Poverty, inequality, violence, environmental degradation, and tyranny continue to afflict the world. *Ethics of Global Development* offers moral reflection on the ends and means of local, national, and global efforts to overcome these five scourges. After emphasizing the role of ethics in development studies, policymaking, and practice, David A. Crocker analyzes and evaluates Amartya Sen’s philosophy of development in relation to alternative ethical outlooks. He argues that Sen’s recent turn to robust ideals of human agency and democracy improves on both Sen’s earlier emphasis on “capabilities and functionings” and Martha Nussbaum’s version of the capability orientation. This agency-focused capability approach is then extended and strengthened by applying it to the challenges of consumerism and hunger, the development responsibilities of affluent individuals and nations, and the dilemmas of globalization. Throughout the book the author argues for the importance of more inclusive and deliberative democratic institutions.

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Ethics of Global Development

Agency, Capability, and Deliberative Democracy

David A. Crocker
To Cathy, Amanda, and Davey
Anna, Julia, and Luke
Philosophy recovers itself when it ceases to be a device for dealing with the problems of philosophers and becomes a method, cultivated by philosophers, for dealing with the problems of men.


In terms of the medieval distinction between “the patient” and “the agent,” this freedom-centered understanding of economics and of the process of development is very much an agent-oriented view. With adequate social opportunities, individuals can effectively shape their own destiny and help each other. They need not be seen primarily as passive recipients of the benefits of cunning development programs. There is indeed a strong rationale for recognizing the positive role of free and sustainable agency – and even of constructive impatience.

Amartya Sen, Development as Freedom, 1999

There are, we have argued, rich lessons here [in the “developmental challenges faced in India”], which cannot be seized without taking interest in the ends and means of development in general and in the intrinsic value, constructive role and instrumental importance of public participation in particular. The basic approach involves an overarching interest in the role of human beings – on their own and in cooperation with each other – in running their own lives and in using and expanding their freedoms.

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Acknowledgments

This book is the culmination of thirty years of teaching and writing in development ethics. In the introductory chapter, I recount the stages in the emergence and evolution of development ethics and its relation to my own intellectual journey. In endnotes to each chapter I acknowledge those institutions and individuals who were important in each chapter’s origin and improvement. The present occasion enables me to express my deep gratitude to those institutions, groups, and persons who have helped shape the entire project. None of them, of course, is responsible for whatever deficiencies remain.

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