

# **RETHINKING DEVELOPMENT: The Need for Ethics in Development Theory and Practice**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of this paper is to examine the relationship between ethics and development. It aims at examining how and why development theory and practice has failed to make a difference, and showing the interconnection between economic growth, human well-being and the natural environment. The first section deals with the aims of the paper. The second section briefly looks at the major theories of development and practice particularly in “developing” countries. The third section discusses how development ethicists have conceptualized development. The final section of this paper offers general conclusions.

For early theorists and practitioners, development is a straightforward economic problem that should be studied by economics. They have focused on technical examination of mobilizing resources forcefully and efficiently so as to promote growth. As a matter of fact, they have failed to examine critically societal value

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changes and environmental issues. Development as conceived by its founding fathers has not changed the living conditions of the majority of the people in the world. Instead, it has not overcome, and in some cases has even led to poverty, malnutrition, high rates of infant mortality, low life expectancy, high rates of morbidity, low rates of health care, low average productivity and environmental degradation. By contrast, development is conceived both as the process of moving away from these evils to more satisfactory levels of life-expectancy, health, literacy and productivity, and the condition of a society which has largely attained satisfactory levels. The reality on the ground is against such expectations.

The environmental consequences of destructive development has begun to show signs of massive degradation in almost all natural resource sectors with serious implications for food production, famine and increasing poverty. Moreover, the rate of environmental exploitation has been aggravated by pressure from “developed” nations of the West who, although in a minority, consume 80 percent of the world’s carrying capacity thereby rapidly depleting available resources to sustain their industrial development. Paul Hawken also explained this fact as follows:

[t]he cornucopia of resources that are being extracted, mined, and harvested is so poorly distributed that 20 percent of the earth’s people are chronically hungry or starving, while the top 20 percent of the population, largely in the north, control and consume 80 percent of the world’s wealth (HAWKEN, 2005, p. 420).

Some Northern countries have harmed the environment in the “South” through such direct acts as the dumping of hazardous wastes and the relocation of polluting industries. This suggests the

need to reexamine the concept “development”. It is worth noting that Denis Goulet advised humanity to do so twenty five years ago.

Most specialists equate development with aggregate economic growth, the creation of modern institutions modeled on those found in industrialized Western societies and the spread of consumer aspirations and professional ambitions. None of these achievements, however, is development in the real sense; at best, they may be desirable social changes capable of facilitating genuine development. A totally different way of thinking is needed – a new concept of development derived from within the diverse value systems cherished by living communities. These values, these networks of meanings, loyalties and patterns of living, themselves define what are the proper ends and the most suitable means of development (GOULET, 1987, p. 170, emphasis added).

Although some development ethicists have argued that development should involve normative and descriptive aspects, they haven't paid attention to the environmental dimensions of development. They have correctly stated that development is ethical in character, and should aim to promote human flourishing, and reduce poverty.

In this paper, development which empowers people and involves economic well-being, environmental care and social concerns is regarded as sound. As Nigel Dower notes, “[a] form of development might be sustainable while being undemocratic, socially unjust or cruel to animals” (DOWER, 2000, p. 44). Accordingly, the term “environmentally sound development” is used to refer to environmentally, socially and economically justified development. This form of development also involves environmentally friendly indigenous knowledge and practices and promotes people-centered development.

## **DEVELOPMENT THEORY AND PRACTICE**

Different schools of development theory approached the economic problems of the so called “Third World” countries in various ways. Among others, growth theory was popular from the late 1940s to mid-1950s. Growth theorists attacked the orthodox classical theory of development for being static and ignoring the structural rigidities which prevented markets from responding to price changes in developing countries. They, therefore, favored the Keynesian interventionist school, because they believed that the structural transformation of a society is impossible without state intervention. For them, the economic growth is a nonlinear process and an identical with development. Economic growth is the central feature of the dominant paradigm of development. The proponents of this view seem to believe that all social problems are fundamentally economic.

In spite of its failure to address the socio-economic and political problems of “Third World” countries, growth theory has influenced subsequent development theories associated with the modernization approach. According to John Brohman, “[i]n many ways modernization theory represented a deepening and extension of the basic conceptual apparatus of growth theory” (BROHMAN, 1996, p. 15).

The international economic order established after the Second World War and the competition between the superpowers led to the rise of modernization theory. The US and Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries had endeavored to influence countries in the South by offering “capitalist growth and modernization to counter the Soviet Union’s proposal for socialist development” (BROHMAN, 1996, p. 11). Thus, the development era began after the Second World War. It should be noted that on January 20, 1949, it was President Harry Truman who for the first

time designated countries in the South as “underdeveloped areas”. “Suddenly, a seemingly indelible concept was established cramming the immeasurable diversity of the South into one single category – the underdeveloped” (SACHS, 1995, p. 429). Truman and modernization theorists believed that all countries in the world were moving along the same track, and “Third World” countries should participate in the development race, and catch up with the lead runners by avoiding old ways of living, patterns of work and modes of knowing, webs of loyalties and rules of governance (SACHS, 1995, p. 429-30).

In spite of the drawbacks of colonialism in non-European countries, modernization theorists have considered development as the transfer of the technological fruits of science to “developing” countries. They argue that modern values will be diffused through education and technology transfer to the “elites” of the “Third world” countries. They have suggested that the backwardness of South, such as Africa was an “original” backwardness, a primeval backwardness that could be overcome through Western know-how and capital (LEYS, 1996). The dominant paradigm thus aims to reduce the gap between rich and poor countries and thereby tackle absolute poverty in the developing world.

However, rather than alleviating developing countries from the shackles of backwardness and poverty, modernization as practice has led to further subordination of these countries at the global economic level, and increased levels of poverty and deprivation. Development policies based on modernization theory have damaged the environment and people’s health.

It is worth noting that some writers stated that the dominant paradigm needed to be modified. They maintain that some kind of intervention or direction from central institutions such as governments is required to facilitate the reduction of poverty.

Modifications (within mainstream development economics/studies) of this economic growth model included ‘growth with equity’ (i.e., growth with mechanisms, generally state-directed ones, to redistribute wealth in favor of the poor), and ‘basic needs’ theories, again targeting the poor with programs designed to meet basic needs (DOWER, 1998a, p. 758).

On the other hand, dependency theory began as a radical challenge to the optimism of the old established theories. It inverted many of the assumptions of modernization theory. The dependency school arose in Latin America as a reaction to the failures of the program of the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America, the crisis of orthodox Marxism in Latin America and modernization theory in the early 1960s. During this period, Latin America was affected by inflation, currency devaluation, declining terms of trade and unemployment.

