



## Introduction: Working in Development Ethics – a tribute to Denis Goulet

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### ABSTRACT

Denis Goulet (1931-2006) was probably the main founder of work on ‘development ethics’ as a self-conscious field that treats the ethical and value questions posed by development theory, planning and practice. This overview of a selection of papers presented at a conference of the International Development Ethics Association (Uganda, 2006) surveys Goulet’s work and compares it with issues and approaches in the selected papers. Ideas raised by Goulet provide a framework for discussing the set of papers, which especially consider corruption, professional ethics and the rights to water and essential drugs. The papers in turn provide a basis for comparing Goulet’s ideas with actual directions of work on development ethics. Rather than as a separate sub-discipline, development ethics takes shape as an interdisciplinary meeting place, aided though by the profile and intellectual space that Goulet strikingly strove to build for it.

**Key words:** development ethics; Denis Goulet; corruption; professional ethics; corporate responsibility

**JEL classification:** O20, B31, D73, L29, I31

## **1 - THE WORK OF DENIS GOULET**

The term “development ethics” emerged in the 1950s and 60s in intellectual circles around the French socio-economist Louis-Joseph Lebreton (1897-1966) and the movement *Économie et Humanisme* which he had founded in the 1940s. Lebreton worked extensively on a humanistic approach to international development. He “never tired of insisting that development was for ‘every person and the whole person’ (*tous les hommes et tout l’homme*)” (Goulet 2000: 34).

Lebreton’s student and associate Denis Goulet (1931-2006) championed and extended the project of “development ethics” and “the ethics of development” into the Spanish, Portuguese, and English language literatures. In a publishing career of almost half a century, Goulet did perhaps more than any other individual to promote the notion of development ethics as a distinctive and vital area in thought and practice: in eleven books, such as *Ética Del Desarrollo* (1965), *The Cruel Choice* (1971a), *The Uncertain Promise* (1977), and *Development Ethics* (1995), over 160 papers, and inspiring personal contacts. Well before Sen, Haq and Nussbaum, he advocated that “authentic development aims toward the realization of human capabilities in all spheres” (Goulet 1971b: 205), and that economic growth and technological modernity must be treated as, at best, potential means towards considered human values, not vice versa. At the same time he insisted that principles of ethics and/or religion had to be confronted by and relate to the full realities and complexities of modern economies (Goulet 1960: 23). Goulet came to these perspectives through an ethnographic approach rather than centrally through reflection on welfare economics or Western moral philosophy. His core concepts were vulnerability and “existence rationality” (1971: viii). He had concluded early in his career that: “Every person and society wants to be treated by others as a being of worth, for its own sake and on its own terms, regardless of its utility or attractiveness to others” (Goulet 1975: 232). Not everything should be conceptualised as a commodity.<sup>1</sup>

Denis Goulet was an American philosopher and social planner who came from an originally Francophone social background in New England. He spent one and a half years with poor and marginal groups in France, Spain, and Algeria during 1957-58, then studied and worked for three years with Lebreton’s *Économie et Humanisme* group, in Paris and Lebanon. In 1960 he published a paper entitled “Pour une éthique moderne du développement”, that has only recently been translated into English. It presented a manifesto for “a practical ethics of development” (Goulet 1960: 12) that would transcend the rupture between predictive political theory that had no interest in ethics and utopian normative political theory that was not grounded in real life; that would attend to the full development of persons (1960: 23) and not conflate the concepts of “goods” and “good”, or “having” and “being” (a contrast stressed by Lebreton, among others); and that would give balanced attention to the

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<sup>1</sup> The title for this special issue derives from Kuttner (1999).

responsibilities of each of “governments, private investors, owners and labour unions” in relation to the development of all of a country and of all countries (1960: 12).

Goulet spent four years in various parts of Brazil in the early 1960s, undertaking PhD research followed by technical cooperation work. His first book, *Etica Del Desarrollo*, appeared in 1965 in Spanish and in 1966 in Portuguese (*Etica Do Desenvolvimento*). In the next twenty years he did field research also in southern Spain, Guinea-Bissau, Sri Lanka, Mexico, and again Brazil (Goulet 1992a). His most influential work, *The Cruel Choice*, in effect defined and consolidated a space for development ethics within English language circles of development policy and theory. The later part of his career, from 1979, was spent as Professor of Education for Justice in the Department of Economics at the University of Notre Dame in Indiana, a charismatic voice who bridged disciplinary and theory-practice gaps and contributed to the quest for understanding across an increasingly unequal world. A selection of his lifetime’s writings appeared recently as *Development Ethics at Work: Explorations 1960-2002* (Goulet, 2006a). Many other papers are available on-line at <http://www.nd.edu/~dgoulet>. He died in December 2006.

This special issue of *Economics and Ethics* is dedicated to Denis Goulet’s memory. It contains a set of papers from the Seventh International Conference of the International Development Ethics Association (IDEA), together with one paper from an earlier IDEA conference. IDEA was formed in 1987 and was much influenced by Goulet and his work. The 7<sup>th</sup> conference took place at Makerere University, Uganda in July 2006.<sup>2</sup>

In this introduction and overview I outline the scope of work in the field called development ethics, including with reference to some of Goulet’s pioneering studies. I then outline the nine substantive papers in the special issue, and relate them to each other and to the agenda for development ethics proposed and exemplified by Goulet. He called for methodologically sophisticated ethical investigation and debate that are driven by experience, not primarily based in academic philosophy. The set of papers matches in good part his concerns for field-based identification and reflection on values and value conflicts and on societal, corporate and global responsibilities. At the same time the set illustrates how the field is moving ahead, combining case investigation with structured philosophical thinking, and seeking to connect to the triggers of action.

## **2 - DEVELOPMENT ETHICS – ITS SCOPE AND PERSPECTIVE, AS REFLECTED IN THESE PAPERS**

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<sup>2</sup> Other collections of papers from the conference will appear in the *Journal of Global Ethics* and the *African Journal of Ethics and Human Rights*. We thank the local organising committee, led from the Department of Philosophy, for excellent hosting; in particular the committee’s chairperson Byaruhanga Rukooko and the conference manager Alice Wabule. Thanks too, for helping to make this collection possible, to Jerome Ballet; and to Raymond Apthorpe, Martin Doornbos, and Asuncion Lera for advice.

