Poverty and inequality

**DISPLACEMENT** - “Some get the pains, others get the gains” (Michael Cernea)

- 10-15 million people displaced each year because of new infrastructure
- The ‘abject failure of so many resettlement projects to produce tangible benefits for displaced communities. … [T]he record of dismal failures and concomitant pain and suffering for the displaced continues with depressing regularity.’ (Oliver-Smith, 2009: 17, summarizing Cernea)
- Even where compensation exercises are present: ‘Overwhelming evidence documents pervasive and multidimensional distortions of compensation in practice’ (Cernea, 2008: 56). 36 of the 44 dam-related resettlement cases reviewed by Scudder (2005) showed direct material losses to the displaced, in addition to the psychological and social losses.
2: **GLOBAL WARMING**
The Stern Review, 2007

Used economic cost-benefit analysis to estimate that the damage from climate change caused by ‘business as usual’ will be worth enormously more than the costs of avoidance/mitigation. By giving serious attention to future generations.

This was despite use of a methodology that weighs effects on poor people as far less, and that is ready to allow gains for the rich to outweigh losses for the poor. Starkly unequal treatment of people on different sides of lines.
LOCATION: U.S.-Mexico Border—A man peeks around a section of border fence.
Example 3. Ethics of migration

- Which groups/parties are involved? (Many distinct, differently affected, groups)
- How does migration (re)distribute effects between these groups?
- What criteria of assessment should we use? (Criteria of: desert, equal opportunity, fair process, unfair process in the past)
- When / by what criteria is the ‘heart trade’ (emigration of care-givers, to rich countries, away from poor countries) to be assessed?
Development ethics looks at challenges and costs of processes of development & change in a world context of:

- first, great possibilities for promotion of human well-being but very incomplete systems of rights and responsibilities to fulfil this potential;
- second, extreme global inequalities, that constantly affect and distort life and action in ‘the South’;
- third, extreme inequities globally – for example, much of the past record of change has involved oppression in and of the global South, and that present-day citizens in the North inherit enormous privileges that they have not individually done much to earn;
- fourth, considerable shared risks—of and from climate change, conflict, pandemics, etc.—of harms that will typically hit the weakest the hardest
III. WHY BOTHER …? :
– ‘But justice is irrelevant globally’

Table: Viewpoints in Global Ethics

Two dimensions for classification:
A. how far is global community—the existence of values and responsibilities of global scope—accepted?; and
B. how important are national community and national boundaries deemed to be?

Range of positions, including:
1, 2 – ‘Swedes’ & ‘inter-nationalists’: both strong national feelings and strongly felt global obligations
3 – pure nationalists: strong national feelings and no felt global obligations
7 – full cosmopolitans: no strong national feelings, but strong felt global obligations; so, no priority to fellow-nationals
9 – libertarian ultra-minimalists: neither national nor global loyalties
### Viewpoints in global ethics
(Gasper, *J. of Global Ethics*, 1(1), 2005)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National Borders</th>
<th>Strong Pan-Human Values</th>
<th>Modest Pan-Human Values</th>
<th>No Pan-Human Values</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Imp.</td>
<td>1. ‘Swedish’</td>
<td>2. ‘International nationalist’</td>
<td>3. ‘International sceptic’</td>
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<td>Quite Imp.</td>
<td>4. ‘Solidarist-pluralist’</td>
<td>5. Typical TNC business viewpoint</td>
<td>6. Typical natl. business viewpoint</td>
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Why bother with ‘development ethics’? – if:

Ethics is an unaffordable luxury that blocks real development - ? 1. This begs questions about what is real development, and neglects people’s answers, 2. Is shortsighted – (a) policies that do not respect rights are typically ineffective; (b) the principle of human security, in the UN Charter: ‘the explicit linkage of human rights protections to an international order of peace and security. … Collective security now [is] seen to require the defense of human rights norms and principles’ (Quataert, *Advocating Dignity*, 2009: 40).