Dependency theorists reacted against the political belief of the communist parties in Latin America, since the latter favored the view that before entering socialism, Latin American countries had to go through the stage of the bourgeois revolution. But dependency writers were attracted by the Chinese Revolution in 1949 and the Cuban Revolution in the late 1950s (BLOMSTROM and HETTNE, 1984, 990, p. 91-93; OMAN and WIGNARAJA, 1994, p. 156,179). Dependency writers also denounced modernization theory as the instrument of imperialism.

There is a good deal of theoretical difference among dependency theorists. In spite of the variety of interests, approaches, ideological orientations and political commitments among dependency theorists, most of them share some basic principles: “A common feature of most of dependency writers was their explicit attention to

the social nature and effects of capitalism in the periphery”(OMAN and WIGNARAJA, 1994, p. 156-157; BLOMSTROM and HETTNE, 1984, p. 71-76; NICHOLAS, 1987, p. 146-147). To put matters another way, though dependency theorists differ in numerous details and to some extent focus on different areas, they have a similar interest in studying the situation of the “Third World” countries in relation to advanced capitalist countries.

Many dependency writers think that dependency is applicable to all the “Third World countries”. Most of them agree that development and underdevelopment are the two aspects of the same economic process in the sense that the expansion of capitalism leads to the development of the metropolises and the underdevelopment of the satellites. Some dependency writers argue that “developed” countries took the normal path of capitalist development. But “Third World” countries were forced to be integrated into the capitalist economy on an inherently unequal basis. Consequently, “Third World” countries became the producers of primary products and raw materials. In order to explain the general pattern of dependency, some dependency writers employed the model of metropolis-satellite or the centre-periphery relationship. In this model, the “centre” represents all advanced countries whereas the “periphery” represents all poor countries. The centre exploits the periphery by extracting surplus through foreign investment, trade (unequal exchange), foreign aid and loans, and technology transfers. Also, within the peripheral regions the local elites align themselves with the centre and exploit the rural people (BLOMSTROM and HETTNE, 1984; GARDNER and LEWIS, 1996).

For some dependency writers, external factors are responsible for the underdevelopment of “Third World” countries”. They stress that the historical heritage of colonialism and the perpetuation of



the unequal international division of labor are the main causes of underdevelopment.

It is true that Theotonio dos Santos, Osvaldo Sunkel and Celso Furtado emphasize the interaction between internal and external factors of underdevelopment. Particularly Fernando Henrique Cardoso gave due attention to the role of internal factors (BLOMSTROM; HETTNE, 1984, p. 72).

Early dependency writers restrict themselves to the analysis of economic conditions. Dependency is seen as a result of the flow of economic surplus from the periphery to the centre. They underline that with the continual flow of surplus from the periphery to the centre, genuine capitalist development is unthinkable. Hence, according to them, dependency and development are incompatible. On the contrary, Cardoso and Enzo Faletto argue that dependency and development could go together. Cardoso, for instance, states: “dependent capitalist” or associated dependent capitalist is possible in the periphery.

Dependency writers have forwarded different proposals to solve the problems faced by “underdeveloped” countries. A considerable number of dependency writers suggest that radical structural change should take place so as to eradicate the structure of metropolis-satellite relation. A de-linking of ties with imperialism, they think, will enable “underdeveloped” countries to promote genuine autocentric economic development, accumulation, and prevent surplus transfer from the periphery to the metropolitan countries. They argue that without replacing the neo-colonial state by a revolutionary state, the chances for de-linking from capitalist framework will be blocked and whatever development will remain dependent development. In order to avoid the unequal relationship between “Third World” countries and advanced capitalist countries, they argue, the links between “developed” and “underdeveloped” countries should be broken. Dependency theorists



think that through socialist revolution, peripheral countries will be able to build free and independent societies. It is also the means of avoiding the old ruling elites who previously favored foreigners. Thus, subordinate classes in “underdeveloped” countries will be the leaders of the revolution. These thinkers have different views concerning the process of transition to socialism (BLOMSTROM and HETTNE, 1984). Therefore, dependency writers advised peripheral countries to disassociate themselves from the world market and capitalist countries and strive for self-reliance. In fact, self reliance does not suggest that complete isolation from other peripheral countries. They recommend cooperation with other peripheral and socialist countries.

While dependency theory appealed to many “Third World” countries, it received severe criticism at the theoretical level, and was undermined by the success of the newly industrialized countries. For instance, following Cardoso’s analysis, Palma contends that the thesis that capitalist development in Latin America is impossible and other related ideas of dependency writers are erroneous (PALMA, 1978, p. 903-904). The critics thus state that dependency and development could go together. According to So: “[c]ountries such as Canada are ‘dependent’ in the sense that their economies have been penetrated by foreign-owned subsidiaries, yet Canada exhibits a standard of living higher than that of most Third World Countries” (SO, 1990, p. 134).

Some writers have stressed that the policy recommendations of dependency theorists cannot help “Third World” countries to address the problems of development. The Tanzanian experience in the 1970s is regarded as an example of the failure of dependency theory. After independence, Tanzanian leaders and intellectuals tried to translate the recommendations of dependency theorists into practical policies. They made valiant attempts to revitalize the “traditional” African socialism. Regrettably, however, the new experiment did not generate positive

results. The country experienced economic crises during the mid-1970s. “Thus ... we might say that the Tanzanian experience during the 1970s once again proved that the real world is far more complex than the dependency school figured it to be” (BLOMSTROM; HETTNE, 1984, p. 155).

In spite of these drawbacks, the dependency theory has had a considerable impact upon development theory and practice. Among others, the works of dependency theorists have paved the way for the serious study of development problems in “Third World” countries (BLOMSTROM and HETTNE, 1984, p. 195). They have provided a catalyst for further research into industrialization, state/society relation, class formation, ideology and the like. The influence of dependency theory is reflected in the politicization of development at international, national and grassroots levels. “Third World” countries, for instance, formed different groups such as the non-aligned movement so as to challenge the influence of “developed” countries. Dependency theory also influenced the proponents of the notion of empowerment (GARDNER; LEWIS, 1996, p. 18-19). Many anti-imperialist and anti-colonial movements employed in their struggles the theoretical and political theories of dependency writers (NICHOLAS, 1987, p. 143).

Also, the dependency writers analysis of the terms of trade and unequal exchange is sound (KAY, 1990, p. 22). Dependency theorists also challenged the doctrine of comparative advantage. They have argued that the technological and financial imbalance between “developed” and “developing” countries has harmful consequences. I think, such a view still reflects the present economic conditions of “underdeveloped” countries. The state of underdevelopment of the so-called “Third World” countries persists and becomes even more entrenched. Furthermore, the gap between advanced and “underdeveloped” countries, instead of narrowing, has been widening.

