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# The Advancement of Development Ethics

**Summary:** An advancement that includes the intellectual history of development ethics is examined in this paper. Relying upon contributions of distinguished scholars, this inquiry considers the intellectual history of the sub-field known as “development ethics”. Special attention is paid to the pioneering development ethicist Denis Goulet, recognized as the founder of the field. The paper concentrates on individual contributions on a variety of issues, emphasizing linkages to Goulet’s conception of tasks, methods and normative principles. Students of international development can benefit from this distinctive perspective where ethics is integrated into economic development, disclosing an enlightened perspective of an ethical developing world. Overall, the goal is to establish development ethics as an important subcategory of development economics in regards with its ethical aspects and one which deserves greater attention from economists and development studies scholars.

**Keywords:** Development ethics, Denis Goulet, Ethics, Development economics, Economic humanism, Development, Social change.

**JEL:** O1.

Development Ethics brings in a normative view to the field of Economic Development. As a sub-field, Development Ethics is commonly delineated as the ethical reflection on the ends and means of local, national, and global development. It is recognized as a sub-field engaged in reflection, application, and practice for the ethical concept of development. Reflection refers to philosophical and theoretical debates, while application and practice refers to the ethical evaluation of development policies. Concisely, the essence of development ethics lies in the effort of thrusting “debates over economic and social development into the arena of ethical values” (Denis Goulet 1973, p. vii).

Though not at all trained in Economic Science, but still widely known as the Father of Development Ethics, Goulet took a “holistic” approach. He felt that the focus of analysis is to provide an analytical discussion of different aspects of development ethics and their relationship to each other. In general, this can be appealing to economists and social scientists. This paper focuses on a subset of contributions to development ethics, those focusing on the work of Goulet and people influenced by and related to his work. The authors strive to trace the major roots of the subject, the early arguments of the subject area and provide discussion of current contributions. Considering the aforesaid, the paper seeks to establish the importance of development ethics as a subcategory of development economics.

A lacuna exists in the literature. The evolution of ideas is depicted here by tackling the thorny relation between ethics and economics and establishing development ethics. The paper is novel and relevant by tracing the evolution of development ethics as a field of study unfolded by tracing the roots of the subject area. The early contributions of Louis-Joseph Lebret and especially Denis Goulet are reviewed, revealing the role of the International Development Ethics Association (IDEA). The paper strives to fill the gap in the literature using a novel methodology. This inquiry considers selected contributions on a range of issues related to ideas in development ethics advanced by Goulet, especially his focus on tasks, methods and normative principles. Students of international development can benefit from this distinctive perspective to development where ethics is augmented into economic development, illuminating the enlightened perspective of an ethical developing world. Overall, the goal is to establish development ethics as an important area of inquiry and one which deserves greater attention from economists and ethicists, development economists and development studies scholars, in particular.

The paper is structured as follows: Section 1 traces the origins of development ethics as an interdisciplinary field of study; Section 2 presents Lebret's Economic Humanism and Goulet's Development Ethics; Section 3 examines the recent and future perspectives in development ethics; and Section 4 concludes.

## 1. The Origins of Development Ethics as an Interdisciplinary Field of Study

The development approach to social and ethical issues was brought to the forefront in the 1940s by the French economist, social scientist and philosopher Louis-Joseph Lebret. In early 1970s, Lebret's ideas became known through the writings of his student, development scholar and activist Denis Goulet. Goulet's prominent book *The Cruel Choice: A New Concept in The Theory of Development* was published in 1971 (second edition 1973). Goulet (1968, 1973, 1995, 1997, 2006) recognized Louis-Joseph Lebret, Mohandas Gandhi, the Nobel Laureate economist Gunnar Myrdal and the sociologist Peter Berger as the forerunners of development ethics. They placed ethics into the development agenda and established the interrelation of development with ethics (David A. Crocker 2008).

Louis-Joseph Lebret's contribution in the formation of the development ethics field is extremely important and recognizable by the majority of development ethics scholars. Lebret appears to be the "giant" in an infant discipline (Goulet 2006). In 1941, Lebret, along with a group of economists, philosophers, labor activists, and maritime specialists, established the interdisciplinary research institute *Economy and Humanism* in Marseille, France. This institute was part of a social and philosophical movement aimed at understanding issues affecting human development. These issues included "institutions and systems, the myriad form of social change, ideologies, competing pedagogies, economic sector, the dynamism whereby a populace may play a role in decisions affecting its own conditions" (Goulet 2006). The main challenge of the *Economy and Humanism Institute* was to critically investigate the development problem in its entirety. Lebret argues that development is inherently multidimensional

since it embraces economic, social, political, cultural, environmental, and spiritual elements of human well-being (Goulet 2006). In the pre-Cold War climate of 1942, a manifesto against state socialism and the structural bankruptcy of liberalism was published by the founders of the *Economy and Humanism Institute*. The manifesto proposed an economy based on the needs and services of humans, rather than on profit. Lebre's economic humanism regarding development is concentrated on the fundamental problem of the unequal distribution of goods within and between societies. He argues that authentic development cannot be achieved through the satisfaction of an abundance of false needs at the expense of keeping multitudes in poverty (Goulet 2006a).