## 2.1 The scope of development ethics: development focused, global, pluralistic, empirical as well as normative

Goulet held that development ethics (DE) considers the “ethical and value questions posed by development theory, planning and practice” (1977: 5). Its mission, he proposed, is “to diagnose value conflicts, to assess policies (actual and possible), and to validate or refute valuations placed on development performance” (1997b: 1168).

Development ethics is an untidy subject, about untidy and often unpleasant realities. In outlining an aspirant or emergent field, one seeks to specify a scope which has a good theoretical rationale and which at the same time finds a sufficient, interested audience. One cannot have a universal audience and so must ask: will anyone be listening and will they keep on listening? A field must be sufficiently distinctive and rewarding that enough people will listen and engage with it and continue to engage despite their limited time and the many candidates competing for their attention.

Besides its manifest features—the foci on development, theory, planning, practice—Goulet’s indication of the scope of development ethics had a number of significant possible implications. I suggest the following implied features:

- The definition depends in turn on one’s definition of development. This could be an advantage: it means the definition can accommodate different views. Alternative bounds for DE include (each to be qualified by the Goulet definition): (i) “the South”; (ii) the South plus North-South relations; (iii) all nations (we then have “social progress ethics”)<sup>3</sup>; (iv) global relations and global issues, not merely inter-national ones; etc.
- DE may at the same time still speak especially to relatively definite audiences of *development* theorists/academics, funders, planners and practitioners, and their major clients, including students, rather than attempt to speak to everybody and as a result perhaps reach nobody. Insofar as DE has a restricted area it also becomes more manageable. If it tries to cover most of social ethics that might result in duplication, lack of focus, and over-abstraction.
- Even so, DE will still, like business ethics and medical ethics, cover issues at various levels: for individuals (in both their personal and professional roles), for organisations, for states and polities, and for the global polity. Like—or even more than—other fields of practical ethics, it should be grounded in intense observation of varied experience, not only the world as seen by the powerful; its normative discourses should be well related to empirical ones.

In an intensively interconnected globe, where the quality and sustainability of the North’s “development” are also profoundly in question, there is strong logic in moving DE’s bounds from “the South” to social progress ethics in all nations, yet also danger of losing a focus and an

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<sup>3</sup> Dower (1988) presents development ethics as the field that asks ‘How ought a society to exist and move into the future?’, as partner to the traditional field of personal ethics that asks ‘How ought one to live as an individual?’, and the emergent field of global ethics that asks the first question in terms of world society.

audience, and of losing a priority to the poorest. Goulet's definition allows us to combine a view of DE as social change ethics (and global change ethics) with yet a relatively specific primary audience—those who recognize themselves as within development studies or development policy—and an acceptance that within that audience there are multiple definitions of the bounds of “development theory, planning and practice”. One can then have an audience, and a global orientation, and not lose a priority to poor people. This has been demonstrated, and good momentum achieved, by a sister stream within development ethics: that of human development, including the capability and capabilities work of Sen and Nussbaum; as well as probably by the great river of human rights work. Goulet's own stream of development ethics remained small in comparison, perhaps due as we will see to the nature of his ideal for DE, to be a new sub-discipline.

Goulet's conception of development ethics, like that of Le Bret or Peter Berger (1974), included strong attention to descriptive and explanatory ethics, done with more attention to dynamics than colonial ethnography gave. Development ethics must start from study of how people in a given setting think and seek to make sense of the world and their lives and the forces and choices that face them. For: “Any ethic—of development, of social practice, or of cultural reconstruction—is simultaneously an ethic of goals and a ‘means of the means.’ No extrinsic grafting of norms can truly work: norms must be drawn from the inner dynamisms of each arena in which they operate. At stake is the difference between hollow moralism and genuine ethical strategies.” (Goulet 1976: 40).

This descriptive and explanatory ethics, the essential grounding for serious ethically based strategy, requires a particular sort of research methodology, argued Goulet (1971a). Following the French researcher Georges Allo, Goulet advocated “the need for observing a ‘normative sequence’ when integrating the living experience of ordinary people with philosophical investigation and empirical social science research” (Goulet 1992b: 19).

He held that “in the case of values, the ‘object’ studied has no intelligibility apart from its ‘subjective’ resonances. .... [Further,] Values belong to realms of synthesis, not analysis: their proper domains are philosophy, poetry, meta-analytical symbolism. Only under stringent conditions...is the study of values appropriate to social science. To reduce this synthesis of totality to that mere portion of reality which is measurable is to deprive life of its specificity and to falsify reality itself.” (Goulet 1971b: 208).

His own resulting model of value systems and value change posited an existential core that must be respected and built from, and an outer zone of flexibility where adaptation is possible.

“...to build development from tradition is the very opposite of reactionary. ... Since the will of most Third World communities is anchored in the cultural values from which they derive their identity, integrity and sense of life's meaning, there can be no justification for labeling a development strategy founded on the latent dynamisms in traditional, indigenous and local value orientations, as politically reactionary. On the contrary, the procedural commitment to respect values already in place constitutes a solid guarantee against falling in the twin traps of elitism and

manipulation. To design and build development on tradition and indigenous values is to espouse a philosophy of change founded on a basic trust in the ability of people, no matter how oppressed or impoverished, to improve their lives, to understand the social forces that affect them, and eventually to harness these forces to processes of genuine human and societal development” (Goulet 1987: 176).

## **2.2 The scope of this set of papers**

The papers here fall into two main groups. They are connected by a concern for setting bounds to markets: to prevent acquisition of public office and execution of public duties from being market processes, in which the prizes go to the highest bidders; to prevent access to water and essential drugs from being purely on the basis of who can pay the free market price; to avoid the conception that the only duties of corporations are the maximisation of their own profits; and, in the background, to avoid the notion that there are no sustainable notions of rightness and goodness other than those of a contract which (albeit unequal) bargainers accept.