On the other hand, Marxist theory emphasizes the importance of economic planning and state intervention in the process of development. In most cases, Marxist theory approached the market private initiative as a component of exploitation. Experience, however, shown that orthodox socialism as perceived by Marxist-Leninist scholars and politicians has failed to produce economic development that is superior to capitalism.

In fact, socialism as a development model started to be challenged in the 1980s and early 1990s. By the turn of the 1990s, the wind of change destroyed the former Soviet Union and other socialist countries. Consequently, we witnessed the resurgence of neo-classical theory of development. Neo-liberals stress that market institutions, if only they are left alone, would promote economic growth (LEYS 1996, p.17-19). Some of the former socialist countries and the so-called “Third World” countries have introduced systemic reforms which involve privatization and significant liberalization.

The proponents of free trade and capitalism argue that it is poor government practice, rootless businessmen, corruption and lack of knowledge in “Third World” countries, which are mainly responsible for global environmental crises. They keep on saying that non-capitalist countries have more problems than the capitalist countries do. In particular, neo-liberals proclaim that capitalism is capable of controlling environmental problems. However, the neo-liberal development model, which has been practiced for decades in many countries, has aggravated the condition of poorer people, and has led to the concentration of power and wealth in a few unaccountable transnational corporations.

The neoliberal development model not only constricts *what* can be decided: it shifts *who* decides. Institutional and economic power is now concentrated in the hands of transnational business and remote quasi-state bodies, such as the World Bank, the IMF and

GATT, which are unchecked by any of the principles or processes of democratic government, such as elections, accountability or transparency. As these new global concentrations of power have grown in influence, the ability of nation states to manage their countries' affairs has been significantly undermined (MARTIN, 1996, p. 153).

Powerful capitalist countries have created various multilateral international trade instruments and have continued to exploit powerless "Third World" countries and the natural environment. "Third World" countries are too poor and powerless to challenge these countries. Environmental laws and principles are required to be subservient to international trade treaties. And the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) has challenged governmental export controls. The exponents of GATT argue: "[a] government trying to conserve scarce resources by restricting their export will violate GATT" (HAWKEN, 1993, p. 100). Also, under the GATT, national governments are required to remove foreign investment requirements, export quotas, local procurements and technology specifications. Thus, free trade has very little to contribute to environmental protection. In global free trade, what is valuable is decided by money. Big companies have been able to externalize environmental and social costs.

The economic pressures in the "Third World" countries and the desire to earn foreign exchange have forced them to export their natural resources to "First World" countries. Hence, resources have flooded up from the poor to the rich. Furthermore, some countries have allowed unaccountable transnational corporations to carry on an unregulated exploitation of natural forests. The decline in commodity prices has further aggravated the economic situation in "Third World" countries.

Many “Third World” countries were forced to borrow heavily in the late 1970s and early 1980s. The conservation strategies of the “Third World” countries have been influenced by the World Bank and IMF development policies. These institutions have suggested minimalist state intervention in the economies of “Third World” countries. As a result, the vast majority of state enterprises were sold off to private companies. The governments of these countries reduced public spending on health, education and social services. Local elites and foreign transnationals have been the main beneficiaries. But the people have not benefited from these measures. “Third World” governments are being forced by the World Bank and the IMF to redirect spending away from public services and publicly-owned enterprises into servicing debt.

The foregoing discussion reveals that contrary to the expectations of Western capitalist countries and some development theorists, sixty years of development experience indicate a yawning gap between theory and practice. The beneficiaries of development are only the global middle and upper class in the North and small elites in the South. However, the development era and foreign sponsored conservation programs have led to irreversible destruction of the regenerative powers of nature and the underdevelopment of hundreds of millions (GOULET, 1990, p. 36). Donor governments and agencies, and national governments in the global South encouraged environmentally destructive approaches to agriculture in the name of modernization.

Goulet (1992) notes that development is a two-edged sword, simultaneously a creator and destroyer of values. It brings material and technological gains and new freedoms, but also breeds injustice, destroys cultures, damages environments and generalizes *anomie*.

He adds

[b]y thrusting the rural poor into mass impersonal urban settings and competitive monetary circuits, development destroys solidarity systems—extended families, caste associations, village and ethnic networks – founded on principles of reciprocal obligations ( GOULET, 1997, p. 491).

In fact, it is also true that in the traditional “solidarity system” people were also often, poor, illiterate, suffering from different problems.

The development measures of conventional approaches are also flawed. GDP failed to measure products consumed within the family and services exchanged informally, as it only “measures that part of production sold for a price in a formal market.” Accordingly, “conventional” accounting procedures ignore or underestimate a major portion of the economic activity in many “Third World” countries (PEET and HARTWICK, 2009, p. 10). This led Peet and Hartwick to conclude, “all conventional economic theories of growth and development are hopelessly flawed because economics harbors deeply within its structure an unrealistic and biased view of the world” (PEET and HARTWICK, 2009, p. 15).

Some writers suggest that conventional development theories need to be changed. In the words of Peet and Hartwick,

[c]onventional thinking about modernity, growth, and development, so defined, is hopelessly, dangerously, and perversely blind to its structural deficiencies and devoid of real alternatives taken seriously in the centers of power. The future existence of the world’s people depends on breaking this utterly deficient style of developmental thought (PEET and HARTWICK, 2009, p. 278).



On the other hand, in the 1990s, the UNDP Human Development Report seemed to have looked at development from a different angle. It has considered human development as the end and economic development as the means (UNDP, 1994). As has been stated earlier, conventionally development has been defined as a process of change aimed at attaining economic growth (a rapid and sustained rise in real output per capita). In such definition, human and social transformation is not given sufficient attention.

But high economic growth rate does not necessarily suggest higher levels of human development. There has been a gap between income and human development (for instance, levels of life expectancy and literacy) in many countries. Economic growth has only improved the status of the already wealthy people and thereby undermined the basis of survival for the poor both in “developed” and “developing” countries. The so called “trickle down” (eventually everyone benefits from growth as income trickle down from the rich) does not work.

As a matter of fact, recently, some development theorists and the UNDP in its Human Development Reports have questioned this approach and paid attention to the role of human development (UNDP, 1990-2010; DOWER, 2000). Human development is intended to promote human well-being. The main parameters of human well-being include health, literacy, life expectancy, community, rule of law, liberty, and the exercise of choice or “control” over one’s life (DOWER, 2000, p. 40-41).