In this context, Lebre developed the theory of "scaled needs" in respect to the spiritual and cultural origins of society. Needs should assist societal solidarity, resource sustainability, and the integral human necessity of both individuals and societies for a decent existence. Priority should be given to essential subsistence needs food, clothing, housing, health care, and the like. The second scale of needs are related to human fulfilment or transcendence, whose satisfaction confers heightened value on human lives that is cultural improvement, deeper spiritual life, enriching friendships, loving relationships, rewarding social intercourse, and so on. These may also be called "enhancement goods". They enhance human societies qualitatively and find their expression in cultural or spiritual achievement (Goulet 2006). Finally, non-basic goods should be produced to satisfy needs as comfort and facilities, which make life easier, transportation, leisure, labor-saving devices, pleasant surroundings, and so on. These non-basic goods are not rejected completely as useless, but should be subordinate to the first two scales of needs (David A. Clark 2002, p. 840). The policy implications that one finds in Lebre's applied ethical and development work are harmonized with his presumptions of accepting these scaled needs. Lebre supports that development's ultimate goal can only be achieved when "all human beings in every society are entitled to enjoy the structural and institutional conditions which foster universal human ascent" (Goulet 2006).

Gandhi is a theoretical and practical precursor of development ethics due to his endeavor of applying social planning and institutional reform in transforming Indian society (Goulet 1997). Gandhi's social planning theory and practices are based on the strong premise of equilibrium between human needs and wants. Gandhi argues that "there are enough goods in the poorest Indian village to meet the needs of all, but not enough goods in all of India to satisfy the greed of each one" (Goulet 2006). Gandhi not only advocated for, but also endeavored to, "the provision of basic needs over the multiplication of wants" (Goulet 1997). Further, Gandhi integrated ethical development theory with applied social practices. His struggle against poverty places Gandhi as one of the forerunners of development ethics. According to Amritananda Das (1979), Gandhi's social planning theory regarding economic systems is based on three types of planning processes: "(a) the area development plans of local communities and clusters; (b) the marketing and reinvestment planning of the cooperative structure; and (c) centralized planning of large industries, the three processes being made to interact in a hierarchical indicative planning system of cluster/district/zone levels".

As Gandhi, the writings of Gunnar Myrdal are influential to development ethics. In his article “What Is Development?”, Gunnar Myrdal (1974) argues that:

“By development I meant the movement upward of the entire social system ... This social system encloses, besides the so-called economic factor, all noneconomic factors, including all sorts of consumption by various groups of people; consumption provided collectively; educational and health facilities and levels; the distribution of power to society; and more generally economic, social and political stratifications; broadly speaking institutions and attributes”.

Myrdal (1969) also investigates objectivity in social research in connection with world economic dualism. Economic dualism pertains to the conditions that keep the developing world at the mercy of developed countries. In relation to objectivity, he holds a critical position on economic dualism between Western and non-Western societies. Myrdal (1969) states that, “the use of Western theories, models, and concepts in the study of economic development ... is a cause of bias seriously distorting that study”. This is indicative of his support for an alternative development pattern with different means and goals to the development process.

During the Cold War, the American social scientist Peter L. Berger (1974) authored *Pyramids of Sacrifice*. In this book, he considers the developing world and the application of political ethics to social change. The incorporation of value neutrality in the fields of social sciences and development economics is another important aspect of this book. Berger (1974, p.vii) argues that:

“No humanly acceptable discussion of the anguishing problems of the world’s poverty can avoid ethical considerations. In addition, no political ethics worthy of the name can avoid the centrally important case of the Third World. It follows from these assumptions that this book is not primarily a scholarly work in the sense of ‘value-free science’”.

Berger’s views on international development are influenced by the world division in ideological camps during the Cold War. He argues that the adherents of each camp endeavor to persuade the world to follow a specific direction, as they indicate “where we are at and what we should do about it?”. His advice is that the world must not to be influenced to a particular development pattern (Berger 1974). Berger’s writings on the structure of capitalism, cultural diversity, and globalization enlarged the agenda of development ethics and supported the route towards its establishment as a self-conscious field (Des Gasper 2004, p. 14).

Goulet’s and Berger’s writings provided a valuable basis so that ethics can be included in the agenda of development practitioners and policy analysts. In the decade of the ’70s, philosophical ethics and socio-political philosophy contribute to “ethics and rural development”. John Rawls’ (1971) study “A Theory of Justice”, along with utilitarian arguments for famine relief by Peter Singer and Garrett Hardin’s “lifeboat ethics” in 1974, all proved to be important in the formation of development ethics (Crocker 2008, p. 5). Peter Singer’s article in 1974, “Philosophers Are Back on the Job” (published in *New York Times Magazine*) defended the philosophical turn to applied ethics by presenting as an example the ethics of famine relief (Crocker 2008, p. 5). It was the time that philosophy’s interest turned towards human problems. In the

mid-70s, the question was whether the wealthy countries and their citizens ought to save the famine victims in poor countries by sending them food. Singer argued that dealing with the famine problem is a moral obligation or duty and not a charity relief (Crocker 2008, p. 6). In fact, Singer framed ethics within the famine context. Nevertheless, “financial relief and food aid only partly addressed the problems of hunger, poverty, underdevelopment and international injustice” (Crocker 2002, p. 9).