Ethics involves only unending assertion of conflicting opinions - ? In fact: 1. important areas of agreement & convergence; 2. many shared prerequisites for (& shared implications of) different theories.
Areas of wide potential agreement, shared implications of responsible development

Penz et al., *Displacement by Development* (2011)

- Without having to adopt any particular ethical theory, we can apply a development ethics set of values which have attained wide international acceptance:
  - Responsible development must not harm/violate
    - *Human well-being and security*
    - *Equity, and sustainability*
    - *Participation*
    - *Cultural freedom*
    - *Other human rights*
    - *Integrity*
  - Background principle of non-maleficence
  - Penz et al. apply these principles in detail to discuss rights & responsibilities w.r.t. displacement – of national and international actors: governments, investors, local residents,…
Why bother with ‘development ethics’? We have human rights & human development ideas already

Four ‘human discourses’ – human rights (HR), human needs (HN), human development (HD), human security (HS)

Shared features:


- **Each of them tries to humanise an existing entrenched, unavoidable discourse.**

- **All are discourses of the UN world, to a major extent**
Human rights ideas – great strengths, and record of influence but also…

- **Weakness in prioritization**, e.g. when HRs conflict with each other or with other values; → HN, HS

- **Lack of attention to grounds**: given the wish to avoid disputation, and the happy fact that often we can find 1) the same implications from different starting points – e.g. via Basic Needs theory. But when there are disagreements → necessity of theorising, including to find the common implications

- **Legalism** → broader HR Based Approaches as the response

- **Openness to (mis-)use** by everyone in defense of their interests, including the rich and super-rich (including against all taxation), especially given the implications of legalism
Human security
(one of UNESCO’s core themes in recent years)

_HS as an integrating and prioritising format = the priority (Human Needs based) objectives within Human Development, which are given HR status; plus objective of their stability._

- 1 – guaranteed minima, not only expansion; in top priority areas, not all value areas;
- 2 - guarantees, rights for all, not just nice talk plus sacrificing of the weak;
- 3 – stability, not just overall average fulfilment.

_Conscience with vulnerability, not only capability_
Complementarity of the various UN human discourses

Emergence of HD work, to transcend HN ideas; HS works adds rather than replaces – it strengthens the focus on individuals and connects to HRs agenda.

HS work presented here not only as a stability add-on but as a synthesis of HN, HR, HD ideas
‘Human Security’: Value-added as a partner to human rights & human development languages

Human security thinking focuses on how people seek security of various sorts, physical, economic, and psychological, and on the priority capacities and vulnerabilities that form the grounds for basic rights.

It has a stronger concern with felt experience than in some of the legal-led work on human rights and economics-led work on human development.

Human security thinking adds to more individualistic human rights thinking an emphasis on the human species as a whole, and its shared security, insecurity and fragility.
The Age of Consequences - The foreign policy & national security implications of global climate change (CSIS, 2007)
Dyer (2010)
Potential value-added of HS framework – an important example of identifying areas of wide consensus (Kofi Annan’s approach):

A human security perspective helps to:

- Better ground the human rights and human development approaches in attention to the nature of being and wellbeing;
- and to focus them on priorities.
- It conveys interdependence more than does human rights language;
- it emphasises a synthesizing approach in explanation and diagnosis, and a realization of dangers, vulnerability, and fragility; and
- it connects strongly to human subjectivity, which increases its explanatory force and motivating potential.
IV. HOW ETHICS CAN (sometimes) MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Neta Crawford on ending of
1. Slavery – even though it was economically more profitable than wage labour
2. Colonialism – even though it remained profitable, and military supremacy of colonisers had even increased
   - Uses tests for whether ethics had influence
   - Identifies ways in which it had influence: by making comparisons, by attention to epic individual cases,… and by long hard struggle.

The spread of human rights norms offers wider insights (Risse-Sikkink model)

- **Spread** is extraordinary, major advances occur each decade. How?
  - A) System of multiple interacting groups – both national and international :- interaction during one phase; the "**boomerang effect**"
  - B) Model of spread: evolution over time, through several phases, of attitudes and practices on human rights – the "**spiral model**"

- **Key component**: processes of **socialization** into conformity, including belief internalization.

- **Lesson**: socialization comes through usage
GLOBAL HUMAN RIGHTS POLITY

HR regimes’ international organisations

Human rights INGOs

Foreign powers

COUNTRY X

Government

Domestic opposition; NGOs
‘Spiral model’ of HRs spread (Risse-Sikkink)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CIVIL SOCIETY</th>
<th>STATE during five phases</th>
<th>INTERNATIONAL / TRANSNATIONAL</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weak domestic opposition</td>
<td>I: Repression</td>
<td>Campaigns by transnatl. networks – Mobilize internatl. orgns. &amp; some states</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strengthening of domestic opposition – 1</td>
<td>II: Denial</td>
<td>Ongoing pressure</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strengthening of domestic opposition – 2</td>
<td>III: Tactical Concessions (‘yes of course we respect HRs’).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Growth into new political space</td>
<td>Crux/turning point</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acquisition of ideological hegemony for HRs</td>
<td>IV: Prescriptive status of HRs</td>
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<td>V: Internalisation &amp; institutionalisation</td>
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Incorporation of DE ideas in codes, training, policy and planning routines, public debate, academic organization, & communication strategies (Part 4)