As can be judged from the discussion so far, genuine development is often to be contrasted with the policies of the IMF, World Bank and the like. Genuine development requires a restructuring of the international economic system, as Paul Ekins (1993) argues. Without an appreciation of or recognition of the reasons of previous failures of development strategies, hegemonic



forces will never be able to contribute to workable solutions for development problems.

## **ECONOMIC GROWTH, HUMAN WELL BEING AND THE ENVIRONMENT**

The theory about a good life is not new. The difference between a good life and material possession was conceptualized in ancient Greece. Some philosophers stressed that the fullness of human good and the possession of many goods are not the same. For Aristotle, “the amount of property which is needed for a good life is not unlimited” (ROSS, 1921, in GOULET, 2002, p. 11). Although he recognizes the importance of property for human beings to live temperately and liberally, he made the following observation: “it should not be thought that the man who is to be happy will need many or great possessions, merely because it is not possible to be blessed without external goods” (BAMBROUGH, 1963, p. 37, in GOULET, 2002, p. 11).

Moreover, Aristotle offers normative guidance to economists:

[t]he economist ought to possess four qualities in relation to wealth. He ought to be able to acquire it, and to guard it; otherwise there is no advantage in acquiring it, but it is a case of drawing water with a sieve, or the proverbial jar with a hole in it. Further, he ought to be able to order his possessions aright and make a proper use of them; for it is for these purposes that we require wealth (Ross, 1921, in GOULET, 2002, p. 11).

This idea might be in sharp contradiction with his belief that slaves and non-Greeks should be treated as “animals”. It was not clear whether he gave this advice to Alexander the Great.

Fifteen centuries later Thomas Aquinas cites Aristotle with approval, saying: “[i]t is better to pursue wisdom than riches, though riches are more useful when you are in need” (AQUINAS, 1992, p. 453, in GOULET, 2002, p. 11).

Also, before the emergence of development ethics, individuals who analyzed development in value terms include, the Frenchman L. J. Lebret, and Swedish economist Gunnar Myrdal (GOULET, 1997). Lebret explained the difference between “to have more” and “to be more”. “Societies are more human or more developed, not when men and women ‘have more’ but when they are enabled ‘to be more’” (GOULET, 1995, p. 6-7). So, development should be judged on the basis of qualitative human enrichment rather than on the basis of increased production or material well being only. Goulet states that the age of globalization can learn from Lebret the priority of needs over wants or preferences (expressed by effective purchasing power) (GOULET, 2004b, p. 6). It can also learn the lesson that “development is multidimensional: it embraces economic, social, political, cultural, environmental, and spiritual components of human well-being” (GOULET, 2004b, p. 7).

Similarly, Placide Tempels stresses that the manner in which the human person is treated is more important than material prowess. He raises the following questions: do the improvements of the material conditions of life “constitute ‘civilization’? Is not civilization, above all else, progress in human personality?” (TEMPELS, 1959, in KEBEDE, 2004, p. 44). Tempels states that the West did not understand man; instead it neglected him despite all its material achievements. Thus, Tempels criticizes the West for excessively immersing in material pursuits and comforts.

Moreover, Barry Lopez, a student of Native American societies, defines wealth as follows:

[s]ome native ideas could serve us well in this historical moment: that a concept of wealth should be founded in physical health and spiritual well-being, not material possessions; that to be ‘poor’ is to be without family, without a tribe—without people who care deeply for you” (LOPEZ, 1978, in GOULET, 1995, p. 129).

I also believe that friendships, family ties, and a genuine sense of community and shared responsibility for each other are important aspects of human wellbeing.

Moreover, some development ethicists have criticized the mainstream development discourse, defined wealth in a different way, and emphasized the need for development ethics in the aim of resolving the moral quandaries raised in development policies and practice. Development ethics examines normative and value questions around the analysis of competing models of the good life, the just society, theories of human need, strategies for social change and so on.

Denis Goulet (1977) is the first prominent figure in the field of development ethics. He is considered as the father and initiator of development ethics. He has been reflecting on the relationship between ethics and development since the 1960s. He has influenced various scholars, international financial institutions and practitioners. On the basis of his academic training in philosophy, political science, and social planning as well as “grassroots” or project experience in numerous countries, Goulet tries to address “the ethical and value questions posed by development theory, planning and practice” (GOULET, 1977, p. 5).

According to Goulet (1977), conventional images of development are ethically deficient in several ways. In the first place, he characterizes the image of a mass consumption paradise as a

cruel illusion for it cannot be attained by all given limited resources. Moreover, the growth paradigm of development failed to pay sufficient attention to equity in the distribution of aggregate gross national product by assigning priority to its quantitative development. Development professionals talk about development in purely descriptive terms by ignoring a normative view of development. They describe a certain quantitative level of performance, a certain gross national product, a certain investment ration, a certain level of trading activity, a certain structure of employment. The growth paradigm paves the way for the destruction of cultural values, local institutions and networks of solidarity for it favors modernity and undermines local and national self-reliance and perpetuates relationships of dependency. At the same time, growth-oriented strategies have proved both wasteful of resources and environmentally destructive, because they have concentrated on aggregate gains in industrial output, export trade and financial earnings without paying sufficient attention to environmental issues (GOULET, 1987, p. 171).

“Development is above all else a question of values and human attitudes, self-defined goals, and criteria for determining what are tolerable costs to be borne in the course of change” (GOULET, 1971). Like David Pollock, a Canadian economist, Goulet suggests that transcendental values should be one of the essential components of development. Pollock writes:

Let us assume that a country’s economic pie increases. Let us further assume that there is a heightened degree of equity in the way the fruits of that economic pie are distributed. Let us, finally, assume that decisions affecting production and consumption of the economic pie – nationally and internationally – involve the full participation of all affected parties. Is that the end of the matter? Does man live by GNP alone? Perhaps the latter has been the prevailing

line of thought throughout the postwar period since, in the short-run, policy makers must focus primarily upon the pressing issue of increased incomes for the masses; particularly for those below the poverty line. But, despite the obvious importance of such short-run objectives, we should also be asking ourselves other, more uplifting questions. Should we not take advantage of our longer-term vision and ask what kind of person Latin America may wish to evolve by the end of this century? What are the transcendental values – cultural, ethical, artistic, religious, moral – that extended beyond the current workings of the purely economic and social system? How to appeal to youth, who so often seek nourishment in dreams, as well as in bread? What, in short, should be the new face of the Latin American Society in the future, and what human values should lie behind the new countenance (GOULET, 1991, p. 604).