In the late '70s, scholars around the world seemed to recognize the significance of development ethics. Researchers, policy makers and development practitioners in Asia endeavored to establish and apply a normative framework of development incorporating ethical ideas based on the culture and tradition of societies in India, the Philippines, South Korea, Singapore, and Sri Lanka (Crocker 1991, p. 458). Attempts towards incorporating ethics to development can be found also in Latin America in 1974. The Third National Conference of Philosophy in Costa Rica addressed the theme “Philosophy and Development”. In 1980, Argentine philosopher Mario Bunge’s book *Science and Development* proposed the term of “integral conception of development”, a rather influential term at the time (Crocker 1991, p. 459).

In the 1980s, the writings of the distinguished economist-philosopher Amartya Sen set a framework for conceptualizing human well-being and development. Sen, the Indian born economist, social choice theorist, philosopher and Nobel laureate, was heavily influenced by the 18<sup>th</sup> century philosopher Immanuel Kant. Kant referred to development as the development of human capabilities. It was time to refocus on human beings, “who are ultimate beneficiaries of real development” (Clark 2002, p. 832). Sen’s Capability Approach was developed as an alternative to standard economic rules on major issues as poverty, inequality and human development. Sen recognized the influence of Adam Smith (analysis of “necessities” and conditions of living), Karl Marx (views of human freedom and emancipation) and Aristotle (theory of political distribution and analysis of *eudaimonia*) (Clark 2005b). Sen’s philosophy, being closer to social sciences, enticed social scientists in the domain of development ethics and had a great impact on economists and policy makers in their way of thinking. Indicatively, Amartya Sen (1987) associates economics to the study of ethics by eliminating the economics assumption of value neutrality:

“The methodology of so-called ‘positive economics’ has not only shunned normative analysis in economics, it has also had the effect of ignoring a variety of complex ethical considerations which affect actual human behavior and which, from the point of view of the economists studying such behavior, are primarily matters of it (development)”.

Amartya Sen challenges the neoclassical notions of economic rationality and self-interest as the exclusive drivers of human behavior. Sen (1987) advises that “economics, as it has emerged, can be made more productive by paying greater and more explicit attention to the ethical considerations that shape human behavior and judgement”.

Until the 1990s, the capability approach seemed to overcome the traditional approaches of welfare and a new development paradigm began to emerge called “human development” (Séverine Deneulin 2002, p. 497). Even the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) adopted Amartya Sen’s philosophy. In fact, Sen inspired

leading policy practitioner Mahbub ul Haq, founder of the UNDP Human Development Reports (HDRs), and the human development movement in development analysis and advocacy (Gasper and Thanh Dam Truong 2005, p. 375). The annual publication of HDR stipulated that the equality of all nations was critical to the wealthy countries concerning their responsibilities and outcomes of their policies, especially in protecting their agricultural and industrial sectors. The 1994 HDR suggested that rich countries should consider their development assistance towards poor countries not as a charity, but rather as investment in their own human security. This inspired a related sub-field of study in human security (Gasper et al. 2013, pp. 15-16). In addition, Sen is among those that supported the construction of alternative measures of economic and social development, like the Human Development Index (HDI) and the Human Poverty Index (HPI) (Anthony P. Thirlwall 2008, p. 37).

Contemporary studies of development ethics are based on Sen's capability approach, enriched by development ethicists (Gasper 2002, 2004; Clark 2005a, 2005b; Crocker 2008; Jay Drydyk 2010). Paul Streeten's views on the means and ends of economic and human development are commonly discussed in the development ethics literature (Crocker 2008). According to Paul Streeten (1994, p. 232), "human beings are both ends in themselves and means of production". Beyond technical advances as a requirement of development, human development should assist people's capabilities. "This is not to say that technical analysis should be abandoned. Far from it, we should never lose sight of the ultimate purpose of the exercise, to treat men and women as ends, to improve the human condition, to enlarge people's choices" (Streeten 1994, p. 232). Streeten et al. (1981, p. 21) argued that the "first, and most important, the basic needs concept is a reminder that the objective of the development effort is to provide all human beings with the *opportunity* for a full life". Opportunity is close to Sen's (1981, 1997, 1999) capability approach to international development. Streeten and Sen's studies of international development motivated many development thinkers, practitioners, and policy-makers, as well as the UNDP, to further research and index international development on humanitarian, and not only on economic, criteria.

Like Amartya Sen, Onora O'Neill has been influenced by Kant's philosophy. Onora O'Neill, a distinguished philosopher, developed a wide range of interests in various philosophical topics such as rationality, agency, global justice, the ethics of children and family, consent, informed consent, trust and trustworthiness. She tried to apply philosophical theories to practical issues and to real world controversies. O'Neill, from her early writings in the 1970s, recognized the importance of proper interpretation of Kant's constructivism in provision of an efficient framework to deal with the various ethical problems. Her Kantian constructivism was evident in her work "Towards Justice and Virtue: A Constructive Account of Practical Reasoning". In this work, O'Neill judges the relationship between rights-based theories of ethics and virtues of ethics, focusing on reason and agency. In the same vein, she wrote the "Bounds of Justice" in 2000 (David Archard et al. 2013, pp. 2-3).