The first group of papers can be seen broadly as about professional ethics: the priorities and practices of individuals who work in particular professions and roles, within development policy, planning and implementation. Normative professional ethics has perhaps not been highly prominent in self-styled development ethics, except for the area of development research. The work of Robert Chambers is one exception (e.g. Chambers 1993, 2005). The four—or, including Camacho’s, five—papers here in this category are by authors based in or from “the South”, and all have a national or (multinational) regional focus. Those by Hellsten, Mwanahewa and Alolo seek to describe and explain a shared ethical problem area: corruption in the public sphere in Africa. They contain some normative treatment too, judging and recommending, but their main emphasis is on understanding the divergences between formally acknowledged values and informally prevalent values and behaviour. Two other papers have a more normative character. Giddy examines whether or not mercenaries should be accepted as just another type of profession; and Camacho gives suggestions for training in professional ethics, based on a case study.

	MORE DESCRIPTIVE- EXPLANATORY	MORE NORMATIVE	META-ETHICS
ETHICS IN PROFESS- IONAL AND PERSONAL CONDUCT	Hellsten – leadership ethics  Mwanahewa – on incongruent cultures  Alolo – gender and corruption	Giddy – what is a mercenary?  Camacho – teaching professional ethics  Bleisch – the right to water	Gaspar (sections 2-4)
ETHICS IN POLICY	Gaspar (sections 5-6) - determinants of ethics’ influence on policy	Banerjee – responsibilities to supply essential drugs  Kreide – responsibilities of transnational corporations	

The second group of papers concerns policy ethics, which at least until recently has been more prominent in development ethics, including in much of Goulet’s own work. Goulet’s model was very demanding though: the examination in depth of a project, programme, policy or even a national development strategy, identifying and reflecting on its multifarious value impacts; moving to an evaluation only through an in-depth description and attempt at understanding—as seen in his work on technology transfer, Mexico, Guinea-Bissau, Sri Lanka and Brazil. Some work by others is on similar lines (e.g. Porter et al. 1991, Richards 1985); it requires exceptional inputs of sustained and wide-ranging attention, and is not readily funded. Mainstream work on value change, such as in the World Values Surveys and on the growth of consumerism or individualism, sometimes builds up sustained time series but is done through large periodic sample surveys and thus has a very different character.

More work on development policy ethics has been directly normative, addressing urgent questions of choice, responsibility and priority, by application or extension of frameworks proposed as relevant from philosophical ethics. Compared to Goulet’s call for an existentialist ethnography, human-rights based approaches for example contain ready-made frameworks for observation, monitoring and evaluation and for contributing in policy design. Our set contains three papers in directly normative policy ethics, by Bleisch, Banerjee, and Kreide. (Giddy’s paper also has some of this character.) They happen to be authors based in the North, and all take a more global inter-national focus. They seek to establish principles concerning rights and responsibilities, including with transnational application. This has long been a central concern in development ethics, merging into global ethics, such as through theories of human rights.

A final paper in the set, by Gaspar, aims to complement the other papers by addressing worries that many potential readers or participants in development ethics feel: Is not ethics too obvious or else too subjective, too obscure, too indecisive and too uninfluential to be worth investing much time in? Together with Camacho’s paper on teaching ethics and this

introduction, Gasper's paper can also be seen as part of a third group within the set, of papers that reflect on development ethics as an activity and movement, including in teaching, research and advocacy. The authors in this final group, one based in "the South" (Camacho) and one in "the North" (Gasper), are both associated with IDEA, the International Development Ethics Association.

The overall set of papers thus illustrates a spectrum from micro-based to macro-focused work, and a variety of modes: descriptive, explanatory, evaluative, prescriptive, methodological. It illustrates too an evolution of topics in development ethics, from some very familiar to Goulet, like corporate responsibilities, to newer topics like the status of mercenaries and cosmopolitan law debates on the global application of human rights principles.

### **2.3 The shape of development ethics: comparative, dynamic, intercultural, international, interdisciplinary**

Writing in the same spirit as Goulet, Mwanahewa proposes from his study of the concepts and causes of corruption in Uganda that, while much of the analysis internationally of corruption has had a generalised, universalist character, "it remains evident that the aspect of context, namely the meeting of the modern conventional and traditional, needs to be tackled ... We can no longer afford to look at aspects of corruption and bribery as if the human race was one homogeneous lot." (Mwanahewa 2006: 23).

The papers in this collection have each a sense of time and place, whether in a particular national or regional location—East Africa, Uganda, Ghana, Costa Rica—or at the current global conjuncture of the emergence of capacities to provide clean water and essential drugs for everyone but the absence as yet of a working system of rights and responsibilities that will fulfil those possibilities. The subset on professional ethics in particular treats ethics in terms of feasibility and relevance within real cultural and historical settings, not some supposedly timeless "everywhere". This context-specificity and the resultant comparative dimension are characteristic features in DE, though not universal in nor unique to it. Some of the classic moral philosophers, such as Aristotle and Hume, evinced this quality; others not.

A further, related typical trait of DE is that it thinks within a world context. It starts from the inequalities and relationships within our world, as well as the related inequalities and relationships within its parts. And it deals explicitly with contexts in which markedly, even dramatically, different ethics coexist, and studies that coexistence, as here in the papers on corruption. Mwanahewa's paper centres on the lack of coherence between the notions and practices found in the small-scale societies of what was brought together as Uganda and the notions and practices introduced by a colonizing world empire. He argues that this incoherence remains within present day Uganda. Such co-existences are not static. Development ethics examines change, often dramatic changes. Alolo writes in and of a world marked by international donor discourses and where foreign travel is something normal. Giddy addresses the phenomenon of mercenaries who operate on a global market,



given the very nature of their trade (he concludes that it does not deserve to be called a profession). Not only is a local market typically too small, but, he implies, killing strangers as a job fits more readily into a setting where one is foreign. Bleisch discusses the extension of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to the case of water, a campaign powered by global non-governmental and inter-governmental organisations. Bannerji and Kreide discuss the responsibilities for such rights, including transnational responsibilities and the responsibilities of transnational corporations. Gasper starts from the plurality of normative views in a plural but interacting world, and reviews what normative discourse can achieve in this reality, and how. Major advances in the past decade on some human rights fronts, and in campaigns for debt relief and for focus on priority basic needs fulfilment, show that persuasion and influence are at least sometimes possible.

