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Ethics of Global Development

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.

David A. Crocker is Senior Research Scholar at the Institute for Philosophy and Public Policy and the School of Public Policy at the University of Maryland. He is an officer of the Human Development and Capability Association, and was founder and former president of the International Development Ethics Association (IDEA).

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To Cathy, Amanda, and Davey
Anna, Julia, and Luke

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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.

John Dewey, "The Need for Recovery of Philosophy," 1917

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.

Jean Drèze and Amartya Sen,
India: Development and Participation, 2nd edn., 2002

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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.

I benefited enormously from my twenty-five years in the Department of Philosophy at Colorado State University. It was at Colorado State in the late 1970s that I joined colleagues James Boyd (philosophy), Gerald Ward (animal science), and, subsequently, Robert Zimdahl (weed science) in constructing arguably the first university course in international development ethics. Many CSU administrators and faculty, especially Maury Albertson, Ray Chamberlain, Loren Crabtree, David Freeman, Judson Harper, and James Meiman, supported the course and my work in development ethics. I am grateful to the many philosophy and other graduate students, especially Alison Bailey, Les Blomberg, Cynthia Botteron, Rex Welshon, William Slauson, and George Wallace, who contributed so much to my own thinking about ethics and development.

The course would not have been possible without the encouragement of my colleagues in the Department of Philosophy and its chair, Willard O. Eddy, who had a long-term concern with issues of global poverty. Especially important was a vision of applied ethics or practical philosophy that we forged together in departmental dialogue about what philosophy should be at a land grant university. Philosophy, we came to believe, should clarify and seek to resolve public problems, and should do so in a way that is informed by good science and relevant to the ethical assessment of institutional practice. I benefited much from Richard Kitchener's work in philosophy of technology, Dan Lyons and

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Jann Benson's study of honor codes and ethical norms in US culture, Bernard Rollin's seminal work in veterinary ethics, and Holmes Rolston's contributions to environmental ethics. Although we often disagreed about the details, we were united by a common commitment that philosophy and public policy belonged together but would have to be changed to realize their potential.

I did much of my early work in development ethics and the capability approach when I was a Fulbright Scholar and Visiting Professor in the School of Philosophy at the University of Costa Rica in 1986–7 and 1992. The great kindness of my Costa Rican colleagues, our many discussions, and their examples as public intellectuals helped me learn about Costa Rica and how development ethics, even done by an outsider, might contribute to better policy and practice. I am particularly indebted to philosophers Victor Breines, Luis Camacho, Guillermo Coronado, Rafael Angel Herra, and E. Roy Ramirez. I also am grateful to sociologist Jorge Rovira Mas, "La Liga" soccer coach Minor Solís, and community organizer and writer Paula Palmer for teaching me much about Costa Rica.

Since 1993, I have had the great good fortune to teach in the University of Maryland's School of Public Policy and to be a senior research scholar in both the School and the Institute for Philosophy and Public Policy, a research unit within the School. The School and Institute have been a perfect venue for my work in development ethics, the capability approach, and democratic theory and practice. The School provides the interdisciplinary context required for my practice of development ethics. I am indebted to the insights and concerns of fifteen years of graduate students in my courses "Moral Dimensions of Public Policy," "Ethics, Development, and Foreign Aid," and "Democracy and Democratization: Theory and Practice." Among the many students who have pushed me to better arguments are Soumya Chattopadhyay, Laura Antkowiak Hussey, Daniel Levine, and Patty Joyce. My thinking on the capability approach and deliberative democracy has also benefited from the PhD proseminars, offered by the Committee on Politics, Philosophy, and Public Policy, that I co-taught at various times with Steve Elkin, Douglas Grob, Judith Lichtenberg, Christopher Morris, Joe Oppenheimer, and Michael Slote. I have especially benefited from the insights of four PhD students who wrote theses under my direction: Peter Balint, Stephen Schwenke, Andrew Selee, and Lori Keleher. Joshua Gillerman, one of my Public Leadership students, ably helped with the page proofs.

The Institute for Philosophy and Public Policy has been a marvelous place to join with other philosophers in the conceptual analysis and

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normative assessment of public policy. Every part of the book shows the salutary impact on my thinking of Institute colleagues and friends: editors Arthur Evenchik and Verna Gehring, the latter who read and made many improvements at various stages of the entire manuscript; and (past and present) researchers Robert Fullinwider, William Galston, Daniel Levine, Peter Levine, Xiaorong Li, Judith Lichtenberg, David Luban, Mark Sagoff, Jerome M. Segal, Robert Wachbroit, and David Wasserman.

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Finally, I could not have completed this project without the help of many family members. Before an illness toward the end of her life (and death at age ninety-six in August 2007), my mother Geri Crocker corrected earlier versions of many chapters. My philosopher-lawyer brother, Larry, and my philosopher son, Davey, commented on much of the manuscript. Eddie, my dear wife of almost fifty years, helped in innumerable ways, not the least of which was extracting me from the study for a run around Lake Artemesia or a paddle on Lake Kahshe. With the hope of a better future for all the world's children, I dedicate this volume to our wonderful children, Cathy, Amanda, and Davey, and grandchildren, Anna, Julia, and Luke.

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