Development ethics has over the years evolved as a self-conscious interdisciplinary field in international development and development studies (Goulet 1997; Gasper and Asunción Lera St. Clair 2010; Charles K. Wilber and Amitava Krishna Dutt 2010). Dutt and Wilber (2010) state: "development ethics also has important implications for

the methods of analysis and how one views the relation between analytical views of the economy and the real world". Crocker (2008) employs the notion of development ethics as an explanatory device in investigating the mode of socioeconomic change in poor countries and regions. The ethical analysis of development is not merely confined to the level of philosophical discourse, but also offers "a space of analysis, evaluation and action regarding the trajectory of societies, with special reference to suffering, injustice and exclusion within societies and between societies at a global scale" (Gasper and Truong 2005). To this end, development ethics combines tasks and methodological instruments from a variety of scientific fields, such as economics, political science, religious studies, anthropology, environmental studies and ecology. Contemporary development ethics can be characterized as a multidisciplinary area of study or, as Gasper (Gasper 2006) states, an "interdisciplinary meeting place". This concept motivated the creation of the International Development Ethics Association (IDEA) in 1984 in Costa Rica. The IDEA comprises a foundational umbrella where social scientists, philosophers, humanists, ecologists, technocrats, and practitioners with different origins, statuses, and backgrounds from all over the world can discuss, discover, and act on crucial development issues.

Finally, two edited volumes have advanced development ethics as an interdisciplinary field of study. The first is *New Directions in Development Ethics: Essays in Honor of Denis Goulet*, edited by Wilber and Dutt (2010). The second is *Development Ethics*, edited by Gasper and St. Clair (2010). In the introductory chapter of the first, after an extended presentation of Goulet's life, work, and contribution, development ethics is placed in the field of development economics. The editors make a clear classification of the context, following IDEA codifications. In the second, the editors accept development ethics as a broad, multidisciplinary field of debate.

Gasper and St. Clair's (2010) book follows a holistic perspective on ethical development, including a variety of debates and concepts from well-established development thinkers such as Sen, Nussbaum, Crocker, Stiglitz, Goulet and the aforementioned editors. In this edited volume, development ethics gives core attention to the values constituting the meaning of human, societal, and/or global development, the evaluation of experience and alternatives, and the methods and methodologies of development (Gasper and St. Clair 2010, p. xv). In both books, well-known and established development thinkers challenge the debate on development issues using the pluralistic, multi-collective nature of development ethics. What is common is the presence of Goulet's leading conceptual formulation of development ethics as a self-conscious area of study in the interdisciplinary field of development. This leads us to frame our paper in establishing Goulet's contribution development ethics. Goulet is the first to be concerned with the aspects of human development and human security before other distinguished scholars, like Amartya Sen, Mahbub ul Haq and Martha Nussbaum (Gasper 2011).

## 2. From Lebret's Economic Humanism to Goulet's Development Ethics

If Louis-Joseph Lebret is seen as the direct precursor of development ethics, then Denis Goulet is considered as the founder of development ethics in its contemporary form. Goulet argued that a disciplinary or sub-disciplinary format is appropriate for

development ethics (Gasper 2008, p. 468). His definition of the scope of development ethics brought to the forefront the broad view of social change (Gasper 2008, p. 254). Goulet's contribution is paramount and extensive. He offers an ethical analysis of development by formulating general principles in almost all relevant aspects of development: technology, ecology, culture and tradition, aid, consumption, international issues, justice and globalization, the role of religion, *et cetera*. In Goulet's work, development means "human ascent", which encompasses "the ascent of all men [sic] in their integral humanity including the economic, biological, psychological, social, cultural, ideological, spiritual, mystical, and transcendental dimensions" (Denis Goulet 1971, pp. 206-207). Accordingly, development is described as "simultaneously and inextricably an economic and political matter, a social and cultural one, an issue of resource and environmental management, a question of civilization" (Goulet 1995, p. 2).

In the ethical discussion of development, Goulet reveals a twofold dimension. First, he ascertains that development is used either descriptively or normatively. Second, he underlines the perception of development as the ends of any social change and the means in order to achieve those ends (Goulet 1992, p. 246). In the first case, he places the qualitative and moral elements together with applied methods to form a normative approach. In the second case, ethics in development is interpreted as the "means of means" or, that ethics finds its way inside the value dynamism of the instruments utilized by development agents and itself becomes "a means of the means" (Goulet 1995, p. 25). Goulet proposes that by interfering within political and economic matters (namely economic development and social change), ethical justifications should not only evaluate the ends of any course of social actions but also the means, economic choices, and technical methods used in order to attain those ends. In this way, ethics penetrate the value context and meaning of any social action. Ultimately, the whole development enterprise must be critically subjected to ethical considerations. Thus, in response to the question of whether ethics is associated with the ends or means of human activity, Goulet (1997, p. 1165) suggests that "ethics is concerned both with ends and means of human action".