In sum, a characteristic development ethics perspective is: 1. comparative, 2. dynamic, 3. inter-cultural, and 4. inter-national. Goulet's work exemplified all of these traits. If one contrasts such features with those of leading recent figures in Western ethics, does one find many who would match it? Robert Nozick's libertarian bible *Anarchy, State and Utopia*, for example, gave a fantasy scenario of societal dynamics (self-interested interactions creating a utopia) but little in the other respects. Alasdair MacIntyre was interested in comparison, change, and intercultural relations, but in nothing outside the North. John Rawls restricted his concern with inter-culturalism to within a Northern niche, and propounded a different model for matters of inter-national relations. One implication is that development ethics can bring valuable new insights for Western ethics, as we see from the work of figures such as Sen, Nussbaum or Bhikhu Parekh. A second possible implication is that a disciplinary nest, such as that of Western ethics, in which particular restricted and abstracted formulations of issues are pursued in great depth, also carries a danger of becoming a permanent cocoon from which the fledgling does not graduate.

Goulet was emphatically for a form of philosophy which did graduate: "...for moral philosophers to stop 'moralizing' and undertake serious analysis of ethical problems posed by development, underdevelopment, and planning...they must go to the marketplace, the factory, the planning board, and the irrigation project and create ethical strategies of social decision-making which enter into the dynamics and the constraint systems of major policy instruments: political, technical, and administrative." (Goulet 1988: 155). He never declared a moral position from on high, but based his advice on in-situ investigation, as well as a perspective of long-term change that had been informed by history, social science, and local immersion. Goulet moved beyond only highlighting the normative significance, and priority, of goals and criteria other than economic growth. He showed the centrality of such goals in motivating and guiding people's behaviour; and he studied how to incorporate justified normative criteria into systems of decision-making. This moves development ethics' centre of gravity from philosophy towards anthropology, psychology, sociology, economics and management.

Yet, paradoxically, Goulet repeatedly called for development ethics to be a distinct discipline and specialism, a sort of secular priesthood (e.g., Goulet 1988, 1997). "The development ethicist" was the protagonist in many of his writings, which remained set in the mould of his 1960s and 70s work: the development ethicist was a Goulet, engaged in technical

cooperation programmes or employed as a specialist researcher and adviser, a worker philosopher. Goulet's own unusual career could not however be a generalisable model. His recommendation appears doubly paradoxical since he had at hand a far more plausible model, that of inter-disciplinary learning (Goulet 1992b), and was aware of the pitfalls of disciplinarity and the vested interests of existing disciplinary redoubts that do not let new competitors readily emerge. I have argued that the place for development ethics is not as a discipline or subdiscipline, but as an inter-disciplinary field in which a variety of relevant disciplines exchange and enrich each other (Gasper 1994). The authors in this set of papers, for example, come from not only philosophy, but also political science, medicine, economics and public policy.

In his late work Goulet recognised “two different roads” in work on development ethics (1997: 1166). The first was his own model, of “a new discipline with distinctive methods and research procedures” (loc. cit.). The second road was of development ethics as a type of work that overlaps with other types, with which it cooperates as partners in interdisciplinary activity. This has been followed much more and is more realistic. An important number of development practitioners and social scientists have become more self-consciously and systematically ethics-oriented, for example through the growth of rights-based approaches in the past decade or more. And the work in the marketplace, factory, planning board, and irrigation project has been done not by philosophers, but by ethically aware anthropologists, economists, geographers, health specialists, journalists, planners, political scientists and others.

### **3. CORRUPTION: “DISEQUILIBRIUM OF DESIRE”, CLASH OF VALUE SYSTEMS, AND/OR THE PROFESSIONALISATION OF DESIRE FULFILMENT?**

The papers by Hellsten, Mwanahewa and Alolo form a closely connected trio. Each essays a realistic study of corruption in a part of Africa: Mwanahewa and Hellsten from East Africa (Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania) and Alolo from West Africa (Ghana). Each has expectations that what they have observed has wider relevance in Africa.

Corruption is a classic topic in DE, related to its theme of the increasing intersections between diverse groups. Goulet held that exposure to the modernising powers of Europe and North America had disrupted an “equilibrium of desire” in pre-modern societies: not wanting and craving what is not widely attainable. Demonstration effects “remove[d] curbs on desire before providing individuals with the means to expand resources” (Goulet 1997a: 493; also Goulet 1971, Ch.3). This factor would not by itself explain corruption. What must also be removed are the constraints set by proscriptions concerning acceptable means, and other inhibitions to the pursuit of maximum desire fulfilment.

Mwanahewa argues that the interface in (what became) Uganda, of a more powerful and sophisticated colonizer group and simpler, more intimate and small-scale societies, created social arenas in which the colonizers' norms were meaningless or alien to the indigenous

people. Yet many of the colonizers' other norms, regarding consumption and status, were rapidly absorbed, and, perhaps understated by Mwanahewa, a nation-wide environment was created above the small-scale societies, within which these groups competed for new prizes. Here again then, several factors are at play.

Let us distinguish a series of factors, very likely complementary. Different theories of corruption place their emphasis or emphases differently within the series.

1. "Disequilibrium of desire", Goulet's view; the growth of demands by individuals, not just desires for the community as a whole
2. The strangeness of the public sphere, in a new larger-scale society marked still by strong family and smaller-scale communal loyalties; a view explored by Hellsten and Alolo, and in part by Mwanahewa, as well as earlier by Goulet
3. The creation of easier opportunities for corruption, via the imposition of Western notions of public office and other mechanisms, as proposed by Mwanahewa. Implicit in this view is also theory 2 and/or theory 4 below, so that ability to get away with corruption will be converted into real transgressions, especially when combined with factor 1, uncurbed desires.
4. "Economic man": if people have an opportunity for self-enrichment they take it.
5. "Economic man is a man": the now influential notion that men are more selfish and greedy than women, which is examined by Alolo. Her evidence supports the view that there are differences on average in male and female ethical reasoning, but shows that a conclusion that women in public service are less liable to be corrupt does not readily follow. Women may well be more subject than men to pressure to find ways to assist their family and friends. In her cases, theory 2 dominates; gender difference only brings different pathways of "corrupt" response.
6. Institutional imbalance: new identities, of the professional and the citizen, and the corresponding peer groups, organisations and belief systems are as yet weakly evolved. This connects to matters taken up in Giddy and Camacho's papers.