Pollock questions whether we can live by GNP alone. The words “transcendental values” raise the vital question: “Does man live by GNP alone?”

Goulet characterized those who reduced development to the pursuit of material well-being and ignore political and religio-cultural components as “one-eyed giants” (GOULET, 1980, p. 481-89). He laments:

they analyze, prescribe, and act as if humans could live by bread alone, as if human destiny could be stripped down to its material dimensions alone. High indices of suicide in “developed” countries hint at the truth that material abundance may be less essential — even for survival — than is the presence of *meaning*. In order to survive one must want to survive, but how can one want to survive unless one’s life has a meaning? Indeed, having a meaningful existence may well be the most basic of all human needs (GOULET, 1996, p. 221-222).

According to Goulet, qualitative human enrichment rather than growth in production or material wellbeing is the true indicator of development although quantitative increases in goods and services are needed (GOULET, 1997, p. 1168; 2002, p. 22). Good life does not necessarily mean having abundance of goods although possession of enough goods is important to be good. “Abundance of goods and fullness of good are not synonymous: one may *have* much and be mediocre or *have* little and *be* rich. Nevertheless, we need to have a certain quantity of goods in order to be fully human, and certain kinds of goods enhance our being more than others” (GOULET, 1995, p. 53). In the same way, Paul Wachtel states that having more does not necessarily yield an increase in feelings of satisfaction or well-being (WACHTEL, 1998, p. 200). For Goulet, being should come first before having. Having is not the essence of being. He defended his view by appealing to the views of the great masters of living. He writes:

Yet the great masters of Living have made the alternative between having and being a central issue of their respective systems. The Buddha teaches that in order to arrive at the highest stage of human development, we must not crave possessions. Jesus teaches: ‘For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it. For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away?’ (LUKE 9:24-25)

Master Eckhart taught that to have nothing and make oneself open and ‘empty,’ not to let one’s ego stand in one’s way, is the condition for achieving spiritual wealth and strength. Marx taught that luxury is as much a vice as poverty and that our goal should



be to be much, not to have much. (I refer here to the real Marx, the radical humanist, not to the vulgar forgery presented by Soviet communism) (GOULET, 2005a, p. 28).

What has been discussed so far suggest that we should avoid the extreme positions of materialism and antimaterialism that have different attitudes towards the acquisition and possession of commodities and human well-being. For materialism well-being is based on worldly goods especially those that bring comfort and convenience (CROCKER, 1998, p. 368). Antimaterialism on the other hand emphasizes the freedom from all attachments to material goods although some more moderate forms of antimaterialism recognize the importance of both material and nonmaterial realities (CROCKER, 1998, p. 369).

As David Crocker notes, both approaches don't enable us to promote well-being. On the one hand, commodities *by themselves* cannot give meaning to life. On the other hand, certain goods and services are important to the physical aspects of human well-being. It is true that humans need economic growth to lead a good life, to have choices, to have more control over their environment than if they remained poor, and to avoid economic depression, unemployment, human suffering, poverty and misery. But the question is: in order to become more, how much is enough? One may suggest that the goods that satisfy the basic biological needs of humans can be enough. Goulet (1995) suggests that because of the fact that human life is more than mere survival, a full stomach, or a warm body, goods that enable humans to meet the goals of development that all individuals and societies desire, namely, optimal life sustenance, esteem and freedom can be considered enough. The quality of life can be dehumanized by both the absolute insufficiency of goods and relative excess (GOULET, 1995, p. 62). Crocker also suggests:



“[w]e must seek to replace materialism and anti-materialism with a balanced and stable conception of the sources and meaning of well-being” (CROCKER, 1998, p. 371).

Wachtel also envisages alternatives that show the connections between psychological well-being and ecological balance to the consumer society. What we need is an image of an alternative that is not just a bitter necessity but holds out promise of a genuinely better life. The image of belt-tightening is one that issues from within our present set of assumptions; it equates conservation, recycling, and fewer gadgets with having less. A notion of standard of living more rooted in our actual psychological experience points in quite a different direction and challenges the idea that altering our present way of life means settling for less. It encourages us to think beyond material goods as the defining essence of the good life and to focus instead on the quality of our relations with others; on the clarity and intensity of our experiences; on intimacy, sensual and aesthetic experiences, and emotional freedom; and on the ethical, spiritual, and communal dimensions that give the entire enterprise meaning. In such a direction lies the path to a way of life that is at once more ecologically sound and more exciting and enjoyable (WACHTEL, 1998, p. 1999).

What is important to note is that most people in developing countries still derive their primary source of meaning from religious beliefs, symbols, practices, and mysteries (HAYNES, 1994, in GOULET, 1996, p. 222). According to Goulet,

[i]n rich and poor countries alike, a growing chorus of voices proclaims that full human development is not possible without regard for essential religious values. They assert that achievements in political, social, economic, technical, artistic, and scientific realms do

not exhaust the creativity, beauty, or triumphs of which human beings are capable. Development thus appears both as a grandiose historical task and as a summons – or an opening – to transcendence (GOULET, 1996, p. 229).

The psychologist Erich Fromm also stresses how religious impulses can contribute to development. For him, religious impulses

contribute the energy necessary to move men and women to accomplish drastic social change, and hence, that a new society can be brought about only if a profound change occurs in the human heart – if a new object of devotion takes the place of the present one (FROMM, 1976, in GOULET, 2005a, p. 28).

In agreement with this view, Goulet (2005a) asserts that the most important mission of religion is “to keep hope alive”. It has the role of raising the hope that new possibilities can be created for development.

Thus, development agents should not treat religious and other indigenous values in a purely instrumental fashion. A non-instrumental treatment of traditional values shows that they harbor within them a latent dynamism which, when properly respected, can serve as the springboard for modes of development that are more humane than those derived from outside paradigms. When development builds on indigenous values, it exacts lower social costs and imposes less human suffering and cultural destruction than when it copies outside models (GOULET, 1996, p. 225).

However, traditional ideas alone cannot be the basis for an action. We should also use other modern ideas. Thus, as Goulet (1987) notes, it would be wrong to romanticize mass poverty and

uncritically glorify cultures that have had negative consequences for the well being of human beings, and obtain material improvements “at the price of a general impoverishment of the spirit”. What is required is a critical re-examination of old values in the light of modern diagnoses of human needs for better life.