## 2.1 Existence Rationality

Goulet (1973, p. 188) defines existence rationality as "the process by which a society devises a conscious strategy for obtaining its goals, given its ability to process information and the constraints weighing upon it". Existence rationality is considered a system of meanings (customs, norms, beliefs, social attributes, *et cetera*.) within the economic, social, and political structure that exists in any society and determines the proper course of action undertaken to serve societal aims. Specifically, the system of meanings refers to how societies evaluate, employ, and apply particular strategies in order to assist what Goulet (1973) sets as universal goals of development those of life sustenance, esteem, and freedom (John Marangos and Nikos Astroulakis 2009, 2012; Astroulakis 2011).

Life sustenance refers to the provision of basic needs. In this context, a country to be considered developed must secure the provision of goods that satisfy these needs. Self-esteem is associated to the feelings of self-respect and independence. A developed country is not exploited by others and concludes economic agreements on equal terms



(Thirlwall 2008, p. 38). Freedom, a key development goal, allows humans to determine their own destiny. In regards to the economic and social development of a country, all people must have the choice to participate and benefit from the process of growth (Thirlwall 2008, p. 39).

Goulet (1973) categorizes societies as traditional, transitional, and modern. Each type has constructed an alternative system of meanings under a historical and social processes. His argument is based on the premise that development should not be perceived as an alien body to the existing system of meaning of any societal type. If development is to be addressed, three conditions ought to be followed: “(a) new capacities for handling information must be generated; (b) vital resources hitherto not available must become exploitable; and (c) the alien rationality implicit in modernization must be re-interpreted in terms of traditional existence rationalities” (Goulet 1973, p. 189). Goulet (1973, p. 189) calls this progress “expanded existence”. The core value of existence rationality is the concern with the provision of those ingredients that ensure what any society defines as a good life. Any change should be integrated into the principle of existence rationality and the system of meanings should be determined by each society.

## 2.2 Vulnerability

The second key concept of Goulet’s study of an ethical founded development process is vulnerability. It is mainly analyzed within the dualism between developed and developing societies and nations. “Vulnerability is exposure to forces one cannot control” (Goulet 1973, p. vii). For Goulet, vulnerability refers directly to underdevelopment conditions and indirectly to advanced development conditions. In developing societies, vulnerability implies that the existence of barriers prevents the achievement of development goals. Throughout economic history, this vulnerability is obvious, as Western capitalist development was associated with the intensive exploitation of resources, economic involvement, and political patronage of non-industrialized nations. This is especially true since the Industrial Revolution. Developed countries intervene in the economic, social, and political environment of developing nations in a misleading way that prevent them from finding and following an “ethical” development path. Further, vulnerability is a matter of power, as well as an ethical matter. It is a matter of power because less vulnerable societies have the advantage of asserting their own ethical development aims. Less vulnerable societies could also better determine the meaning of “a good life” based on their historical and societal needs.

## 2.3 The Conceptual Foundation of Goulet’s Development Ethics

Goulet’s general premise is that the study of development ethics can be influential only if it occurs within the field of the social sciences, by incorporating applied policies and their ethical reflection. This is generally accepted by development ethicists. Goulet’s experience living and working with “communities of struggle” was extremely important in his intellectual and professional journey. Goulet conceives the conceptual foundation of development ethics by answering the question “What is development ethics?” In his words, “the discipline of development ethics is the conceptual cement

that binds together multiple diagnoses of the problem with their policy implications through an explicit phenomenological study of values which lays bare the value costs of alternative courses of action” (Goulet 1995). Development ethics is formulated as “disciplined eclecticism”. It is eclectic in its selection of subject matters but disciplined in its mode of study. Its mission is “to diagnose value conflicts, to assess policies (actual and possible), and to validate or refute valuations placed on development performance” (Goulet 1997, p. 1168). Accordingly, development ethics receives insights from the work of other intellectual fields, such as the social sciences and humanities, religious studies, and ecology. The incorporation of all these intellectual fields takes place under a wide ethical view of the discussion of development means and goals, the quality of life, and respect of cultural diversity. Almost all of Goulet’s ethical thought is permeated with his perception that development ethics ought to investigate development in light of fundamental philosophical ancient queries on the meaning of the good life, the foundation of justice in society and the human stance towards nature (Goulet 1997, p. 1161). The study of development ethics attempts to discuss and codify these philosophical queries, borrowing scientific instruments from economists, political and religious researchers, anthropologists, environmental scientists, and others. In this context, Goulet recognized development ethics as a “a new discipline with distinctive methods and research procedures” (Goulet 1997, p. 1166) in partnership with other types of studies. This implies intrinsically interdisciplinary discourse. An important fact for Goulet is that development ethics cannot only be described normatively, but also in an applied and practical manner. In his words, “to ethicists it is axiomatic that how development is pursued is just as important as what benefits are gained” (Goulet 1997, p. 1168).