Emphasising factor 2, the strangeness of the public sphere, Mwanahewa asks: "Why is it that many conventionally educated well-to-do people find themselves trapped in the vice of bribery? Could it be that the concept does not exist in their traditional cultures, accounting for its seeming absence in their conscience?" (p.3). "For when is a bribe a bribe and when is it a token of appreciation?", an expression of a traditional norm of "something for something". We can add though that often there is plenty of bribery also where the concept of bribery does exist, and without it necessarily troubling offenders' consciences. Ethics and culture are not identical; norms that are acknowledged are not necessarily always respected.

Mwanahewa harks back to a posited golden age in the Ankore region of Uganda, of internally harmonious communities where consensus ruled and the mutually acknowledged ethics were virtually always honoured. He emphasises factor 3, arguing that institutional arrangements—often—precluded bribery, unlike in later and current situations: "Decisions which were made were often collective decisions. Under such tight arrangements it was impossible to bribe a particular officer or councillor." The picture arguably well reflects "the

characteristics of common sense in traditional cultures. These cultures are simple and undifferentiated or compact” (p.18).

The paper alludes too to a series of other factors and situations.

- First, interaction with other African societies. Reportedly the Ankore language had no word for bribery, and took the word it now uses from the neighbouring larger kingdom of Buganda (p.3). Societies often take words for grey or illicit activities from another society, to which the vice is attributed, thus flattering the taker. Probably Buganda was indeed a more complex society, although later it seems to be exempted too: “the concept and expression bribery did not exist in the peasantry or the peasant communities in Uganda and possibly many other communities in Africa and possibly beyond” (p.16). The growth of the practices and associated concepts of bribery in the various parts of Uganda is a challenging field for further historical research, given that the practices have found such fertile soil today.
- Second, Mwanahewa highlights conceptual confusions between local systems and the colonial system, but points out that some of what he says—how vague stipulations concerning “adequate” compensation or “any other duties” provide opportunities for corruption—applies within any system, as he notes later for Britain (p.20).
- Third, he observes that for some actors there is no conceptual confusion, rather an exploitation of opportunities. Postcolonial judges and managers, for example, inherited the wide discretion provided by vaguely, flexibly worded laws and regulations, without necessarily feeling constrained in the same ways as their predecessors; and were more likely to feel constrained instead by large social networks pressing for some share of the goods.

Hellsten traces the impacts of such a combination of new objects of desire, external pressures and models, and a continuing “existence rationality” of strong group loyalties:

“The main message sent through this new ‘global ideology’, to people who traditionally were either socialized or indoctrinated to believe in community solidarity and sharing, is that in order to survive in the midst of rapid globalization they need to adapt to individualistic promotion of self-interest, profit making and competition, while simultaneously maintaining traditional values as the backbone of local politics and social interaction. ... ..the lack of strong state policies, efficient and reliable service delivery as well as the absence of impartial leadership and good governance has thus led many African transitional societies to a political reality which could be labeled ‘libertarian communitarianism’.” (Hellsten, p.12)

“In the new economic and social context which mixes the imported individualist values with the traditionally more collectivist values, the societal ethics are turned around: one’s traditional social duties become part of the scope of one’s private morality and the individualist requirements of impartiality and autonomy are to be the basis of the public ethics.... In politics in many African societies, individualistic self-interest is now mixed with communal loyalties rather than with the public good of the nation as a whole” (p.13).

Leaders gain personal benefit not by good performance of public duties but by looting public office, while also looting it to benefit their support base. In “reverse ethics” the old values become the sources of crime and bias in the new society.

Alolo adds, citing Price: “Social pressure in such societies, rather than permitting the separation of personal roles from official roles, demands that...personal criteria enter into the performance of official roles. Pressures of this kind come not only from the individual bureaucrat’s extended kinship group, but also from other members of his [or her] society, whose interaction with him [or her] is shaped by generalized personalistic expectations founded in [the] corporate nature of their society and culture” (Price, 1975: 30). Elaborating on theory 2 above, Goulet argued that more complex societies operate a division between social spheres, a meta-principle that different principles apply in different spheres—for example, that “something for something” is an exchange principle that must not be applied within the state. He suggested this division might not be easily adopted by simpler societies.

“Men learn to conduct their business life as though money were the supreme value, while continuing to abide by other values in their private lives. Such normative schizophrenia creates great personal stress, it is true. But it has at least protected modern societies from bearing the full consequences of the values to which they subscribe in the realm of productive activity. *Non-modern societies, on the other hand, are not psychologically prepared to dissociate economic values from more intimate value spheres.* If economic achievement is portrayed to them as important enough to warrant casting off all other concerns—including their most treasured family and religious practices—then why should their quest for more goods be moderated by considerations of the rights of others, prior claims of needier men, or the need for austerity in consumption so as to build up a solid production base in the nation?” (Goulet, 1971: 223-4; italics in the original).

Societies not steeped in such dissociation could move in practice to a value unitarism in which acquisitive and consumerist values become applied comprehensively, not only in restricted spheres, he feared.