- Codes (e.g., DeMartino, Inter-American Devt Bank, Stiglitz)
- Training (e.g., immersion visits?)
- Routines of policy & planning (see e.g., methodologies in: Dreze & Sen’s use of Human Development thinking in policy analysis; HRBA; human security reports)
- Avoiding being a specialist subdiscipline that talks only to itself; instead accessing mainstream courses, textbooks, arenas – as HRBA work has begun to do
- Preparing practical methods and policy options, for when crisis moments of opportunity may arrive.
Example 1: Principles for displacement ethics
– Penz, Drydyk and Bose (2011, Cambridge University Press)

As discussed earlier (consensual principles of responsible development) converted into practical advice

Including, explicitly:

*The most fundamental rights, the non-tradable rights*, are to: good reasons, empowerment, non-victimization, benefit-sharing.

Implicit:

*Who sustains all this assessment, negotiation, adjudication? Local, national and global social movements.* Motivated by…
What helps the push for innovative solutions to displacement dilemmas?

- Human rights presumptions, but with a broader ethical perspective, not a rigid legalism or absolute insistence on entitlements A,B,C. We can call this: A Human Rights Culture
  - including the right to be part of the discussion

- Social movements –
  - to exert pressure on governments & corporations;
  - to counter manipulation of data;
  - to change attitudes and terms of engagement, before
  - changing the range of perceived alternatives;
  - motivated by ideas of human rights, and more broadly by ethical principles of compassion & solidarity.
Example 2: CLIMATE CHANGE AND DEVELOPMENT:
  In the medium and long term, the largest source of uncertainty in climate change scenarios are what development models will be pursued.
Findings: WORLDVIEWS
- Dramatically different vocabularies

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<tr>
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<th>HDR 2007/8</th>
<th>WDR 2010</th>
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<tr>
<td>‘justice’</td>
<td>7</td>
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<td>‘human rights’</td>
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<td>‘equity’/‘equitable’</td>
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<td>‘climate smart’</td>
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<td>9</td>
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<td>‘political’</td>
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<td>‘economic growth’</td>
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<td>‘efficiency’</td>
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<td>48</td>
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<td>‘We’</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘manage’</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>26</td>
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<tr>
<td>‘human’</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>8</td>
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Findings: very largely shared POLICY VISION of the HDR and WDR

1. Developing countries need more economic growth
2. An insurance rationale
3. Mitigation: HIEs should adopt carbon-pricing: either a carbon tax or a cap-and-trade system.
4. These mechanisms generate finances for transfers to LDCs for mitigation and adaptation, to be administered by a multilateral mechanism.
5. The transfers will be programme-based. Developing countries will have to commit to quantitative goals and policy changes for mitigation, adaptation, and management of water, land, and energy.
6. No international regime is proposed to require and enforce changes in rich countries.
8. Open global product markets.
Why did the HDR 2007/8 not convert its critique far into a distinctive ethics-led policy approach?

First, its structuralist belief in ‘lock-in’ already in the North, and fear of an imminent high-carbon ‘lock-in’ too in the South, leads it to share the mainstream preference to focus on change of direction in the South, not the North.

Especially given also:
Second, its residual adherence sometimes to a decontextualized notion of ‘efficiency’ as judged in market terms (i.e. according to market purchasing power, rather than in terms of human development values).

But most especially, and intensified by the first point:
Third, its belief in ‘the fierce urgency of the now’, leads HDR to rush to a full policy package, designed in terms of instruments already available.
Why does the HDR 2007/8 not convert its critique far into a distinctive ethics-led policy approach? - 2

The United Nations Intellectual History Project (1999-2010) concluded that to achieve practical impact a movement of ideas needs:

- First, an intellectual vision, consistent with and partnered by
- Second, an inspiring set of values; and these two must be
- Third, operationalised in action-agendas, methodologies, practical proposals, &
- Fourth, institutionalised in organizations, processes and networks that carry the ideas forward and continually press for their use.

The HDR 2007/8 may have fallen short especially in

- the fourth respect, its network of active cooperators, and (consequently) in
- the third respect—conversion of its vision and values into practical means, rather than taking over policy instruments devised to express different visions and values.

So a new Human Development Report (or equivalent) on climate change is needed soon, to go further with that conversion, on the basis of insights from a broader network.