## 2.4 Contemporary Insights Based on Goulet’s Work

St. Clair (2007, p. 143) considers development ethics “as a hybrid between a public moral-political philosophy and a public conception of social science”. She argues for methodological pragmatism development ethics based on the contributions of Goulet and Sen. For Goulet (2006, p. 19), “development ethics is useless, unless it can be translated into public action”. Goulet’s life as a development activist is crucial in this respect. Gasper (2006, 2008), a prominent development ethicist, captures the diversity within development ethics and insists that development ethics moves from theory to policy, practice, and advocacy, keeping alive the practical and insurgent side of Goulet’s life and work.

In turn, Sen’s capability approach provides an applied or empirical basis of human development. Sen’s capability approach is methodologically pragmatist in the sense that “theoretical freedom is not the same as actual freedom for all” (St. Clair 2007, pp. 153-154). St. Clair (2007, pp. 153-154) concludes by arguing that “methodologically pragmatist development ethics is an offspring of Goulet’s life and work, and a path forward in this interdisciplinary space includes to revisit, update and expand Goulet’s insights in a way that it may influence decisions of those who hold power”. Overall, St. Clair’s approach is consistent with Sen’s and Goulet’s contributions in applied and practical formations of development ethics.

At the level of application and practice and from the viewpoint of Goulet's formulation of the ethical goals and strategies of development, Kenneth P. Jameson (2010) recognizes the ethical goals of development (life sustenance, esteem, and freedom) as the ethical principles for macroeconomic development. In the words of Jameson (2010), "he [Goulet] concluded that there are three ethically mandated goals for an economy, as gleaned from the human experience across countries and across time". Extending ethical strategies, Goulet's analysis of the abundance of goods can be perceived as an originator of new developments in happiness studies. Overabundance does not increase happiness beyond a certain level of goods (Dutt and Benjamin Radcliff 2009). Dutt and Wilber (2010) have observed that subjective well-being research has proven that "beyond a certain level of income and consumption, further increases do not add significantly, or not at all, to a person's happiness". The authors directly connect this approach to the development ethics strategy of the abundance of goods.

In turn, participation has been advanced in recent discussions of development ethics. As participation is one of the focal points of development, recent development studies in line with development ethics have incorporated Goulet's ideas with new approaches. For instance, Crocker (2007, 2010) and Drydyk (2010) supplement Goulet's account of participation with Sen's ideas of participation and endowment in development of deliberative democracy. This indicates the significance of Goulet's and Sen's development ethics ideas of participation as one of the major topics in the development ethics discourse.

Chloe Schwenke (2011) explores "the audacious" (in terms of philosophical and practical issues) agenda of development ethics. As Schwenke (2011) states, "development ethics can provide a basic understanding of the human condition and of morally relevant facts". Schwenke (2009) provides a discussion of applied-ethical issues, such as education, participation, and minorities' rights, in the conceptual company of international development from the angle of development ethics. He discusses a variety of real experiences in the developing world (in Kenya, Uganda, and elsewhere) in accordance with applied ethics theory and policy. In his final chapter, "Ethical Performance", he underlines the role of the public sector in human or ethical development. According to Schwenke (2009), "people and institutions have the potential to perform to exceptionally high moral standards, to provide public services with honor and commitment, and to exemplify the ideals of dedicated public service". Schwenke's study of development ethics and international development is both theoretical and practical, while the field of development ethics is viewed as embracing both theory and applied policy. Very close to the beliefs of Goulet and other development ethicists (such as Crocker, Gasper, and Dower), Schwenke (2011) remarks that "the effectiveness of development ethics to shape and improve development itself still remains highly constrained by the troubling resistance of the development establishment to embrace it as a valued resource".

Crocker, Gasper, Dower, Clark and Drydyk are among other distinguished scholars who recognize the constitutional aim of the IDEA. According to the

constitution of IDEA<sup>1</sup> (2018) the aim of organization is threefold: “(1) To apply ethical reflection to development goals and strategies and to relations between the “North” and “South”. Numerous groups are concerned with international development. Only IDEA, however, explicitly formulates and applies ethical principles to the theory and practice of global, national, and local development; (2) To effect ethically sound development policies, institutions, and practices. In the light of reasonable ethical principles, IDEA is committed to bringing about improvements in development and environmental policies, institutions and projects; (3) To promote solidarity, mutual support, and interchange among those development theorists and practitioners throughout the world who are seeking to implement ethically better development paradigms and strategies”.

Accepting these commitments, development ethicists explicitly recognize ethical value issues as an important part of the development discourse. These issues are not peripheral or mere extras following the technical and economic analysis. Value issues ought to be at the very heart of all development thinking. For IDEA, the discussion of value issues is concentrated on two key areas. The first is the careful defense of the basic normative theories (whether secular or religious) that justify a model of local, national, or global development. Such theories must appeal to social justice, human rights, basic needs, and theological understandings of the human condition. The second is the application of values to decision-making, whether at the level of donor organizations or grassroots communities. There is a vast agenda on the ethics of means on how to realize the goals and what ethical limits must be observed in pursuing these goals.