Theory 2 contains distinct elements. One concerns this difficulty of separation out of a public sphere with its own values different from those in family life and business life. Another concerns one justification for this sort of detached public sphere: the emergence of a more complex, plural society, not homogeneous in terms of groups and culture. Mwanahewa presents virtues of the traditional value-set, for its era; and argues the incoherence of the current value mix. If one accepted that analysis, it would not follow that the traditional value-set is feasible or sufficient for the current era, in a far larger-scale and more complex society where many previously separate communities are merged, as in Uganda. As Hellsten indicates, the problem thus involves not just the relationship between communitarian and individualist ethics, and not just the difficulty of dissociation, but the operation of a multi-community larger society. She considers the modern reality of a nation with interwoven communities. “Corruption” meant originally: rotteness or disease, as in a sick or decomposing body. When the notion is applied to human behaviour within groups, which is “the body”? Which is the community? The set of personal intimates, the family, the clan, the

people of common place of origin, the ethnic group, the fellow-believers or like-minded thinkers, the nation-state, like-minded states, the world ... ?

Corruption's causes alone—historical roots, current pressures—would not justify it. But as to how to respond, authors may agree on a situation report and a causal analysis yet draw very different policy conclusions; due for example to different judgements on what are the real options. Mwanahewa does not essay prescription. Alolo, like Hellsten, while mainly focused on description and explanation endorses in the end the modern conventional norms of strict public/private division, contrary to perhaps half of her interviewees. Hellsten opens with assertion of those classic Western formal norms for the public sphere; she sees the validity of some “realist” claims that leaders in the public sphere may need on occasion to diverge from conventional ethics, but judges that the “realist” stance as a whole can motivate an acceptance of disastrous venality and brutality.

Giddy points to our factor 6—new identities and institutions as counterforces to corruption. He discusses the role of “overarching identity-giving narratives” of nationhood and citizenship and “the project of seeking how to integrate professionalism in traditional African culture” (p.5). His case study—of mercenaries—is extreme but illuminating, and highly germane in Africa. Large mercenary-services businesses play a major role in present day armed conflicts, most especially in Africa. Are they simply one type of professional or is there a problem in having for hire professional specialists in violence and killing? “To take the South African case, is the mercenary part and parcel of the new vision of an efficient and professional African culture, or should he or she be confined to the historical past along with the perpetrators of racist violence?” (p.7).

Giddy concludes that the case of mercenaries exceeds the bounds of validity of the willing-seller-willing-buyer paradigm. It spreads commercial values into a sphere where they are destructive; and it undermines the notion of citizenship and the nation-building project.

“While South Africa has put a large emphasis on individual human rights and formal moral principles, there has also been a movement towards articulating and drawing upon a common ethical narrative, on nation-building. It is only within the latter context that principles are actually motivating, and that professions will preserve and expand their integrity. In a commercial society and utilitarian moral climate the external goods of competition will [otherwise] tend to become all-motivating, eclipsing the internal goods and corrupting the professions.” (Giddy, p.11)

Mercenaries become “justified” by the presence of the selfishness and conflict that they help to bring and sustain. There is very little evidence for a Nozickian rather than Hobbesian scenario in a world of purely selfish individuals.

#### **4. WOULD BASIC RIGHTS, SUCH AS TO CLEAN DRINKING WATER AND ESSENTIAL DRUGS, IMPLY ANY CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES?**

Giddy's paper connects us to a second characteristic swathe of development ethics: less focused on the duties and actions of individuals, more concerned with the priorities and responsibilities of public agencies. Is drinking water a human right? Is a corporation a mercenary body, or has it wider social responsibilities? A corporation is not a government, nor a lawmaker; what could its societal duties be, including in world society, other than to respect the laws? The character of the papers in this second half is more distanced and generalized, the view from in and around policy-making centres: no individuals appear and the papers are on the whole more abstract and normative. The papers by Bleisch and Kreide in particular are based in philosophical literatures. All the papers pay attention also though to the actual configuration and capacities of actors.

The ongoing human rights revolution has underlined that human rights entail a set of responsibilities to or for each other:

- responsibilities for all to *respect* others' human rights, not violate them;
- responsibilities for some to *protect* human rights, against violation by others; and
- in some other cases responsibilities to *promote* and fulfil the rights.

The first strand in human rights thinking brings responsibilities for all, and is fundamental, as Kreide's paper emphasises. Violation with often zero compensation paid has been normal in the past, not exceptional, for example in cases of industrial pollution of water supplies. For the second and third strands we must answer though: which responsibilities precisely, falling on which people to protect or assist which other people?

Bleisch's paper treats a newly asserted basic right, the right to water, endorsed as recently as 2002 by the UN Committee on Human Rights, as an implied even if not explicitly specified requirement for fulfilment of article 11 of the 1966 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Bleisch summarises the reasoning that led to this judgement and defends it against objections. It has remained ambiguous so far whether the right to water concerns domestic water only or also productive water, e.g. for irrigation. Bleisch argues that whereas a right to domestic water might be justified quite easily this is not the case with productive water as part of a broader concept of welfare rights. One objection against such rights will be that there is no meaningful right until there are specified counterpart responsibilities. A sister objection is that such additional responsibilities cannot be imposed on already overburdened governments. As Bleisch observes, Uganda is one of the few countries whose national constitution in fact includes a right to water. Yet a Commissioner in the Uganda Commission for Human Rights remarked at Bleisch's conference presentation that she had not heard of this alleged right and did not welcome its assertion when so many other rights were far from fulfilment.

Such a right has roles besides and before establishing a claim for public provision. Vitality, it establishes a duty not to harm other people's access to basic domestic water supply, and a duty on the State to prevent and penalise such infringement. It guides the State also in specifying the responsibilities of private providers that it commissions. By 2002-3 three giant French corporations had gained control of around 75% of the new world market for

commercialised water supply: Vivendi, Suex, and Saur (AEFJN 2003). Hall reports a typical and revealing experience, and draws out its significance:

“In 1999, Mozambique gave Aguas de Moçambique, a concession for 5 years in the cities of Beira, Dondo, Quelimane, Nampula and Pemba, and for 15 years management of water services in Maputo and Matola. ... However, the catastrophic floods in the year 2000 wrecked many of the water supply installations... The consortium’s financial plans had been based on rapidly increasing the amount of water sold, but such expansion now proved impossible and the company took heavy losses in 2000.... Saur, with 38.5% of the shares, wanted to declare Aguas de Moçambique bankrupt at the end of 2001, which would have reduced the liability of the parent company. However, other shareholders—Aguas do Portugal and the Mozambican companies—disagreed. Saur then left, selling its shares to the others... In effect, Saur was unwilling for its shareholders to carry any of the extra liability that Mozambique’s water services had to face after the floods. (Hall 2006: 2-3)

“The problems with the corporate behaviour partly stem from their wish to avoid the risk of having to pay for events which are unforeseen, or at least uncertain. ... [whereas] one of the characteristics of public services is that they should protect citizens from a range of risks—environmental, health, economic—and do so by accepting a collective sharing of risks through state mechanisms. ... Public authorities are expected to assume the responsibility for these risks. ... [In contrast] risk avoidance is of quantifiable value to the private sector” (Hall 2006: 8).