According to Goulet, the central task of development ethics is to provide wise normative guidance as to the direction we need to take in our life (GOULET, 1978). Development ethics is required to “diagnose value conflicts, to assess policies (actual and possible), and to validate or refute valuations placed on development performance” (GOULET, 1997, p. 1168). The instrumental treatment of values alone is not sufficient for development ethicists to discharge their function. They need to subject development critically to “the values tests of justice, human enhancement, spiritual liberation, and reciprocal relations. “It is these values that judge development, not vice versa” (GOULET, 1989, P. 94). Goulet (1997) also contends that the primary mission of development ethics is to keep hope alive.

Other Western philosophers for their part have shown the link between economic growth and human-well being. They have emphasized that human well being should be the goal of development (CROCKER, 1991; ROBERTSON, 1996; DOWER, 1998, 2000; GASPER, 2004). Dower, for instance, states that progress in human well-being/flourishing should be the central concern of development. He stresses that economic growth and industrialization are only means to certain ends, and they are not ends in themselves (DOWER, 1998, p. 758).

Streeten and Sen (1984) have also emphasized the ethical dimensions of development. According to Sen, the goal of development is not economic growth, industrialization or modernization. But it should be understood as the expansion of people’s “valuable

capabilities and functionings”: “what people can or cannot do, e.g., whether they can live long, escape avoidable morbidity, be well nourished, be able to read and write and communicate, take part in literacy and scientific pursuits, and so forth” (SEN, 1984, p. 497). Sen stresses that development is required to enhance capability (i.e. a person’s ability to do valuable acts or reach valuable states of being). So, for Sen commodities or opulence and utilitarian happiness or preference satisfaction are not the major elements that explain the standard of living. Instead, human well being should be explained in terms of certain valuable human functionings and capabilities.

If we value the capability to function, then that is what we do value, and the possession of goods with the corresponding characteristics is only instrumentally valued and that again only to the extent that it helps in the achievement of the things that we do value (namely, capabilities) (SEN, 1998, p. 294).

Accordingly, in capability approach, we are not required to value only *desire fulfillment* and happiness, as the state of being happy is one among several objects of value. Sen (1998) also recognizes the importance of material capabilities in judging the standard of living of people in poor countries. The following questions need to be answered in order to judge the standard of living of people: “[a]re they well nourished? Are they free from avoidable morbidity? Do they live long? Can they read and write? Can they count?” (SEN, 1998, p. 295).

Sen’s “capability approach” leads us to look at the range of life-options that people have (their “capabilities set”), and the actual things they do and achieve (their “functionings”), rather than just looking at their incomes or their declared state of satisfaction,

which can by themselves be missing. In this way, he urges us to consider development as an extension of the range of attainable and worthwhile life-options that people have.

Nussbaum (1998), for her part, favored what she calls the “capabilities approach”. According to her, central human functional capabilities include life; bodily health and integrity; pleasure and pain; senses, imagination, thought; emotions; practical reason; affiliation; other species; play; separateness, and strong separateness (NUSSBAUM, 1998, p. 318-321). She states that the “capabilities approach” claims that “a life that lacks any one of these capabilities, no matter what else it has, will fall short of being a good human life”.

Relying on Aristotle’s ethic of human flourishing and the works of Sen and Nussbaum, Crocker identified four kinds of valuable capabilities (and functionings): physical well-being, mental well-being, social well-being and what Nussbaum calls “separateness”. Crocker stresses that to lead a good life, we need to promote balance and harmony among the four kinds of valuable capabilities (and functionings). “Too much or too little of a good thing in one dimension may decrease our overall well-being in one or more of the others” (CROCKER, 1998, p. 374).

Since the 1987 the International Development Ethics Association (IDEA) has also questioned the mainstream development paradigm by encouraging systematic research and publication in development ethics. The major aims of IDEA are:

- to apply ethical reflection to development goals and strategies and to relations between the “North” and “South”.
- to effect ethically sound development policies, institutions, and practices.
- to promote solidarity, mutual support, and interchange among those development theorists and practitioners throughout

the world who are seeking to implement ethically better development and strategies (IDEA, 2011).

However, some development ethicists have not sufficiently shown the interlinkage between economic growth, human well-being and the natural environment. They have focused on the link between normative and descriptive aspects of development. They stress that development ethics originated as the ethics of Third World development, and development ethicists are committed to understanding and reducing human deprivation and misery in poor countries. In fact, in his later work David Crocker seems to consider all societies as “developing”. He writes: “International development ethics is moral reflection on the ends and means of societal and global change” (CROCKER, 1991b, p. 149).

Development ethicists do not agree among themselves whether development ethics’ focus should be “Third world”, international, or global. What should be stressed here is that the founding fathers of development argue that development is only the problem of the “Third World” or “developing” countries. In the same way, most Western development ethicists regard development ethics as a subject that deals with the development conditions of poor countries as if other advanced countries do not need any development.

Unlike some development ethicists who assert that international development ethics is ethical reflection on the ends and means of socioeconomic change in poor countries and regions, I would suggest that development ethics should also look at the impact of global powers on the people and the planet Earth. Development ethics should deal with development issues in all countries including rich countries. As Goulet persuasively notes:



[n]o nation is fully developed in all respects, for no nation adequately meets the real needs of all its members, and in no society are all essential relationships organised satisfactorily. Not surprisingly, therefore, many who enjoy material ease, in rich and poor countries alike, complain that their life or work does not seem fulfilling, and that they feel no sense of community around them. Their laments suggest the need for a normative, and not a purely descriptive, conception of development (GOULET, 1987, p. 170).

Unlike some development ethicists, Goulet stresses the interlinkage between development and nature. He suggests that humans should balance human freedom and nature, and consider them as relative values.

Sound development enjoins and practices ecological wisdom, just as ecological wisdom (integrally and comprehensively understood) promotes sound and harmonious human development. What is urged here is not some passive stance in which no human interventions will be made upon nature to promote some sort of economic growth. Rather, the scope and content of that growth will be redefined and renegotiated to assure just and adequate access to essential goods by all, and to protect biosystematic sustainability (GOULET, 1995, p. 126).

Although different groups give priority to either nature or freedom, Goulet suggests that different values

ought to enjoy parity of moral status because any long-term, sustainable equity-enhancing combat against poverty requires wisdom in the exploitation of resources, just as the preservation of species cannot persuasively be held out as a priority goal if the human species is threatened with degrading poverty or



extinction. Nature itself is diminished when its human members are kept ‘underdeveloped’; reciprocally, human members cannot become truly ‘developed’ if their supportive nature is violated (GOULET, 1995, p. 122).

Therefore, the achievement of authentic development requires “satisfactory conceptual, institutional, behavioral answers to the three value questions – the good life, the just society, and the sound relation to nature” (GOULET, 2004b, p. 5).