The IDEA’s ethical guide to the nature of value issues and the way that these values issues are examined harbors a close relationship with Goulet’s stratum of development ethics. As Dutt and Wilber (2010) point out, “Denis Goulet himself contributed to all these levels of analysis, weaving them together in many of his contributions”. In recent times, several development scholars share common or similar views with the IDEA and Goulet’s development ethics thinking in studying current development questions. The evolutionary study of development ethics has been enriched with new insights. At the level of application and practice, much work has been done recently by development ethicists. At the level of reflection/theory, development ethics is still based on Goulet’s conceptual foundation.

There are important and fertile disagreements within IDEA and among development ethicists generally. Within IDEA, there are important differences and fruitful interaction between the theorists, the practitioners, and those who combine them. IDEA is proud of its pluralism. Its members have a variety of philosophical and normative outlooks that are derived from a wide variety of intellectual sources and traditions such as from Kant (Onora O’Neill, Cornina), Habermas (Cortina, Conill), Dewey and pragmatism (St. Clair, Thompson), and feminism (Koggel, Khader, Keleher). One way that Goulet influences IDEA and many of its members is maintaining a culture of staying open to and critically engaging and assessing morally in new ideas and practices. The goal is to overcome the many obstacles to human progress.

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<sup>1</sup> **International Development Ethics Association.** 2018. <https://developmentethics.org> (accessed January 17, 2018).

Perhaps in keeping with this openness, many who have learned from Goulet also criticize him. For instance, Crocker (2006) argues that Goulet has an inadequate notion of democracy and its relation to development. So, Goulet fails to address many important questions in the center of development ethics. Moreover, Crocker and others have argued that Goulet has an insufficient appreciation of Anglo-American normative ethics and political philosophy and the role that abstract theory can and should play in development ethics.

### 3. Recent and Future Perspectives in Development Ethics

The development ethics agenda has become larger in the current era of globalization, where societies can be extremely fragile. David Crocker (2014) supports the contemporary argument that development ethics is related to global ethics since development ethics can be defined as “ethics of global development”. Both development ethics and global ethics contribute to the creation of the proper condition of human flourishing, both are deepened in human well-being, both recognize the importance of cultural diversity and both claim that a universal account must be given (Nigel Dower 2014, p. 12). Global ethics provides the global context in which the development of a country or society takes place. It can also be seen as a global ethical guide to human relations and be applied to the sub-fields of development, business, trade, the environment, and conflict, or as an interdisciplinary universal field along with other types of applied ethics. Development ethics and global ethics may differ in their starting point, but they converge (or at least supplement each other) in order to deal with inequality of power, agency and empowerment, democracy and development, corruption, and transitional justice (Crocker 2014, pp. 245-246).

Referring to the popular application of the ethical guide to the sub-field of business, Georges Enderle (1999, 2000, 2009) introduces the concept of international business ethics by emphasizing the role of culture and values in business ethics. In this framework, ethics in a global business context is broad, covering:

“The whole ‘economic domain of life’ and thus dealing with the individual decision making of economic actors, such as managers and employees, the shaping and conduct of economic organizations, business-related public policies, economic systems, and global economic and financial institutions alike” (Enderle 2000).

Enderle (1999, 2000, 2009) addresses the field of applied business ethics not only on a microeconomic but also on a macroeconomic, international level. Enderle (2009, p. 290) proposes an ethically good manner of wealth creation: “After all, business is about producing wealth, and ethics has to make sure that this is done properly”. In this regard, “properly” means that wealth creation is more than just financial capital, incorporating physical, human, and social capital. “Wealth is not only private wealth but also encompasses public wealth, both influencing each other in multiple ways ... Wealth is not merely material, but also has a spiritual side, which enables its creation to a truly human activity” (Enderle 2009, p. 292). In the notes of the article, Enderle (2009, p. 293) states:

“I’m beginning to understand how important a proper concept of and a determined focus on wealth creation are precisely for addressing the issues of poverty and inequality between income and wealth. Furthermore, these vital problems cannot be dealt with in a purely technical and value-free manner. Culture and religion obviously matter, and their impact, for better or worse, needs to be investigated and evaluated”.

Scott R. Appleby and Carl Bindenagel (2010) correlate religious aspects with current development issues. They draw upon the spiritual meanings of development in the sense of individual people and community solidarity. Appleby and Bindenagel (2010) state that “the Western exaltation of the individual, conceptualized as an autonomous moral agent operating in an atomized society, further distorts the meaning and orientation of human person” as “Goulet understood the community, not the individual to be the basic unit of society”. At a practical level, Appleby and Bindenagel (2010) investigate worldwide experience of religious-oriented organizations lifting people out of poverty in various ways.

Development ethicists have also recently approached global poverty as a problem of ethics and social justice, highlighting the element of power in international development (Teppo Eskelinen 2009, 2011). As the gap between development theory and practice is large, “I (Eskelinen) share the conviction of several philosophers concerned with ‘development ethics’, that the concept of development can be redefined” (Eskelinen 2009, p. 81). Eskelinen (2009, 2011) mainly analyzes the key development issues of poverty from the perspective of political philosophy following the beliefs of political realism. According to political realism, worldwide injustice conditions and the distribution of power among nations play significant roles in poverty. Regarding the applied terms of political realism, Eskelinen (2011) argues that even international institutions (the World Trade Organization, for instance) are major sources of injustice and poverty. Even though the role of a nation state is still powerful in international development (Robert Gilpin and Jean M. Gilpin 2001), strong conservative strains in the 1980s and 1990s within developed countries and international development institutions have forced a specific international development pattern. The Washington Consensus initially applied in Latin America and then around the developing world (John Williamson 1990; Marangos 2009a, 2009b).