Insofar as risk-sharing and burden-spreading are fundamental values in public services, and insofar as commercial corporations in the world market are not capable of diverging far from profit-maximization, then either governments must subsidize corporate public service providers—somehow anticipating all the cases where corporations will otherwise evade providing services—or provide services themselves, or arrange them in some other way; unless corporations conclude that long-run profit maximization requires shorter- and medium-run investments in societal decency and sustainability.

Banerjee, a medical doctor, looks at the comparable issues of responsibility for essential drugs, and Kreide considers specifically corporations’ responsibilities, especially transnational corporations’ transnational obligations. Banerjee looks with favour on the idea that: “...the pharmaceutical industry possesses...[such] special knowledge [that] bears so directly and centrally on human well-being, [that] it is constrained by special moral requirements to apply its knowledge in ways that benefit the rest of the society, and therefore...the drug industry should be viewed differently to other industries” (Banerjee, p.8). “Drug access for poor people in the developing world is a greater moral responsibility than a responsibility to shareholders to obtain marginally higher profits” (Banerjee, p.11). These moral arguments probably need to be supplemented by an understanding that marginally higher profits not derived in a morally balanced way are unlikely to be sustainable. Banerjee systematically discusses also the respective responsibilities of governments, other organisations, local communities, and sick and at-risk individuals and their families. He concludes: “Governments and the pharmaceutical industry have the



greatest power to institute change in the structures which have most influence on drug access and so the greatest responsibility and response must be borne by these two players.” (p.29).

In an interesting study of the distribution of responsibilities for managing the risks and damage associated with agricultural pesticide use in tropical countries, Karlsson (2007) notes three principles for allocating response-responsibilities: causal responsibility, response capacity, and concern. The weakness of the first principle is that available information and theory often do not suffice to ascertain respective causal responsibilities. Capacity and concern are both required for an allocation of response-responsibility to have good results; neither criterion without the other is likely to give effectiveness. Fortunately some of the most swollen beneficiaries of globalised “turbo-capitalism” (Luttwak’s term) have shown concern: including Gates, Buffet, Turner and Soros. The first two, as Bannerjee notes, have made massive resources available to support access to essential drugs. Preferably more such moguls, including some of Third World origin like Lakshmi Mittal, will join these ranks rather than conduct fantasy escapades such as wedding revels in Versailles – escapades for which their names might be remembered with contempt not the respect that they seek.

Kreide’s paper follows a similar line of reasoning to Karlsson, in the present-day setting where “Private collectives in particular have gained increasing prominence in international negotiations, public deliberation, and rule-setting” (Kreide p.1). While Banerjee’s treatment of responsibilities does not directly confront the issue of how far responsibilities cross national boundaries, this question is addressed by Kreide. Compared to a generation ago however, when national boundaries were typically treated as presumptively massive moral divides, these two papers and Bleisch’s reflect the impacts of enormously increased international interpenetration and transnational arrangements, and the growing strength of a global human rights regime.

## **5. TEACHING, RESEARCH AND ADVOCACY IN ETHICS**

Goulet remarked that: “Planners and other intellectuals find it so difficult to create a true professional ethic because they are crafters of words, ideas, and models. Consequently, they are timid about plunging into the heartland reality of ethics as existential power, and not as moral verbalism or conceptualism. Ethicists themselves constantly vacillate between ethical paralysis or compromise in the face of power, and energetic creativity newly released whenever they catch a faint glimpse of the power of ethics itself. ... the power of ethics to counter the power of wealth, of politics, of bureaucratic inertia, of defeatism, of social pathology. Such power can be won by a Gandhi, a Martin Luther King, a Danilo Dolci; it can never be institutionalized. But those others who lack ethical grandeur will inevitably lose hope in the face of larger powers, and accept compromises which strip their own ethics of its latent power.” (Goulet 1976: 40-41). Inspirational leadership only succeeds though in certain circumstances; and is sometimes disastrously misguided. Leaders need a combination of a favourable conjuncture, capable supporters, strong networks and relevant practicable proposals, in addition to some inspiring vision (Gasper 2007).

Goulet himself may understandably have sometimes become dispirited in the era of Reaganism, Islamism, born-again Protestantism, the suppression of liberation theology and the retreat from Vatican II, and of tragedies and disappointments in some countries he had engaged with closely such as Sri Lanka or Guinea-Bissau. He constantly reiterated however, through to perhaps his final published paragraph, that “the primary mission of development ethics...is to keep hope alive” (Goulet 2006b: 120).

How? Three interconnected means are: incorporation in movements, incorporation in methods, and incorporation in education and training. Development ethics can seek in these ways to become, in another of Goulet’s key phrases, “the means of the means”, incorporated in and influencing the means of action: professionals, organisations, techniques and procedures, legislatures, courts and even public water supply companies.

#### *Education and training*

Ethics teaching, whether to practitioners or non-practitioners, is not easy to make effective and fruitful. Camacho’s paper illustrates a practical approach – not trying to enforce any single doctrine, but providing a space for attention, heightened awareness and a process of joint reflection. From a case study of training for professionals in Costa Rica’s state water corporation he suggests some steps as worthwhile for intra-organisation training seminars:

1. Review the state of the organisation (Section 3 and 4), with an onus on participant self-review and then joint review of the identified problems and of causes and possible responses
2. Pay special attention to user complaints (Sections 4.4 and 5)
3. Present theories in relation to such cases, not in the abstract (Section 4)
4. Use multi-media to convey reality and relevance (Section 5)
5. Pay special attention to the relevant laws and regulations (Section 5); examine, as one starting point, the authorisation established by the laws (Section 6).