On the other hand, some organizations and writers have discussed the basic features of sustainability to show the relationship between environmental and developmental issues. The International Union for the Conservation of Nature used the concept sustainable development in its report in 1980. This concept was given more emphasis in the Brundtland Report that suggests that the international community should work towards sustainable development (WCED, 1987). It was designed to accommodate economic development and environmental concerns. It was assumed that environmental capacity can satisfy human needs. A new development path was conceived that aims to relieve poverty and sustain environmental capacity. Thus the principle of “sustainable development” is formulated as follows: “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (WCED, 1987, p. 8).

The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 embraced the idea of sustainable development, as it appears to accommodate the concerns of “developed” who favor environmental protection and “developing” countries who suspected that the former tried to limit development progress in the “South” by denying access to methods that were used

by Northern countries in their industrialization processes. Although the Brundtland Report links issues of intragenerational equity with those of intergenerational equity, it doesn't have a clear proposal for environmental protection (HOLLAND, 2001, p. 391).

Alan Holland (2001) believes that there is a connection between human well-being and states of the natural world. He writes, "there are conceptions of the human good that make a concern for nature for its own sake a contributing or even constitutive factor in human well-being. In this way human interest and ecological integrity do not just happen to coincide, but exhibit an interlocking conceptual relationship" (HOLLAND, 2001, p. 394).

Goulet for his part emphasizes the need for sustainability in various fields:

[s]ustainability is needed in five domains: economic, political, social, cultural, and environmental. Long-term economic and environmental viability requires using resources in a way which does not irreversibly deplete them. Political viability rests on creating for all members of society a stake in its survival: this cannot be achieved unless all enjoy freedom and inviolable personal rights and believe that the political system within which they live pursues some common good and not mere particular interests. Finally, if development is to be socially and culturally sustainable, the foundations of community and symbolic meaning systems must be protected. Otherwise, they will be steam-rolled into oblivion under the pretext of submitting to the requirements of scientific and technological 'rationality' (GOULET, 2005a, p. 29).

Holland, however, laments that the transition to environmental sustainability and redistributive social and economic policies has been hampered by certain characteristics of the present global

economy, for example, the mobility of labor and capital, and the centralization of knowledge and power (HOLLAND, 2001, p. 399).

Following other writers, Robin Attfield (1999) contends that without transforming the structures of international aid, trade and debt and without the cooperation of the countries in the “South” to preserve their biodiversity and to research pathways for biotechnical development, and perhaps without superseding international capitalism or subjecting it to global regulation to curtail its inherent tendencies to unsustainability, sustainable development cannot take place (ATTFIELD, 1999, p. 112). Attfield suggests that global resources can be protected through international treaties which should be complemented by global citizenship, as embodied in transnational groups and groupings, international peace groups, and federations of trade unions, minorities and ethnic groups such as the Environmental Justice Movement.

However, international organizations including the United Nations and the people have not yet forced transnational corporations and capitalism to be environmentally friendly, and respect international treaties. Powerful industrialized countries can ignore regional and global environmental and developmental treaties. Signatory states can violate a treaty and continue to destroy the environment. Although economic policy instruments may be used to compel these states to take environmental action, other countries and environmentalists have no real power to force them to abide by the law. Therefore, the fact on the ground is that power seizes knowledge for its own ends and marginalizes ethics. If one has power, one can appropriate all knowledge. What must be clear is that developmental and environmental questions are not simply ethical. Environmental and development issues involve more than moral persuasion. They cannot be addressed without taking political power into account. In

order to address global problems there have to be major changes at political and ethical levels.

Some other writers believe that the idea of sustainable growth is not feasible. Ecological economists argue that there is limit to economic growth, as it stresses the carrying capacity of the earth. For instance, economist Herman Daly argues that economic growth cannot continue indefinitely.

Even ‘green growth’ is not sustainable. There is a limit to the population of trees the earth can support, just as there is a limit to the populations of humans and of automobiles. To delude ourselves into believing that growth is still possible and desirable if only we label it ‘sustainable’ or color it ‘green’ will justly delay the inevitable transition and make it more painful (DALY, 1999, p. 424).

He suggests that the current use of the term “sustainable development” as a synonym for the oxymoronic “sustainable growth” must be changed. “Sustainable development” should be understood as “‘development without growth’ – i.e., qualitative improvement of a physical economic base that is maintained in a steady state by a throughput of matter-energy that is within the regenerative and assimilative capacities of the ecosystem” (DALY, 1999, p. 424). He further writes, “[s]ustainable development must be development without growth — but with population control and wealth redistribution — if it is to be a serious attack on poverty” (DALY, 1999, p. 425). For Daly, development refers to a qualitative improvement. This should be, he said, our goal in human life.

However, for mainstream economists such as James Tobin, Robert Solow and William B. Nordhaus, there is no limit to economic growth set by nature (SAGOFF, 1998, p. 29). They argue that human intelligence and ingenuity enable people to satisfy their preferences using different alternatives. For mainstream economists only the

limits to knowledge can be a limiting factor in economic production. The advance of knowledge can lead to the expansion of the economy.

By citing evidences that show the potential conversion of sunlight to electricity, the use of water, wind and biomass as the sources of energy, the prospects of “nonsolar alternatives, such as tidal power, which captures gravitational energy, and geothermal power, which employs heat coming from the earth’s core,” and the contingent relationship between economic growth and environmental degradation Mark Sagoff (1998) doubted the arguments of ecological economists. He notes that in some instances, absence of economic growth rather than its presence can lead to environmental degradation. In other words, destitution rather than economic development is far worse for the environment, as it can force people to overexploit their environment. He writes,

[n]o one believes that economic growth is likely to lead automatically to environmental protection. We have found no reason to agree with the contention of ecological economics, however, that growth in the sense of greater gross domestic product is unsustainable because it necessarily strains natural limits and leads automatically to resource depletion and ecological demise (SAGOFF, 1998, p. 38).

Sagoff stresses that there is no necessary relationship between economic growth and environmental stress. Some Scandinavian countries with big gross domestic products have not devastated their environments. Instead, they have been protecting nature and supporting countries with smaller economies, like Poland, to clean up the environmental mess (Sagoff, 1998, p. 38). In agreement with mainstream economists, Sagoff states: “[e]cological economists are unable to point to a single scarcity of natural capital that knowledge

and ingenuity are unlikely to alleviate” (SAGOFF, 1998, p. 45).