Joseph E. Stiglitz (1998, 2002, 2005) and Narcís Serra and Stiglitz (2008) argue for a new development paradigm in international development theory and policy beyond the Washington Consensus. Stiglitz argues that the policies of nation states and international development institutions should be reinforced in line with the following general suggestion: “To be meaningful, the vision and actions must be set within a coherent framework, which requires setting priorities, encouraging partnership and taking into account the global and regional environment” (Stiglitz 1998, p. 23). Stiglitz’s views have been integrated into the agenda of development ethics (Crocker 2007). Beyond his critique of the applied policies and results of the Washington Consensus, Stiglitz (1998) also argued for a Post-Washington Consensus policy in international development. In this respect, a good development policy rests on both the public sector and the private sector. Crocker (2007) in turn, acknowledges that “development ethicists, such as Stiglitz, enrich public discussion by challenging global

citizens to improve development policies and global institutions so that globalization can be less of a curse and more of a blessing”.

Recent development ethics has worked on topics that Goulet did not or did so only casually. Examples include feminism, a rights-based approach to development and development ethics, displacement by development, corruption, agricultural policy, democracy, global justice and climate change.

#### 4. Concluding Remarks

Development ethics is a relative new field of study, with direct ancestors in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This paper contributes to the advancement of development ethics in establishing the importance of development ethics as a subcategory of development economics. The paper attempts to situate the contributions of development ethics in the areas of economics so that the readers of this journal are likely to have some familiarity with the intersection of ethics, economics and development economics.

Development ethics approaches development in a holistic and normative manner. The subject matter of “a good society” is the attainment of “a good life” *via* the “development for all persons” through the “development of all the person”. French economist Louis-Joseph Lebrét, the originator of development ethics as an intellectual field, according to his student Goulet, placed the economy at the service of humankind. Goulet extends the analysis by examining the relationship between the ends and the means of development. Goulet argues that ethics penetrates almost all aspects of development and inevitably becomes the means of the means. In view of this, Goulet suggests a bundle of ethical goals and ethical strategies that each society should espouse in order people to have “a good life” and establish “a good society”. Amartya Sen set a framework for conceptualizing human well-being and development. Sen’s Capability Approach evolved as an alternative to standard economic rules for major global issues such as poverty, inequality and human development. As development ethics evolved through the time, the interdisciplinary character motivated the creation of the International Development Ethics Association (IDEA), the foundational umbrella under which social scientists communicate on crucial development issues. The contemporary areas of study within development ethics are centered on the emerging global concepts of social justice, human rights, and basic needs. Development ethics, based on the above-mentioned issues, can also be defined as “ethics of global development”, identifying the strong interrelation of development ethics with global ethics.

New environmental and political challenges to what has been a fairly stable postwar order requires a rethinking of development ethics. The world has entered new territory and development ethics needs to assist us with understanding the challenges. Major global concerns include climate change and sustainable development. Climate change threatens any efforts of sustainable development worldwide. Of late, the parameters and the dynamics related to global development have changed. The question of “what is a good life?” requires a different answer that rejects humanity’s reliance on a never-ending supply of natural resources, space for increasing waste and framing material consumption in a non-sustainable manner. Environmental sustainability as a development concept is not value-free, but rather an ethically determined political issue. Technical methods and means are subjected to ethics and politics. Although

technological advancement provides the means of attaining sustainability, implementation is a matter of ethics and politics. Technical methods alone cannot lead to sustainability because of fundamental negative inherent conditions associated with the methods of production and consumption processes, the notion of economic well-being, extreme exploitation of resources, and world dualism, the division between North and South. Consequently, sustainable development is also closely linked with social and economic justice. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, development ethics can be a crucial tool in providing solutions to outcomes from the wrong type of development.

The rise of liberalism and the of so-called “strong men” in a range of countries threatens the advancement of development ethics by these fascist-leaning characters. This is a topic calling for significant attention. As nation-state policy has to do with the control of resources and the institutional fabric of a nation, these “strong men” are in control of the direction towards (or away from) a good society. Undemocratic and unethical undertakings go hand-in-hand. The implementation of applied-ethical development policy requires ordinary peoples’ participation in decision-making. Democracy means that non-elite participation results in people’s decision-making that is in control of resources and institutions “in reducing poverty, expanding solidarity, and strengthening self-reliance” (Crocker 2010). Democracy and popular governance means empowerment perceived as the process in which “people becoming the agents of their own development” (Drydyk 2010). Ethical development requires dealing with climate change in a sustainable manner with nature taking its place as a vital part of human existence. The use of resources in a beneficial way for future generations, in line with the safety and fairness of humankind are keys to such sustainability. All this ought to be accomplished within the framework of political democracy, popular governance and people’s empowerment.



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