Giddy adds that if training is to have much effect on behaviour it should attend to ethos and attitudes. He makes us ask: how to teach the virtues?

The range of issues covered in training will depend on the mandate and function of the organisation. In some cases attention to international dimensions could be obligatory. In nearly all cases the theme of setting ethical boundaries to markets would be germane, asking what should be a commodity and to what degree, and what should not be for sale. One can ask these questions for a range of instances, from what are in principle undisputed cases—such as life or judicial and administrative decisions—to actively disputed ones, such as military force or drinking water.

Camacho uses the water company’s language of “customer”. The right to water in Costa Rica is explicit, but it is only a right to obtain water at a “reasonable” price, and even in this middle-income country it is not fully achieved. The language of human rights is not highlighted in the training seminar he describes. Some might say that such issues belong at Ministry level rather than implementing agency level. Many issues are indeed matters of strategy, policy, major investment or legal revision, rather than of identifying and balancing different values in matters of daily operation. It would be bizarre though if a national

commitment to a right to water existed but was not absorbed into the ethos of the main water agency and was instead outweighed and nullified there by other values (cf. Stravato, 2005).

In South Africa a constitutional right to water now exists but is not yet fulfilled. Nor in recent years were essential drugs assured to HIV-AIDS sufferers, at the same time that immense outlays were made on the South African navy (*sic*), to the considerable financial gain of people very close to senior politicians. The broader-ranging training that is possible in contexts like universities should emphasise then that a preoccupation with legal provisions is insufficient and can be dangerous if it restricts effective redress to those people most able to hire expensive lawyers and access the courts. Social movements to bring pressure on governments and raise consciousness within the legal system are an essential counterforce. Responding to such a social movement, the courts in South Africa in 2001 used right-to-health and right-to-life arguments to oblige the government to allocate funds to HIV-AIDS drug provision. Both elements proved essential: the established constitutional provisions, and the social pressure to establish and then apply them.

The issues of power and motivation which are so evident in the more situated, worldly, professional ethics literature must thus also be present in policy ethics teaching and research. Just as professional ethics must engage with anthropology, psychology and organizational behaviour, so policy ethics must engage with political science, economics, inter-organizational studies and international relations.

Gasper's paper "What is the Point of Development Ethics?" complements Camacho's on professional ethics training. It takes up a series of basic issues to be considered in trying to justify attention to policy- and professional ethics, including in education and training. Is ethics epistemologically futile? If not, is it epistemologically possible but obvious, a matter of common sense? Or epistemologically possible in principle but sterile in practice? Or, epistemologically possible in principle but politically irrelevant? How can it achieve more influence? The paper sketches both a methodological, meta-ethical framework, and a descriptive-explanatory treatment of ways and conditions in which ethics can influence policy and personal behaviours and how such influence can be promoted. It introduces part of the agenda required for consolidating development ethics as a useful and lively field of research and practice.

#### *Methods of policy analysis*

Incorporation in methods is a vital part of institutionalisation. Goulet's perspective has perhaps not yet become sufficiently embodied in methods and methodologies. He was well aware of the central importance of how routine operation is structured, as seen in his later work on indicators (e.g. Goulet, 1992c), but was not fond of formalisms and formalised frameworks. Yet these are often the paths and instruments for influence. Various of his ideas that were shared by others have become embedded by them in relevant methodologies. His type of value-focused approach to local investigation and action has grown in the work led by Robert Chambers and others. His approach to policy ethics is close to the value-critical policy analysis of Martin Rein (1976), Frank Fischer (1980, 1995), Ronald Schmidt (2006) and others, which has been elaborated and applied quite extensively. Schmidt provides a

concise and lucid overview. His proposed approach to development cooperation has lately been greatly advanced by David Ellerman (2005) amongst others.

*Social movements*

Incorporation in movements is essential for change. Here, Goulet's insistence on evolution from tradition, domestically, and on a separate specialism or sub-discipline of 'development ethicists', who should be added to decision-making in development policy and practice, formed an uneasy combination. Where would a sub-discipline emerge except in North America where philosophical ethics is an enterprise on sufficient scale, in terms of numbers of courses and students and academics, for such a specialism to receive sustained attention? And what role would such implicitly expatriate or relatively distanced ethicists have in relation to domestic traditions? Goulet drew the parallel with specialist business and medical ethical advisors (1988: 160-2). In my view, the paths of trying to influence methods, other specialists and social movements appear more relevant: in order to enrich and modify others' work, and become a means of the means.

The international human rights movement or movements tries to institutionalize ideas of great existential power. Goulet had mixed feelings however about its generalizing and sometimes rather Eurocentric vision (Goulet, 1984). While sympathetic to the UNDP-led movements of "human development" and to movements of participatory research and action, his active personal affiliation and quest for potential partners appears instead to have been especially within movements of progressive Christian thinking. Here the 1980s and 1990s were perhaps times of retrogression instead. Compared to the 1970s Goulet's influence declined, in the absence of vehicles—organizations, journals, a readily encapsulated methodology, a related movement—that could extend, apply and adapt his approach. The model of a Parisian prophet, dissemination of whose ideas looks after itself thanks to their elegance and power and the presence of a large waiting audience, rarely works on a wider stage. Two of the key audiences were remote, physically or psychologically: movements of the poor living far away, and the Northern rich, asked to reflect about their riches and about their relations to the distant poor.

I have suggested that Goulet's distinctive strength came through his ethnographic and sociological approach rather than a modification of welfare economics or Western moral philosophy. Yet just as village ethics cannot suffice for more complex societies, so more elaborated, multi-part, dissociated and in some parts abstract, intellectual systems, methods and projects are also needed in analytical and practical ethics (Gasper 1996, 2000). Goulet's type of work requires partnership with the streams derived from economics and philosophical ethics. We can aim to take forward his work in building an interdisciplinary field of development ethics that makes some difference, through more systematic incorporation of ideas into methods, movements and education.

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