Although it can be true that there is no necessary connection between economic growth and environmental stress, I think that knowledge and ingenuity cannot always solve all developmental and environmental problems. Science and technology have not yet enabled human beings to address all environmental issues. It is difficult to maintain sustainable development that is compatible with a high material standard of living, as presently defined, for all human populations. The unlimited greed to exploit Earth’s resources cannot last. Accordingly, both capitalist and non-capitalist countries have to note that unlimited growth for indefinite time is not on. They cannot have economic growth, growth in consumption and pollution indefinitely in the world. If the accelerated misuse of the natural environment is unabated, it will lead to long-term negative consequences such as the decline of agriculture and of individual and community income, poverty, increased competition for scarce resources, loss of forest products and so forth which will endanger the survival of present and future generations, and non-human species. We have already faced global ecological problems including rising sea levels, the melting of the polar icecaps, shortage of fresh water, ozone layer depletion and so on. Thus, we need to reexamine our worldviews and change our attitudes towards growth and natural resources.

The ethical element must come to development because we frame our ultimate goal from the point of view of some ideals or visions of the future and of how our world *ought* to be. There are some very grave imbalances in the current global system that must be addressed, and a necessary condition for addressing them is ethical clarification and rectification. Ethical clarification is just the first step. Ethical ideas partly motivate and guide people. Accordingly, ethics can change the way people behave, because it helps individuals to be



responsible citizens that will seek constructive solutions to complex moral problems. The unfair treatment of people against the ethical principles they subscribe to can be the cause of conflict, as it can affect their motivation and cooperation (GASPER, 2012, p. 8).

As the experience in Brazil and other countries shows, ethically inspired and informed social movements can and do make a difference, as they encourage popular participation in different projects (GOULET, 2005b). Thus, fundamental values and ethical principles rather than economic or political forces should guide technical and legal processes. Environmental philosophers and development ethicists have tried to stress these points, and thereby encourage people to promote environmentally and socially sustainable development.

## CONCLUSION

The problems faced by development theories illustrated the ambiguities surrounding the whole idea of development. Mainstream development discourse is not only produced in and by industrialized countries but is enforced by same hegemonic actors. Little attention is given to what is on the ground in “developing” countries. Development is thus currently a site of contestation where many scholars question not only how development has been practiced in the “Third World”, but how the discourse of development has been deployed to inform development practice.

Many writers were preoccupied with social and economic concerns, and ignored human and environmental well-being. Development has been equated with economic growth. It has been, however, argued that development is to be distinguished from growth, as measured simply by GNP (gross national product), which



registers much economic activity not conducive to development, and which takes no account of economic activity where no money changes hands. Development is “more than the sheer accumulation of worldly goods”. The paper thus suggests that the moral dimension of development theory and practice should be given attention by the concerned parties. Besides social and economic concerns, the quality of life, cultural and environmental impact, individual rights and freedoms need to be addressed. Development conceived simply as aggregate economic growth does not seem to have a future as various environmental and social problems make it unsustainable.

Development as conceptualized by the “founding fathers” has become a vehicle of disempowerment and bondage. In the development era, the people have not been consulted enough about their environment and development issues. Modern scientists and donors have tried to impose their own theories of what constitutes development on the rural poor. Consequently, the promotion of Western development models at the expense of indigenous knowledge and practice has long term negative consequences for the former. Such models have very little to do with local realities or the wishes of the people on the land. International institutions of development assistance such as the World Bank, and the IMF along with trade regimes such as that being ‘negotiated’ within the WTO tend to promote large, in effect, monocultural projects, in agriculture, for example, that lead to a limited number of uniform varieties gaining dominance and production of such materials only through highly specialized plant breeding and seed production institutions. This will also pose serious limitations on farmers’ abilities to develop/produce their own seeds and exchange them with other farmers, including protection of farmer-bred varieties that are competitive in the market. Thus, development and the solution of development

problems should be grounded on people's cultural heritage and institutions, which enable them to live together in permanent harmony, develop agriculture and society, and utilize the natural resources of their local environment in an ecologically sustainable manner. Here it is worth stressing that we cannot apply development theory in exactly the same way in Ethiopia as in Europe. Development strategies should reflect the values, interests, concerns and worldviews of the concerned people.

This paper further suggests that in order to change the position of the poor and promote their interests in the current world order, global and multilateral institutions should be more inclusive, democratic and equitable in terms of representation and voice. Accordingly, what are needed are fundamental democratic changes in the structures of global power such that the 'weaker' countries that represent the vast majority of humanity are no longer *weak* and the 'powerful' countries that represent a tiny minority of humanity and perhaps no one's real long term interests are no longer *powerful*. What is absolutely undeniable to any rational and informed human being is that humanity as a whole must develop alternative attitudes towards the current world order. This imperative suggests that even if only within the framework of a minimal utilitarian justificatory scheme, the global community has ethical obligations to assist the "Third World" countries to get rid of oppressive and exploitative global structures. Thus, instead of searching for short-term profits or looking only for immediate gratification, TNCs and other powerful players in the current world order should be forced to respect the knowledge, need, aspiration and voice of "Third World" countries.

The foregoing discussion reveals that development ethics deals with the ethical dimension of development policy and practice. Development ethics can help guide development policy and practice

in both “developing” and “developed” countries. Development ethics should focus on ethical dimensions of development theory, planning, grassroots development projects and practice all the world over. It should examine the impact of global powers on the health of the planet Earth, [international trade, capital flows, migration, environmental pacts, military intervention, and responses to human rights violations committed by prior regimes], the moral responsibilities of transnational corporations and their host governments and should address human deprivation in both “developing” and “developed” countries.

If development ethics broadens its scope and addresses the injustice done to the majority of the people and to nonhuman species, it will have a paramount role in creating awareness within countries and globally about the actions of transnational corporations, irresponsible capitalist countries and local industries which damage the environment. The efforts of many a people may one day bring change in favour of the majority of the people, non-human species, and the planet Earth. There are some grounds for hope. But I do understand that there is still a formidable distance to travel.

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## **ABSTRACT**

This paper examines the role of ethics in development theory and practice. It critically evaluates competing ethical positions concerning development. It will consider the ethical dimensions and implications of dominant modes of development including the policies and practices of major international institutions, national governments and independent NGOs. The major findings of this paper are that the ethical dimensions of development have been neglected in mainstream development studies. Development theorists have been preoccupied with social and economic concerns, and ignored human and environmental well-being. As a result, development as conceived by its “founding fathers” has not changed the living conditions of the majority of the people in the world. It has not overcome, and in some cases has even led to poverty, malnutrition, high rates of infant mortality, low life expectancy, high rates of morbidity, low rates of health care, low average productivity and environmental degradation. Full human development requires regard for essential religious values and, although development ethicists have examined the moral consequences of development and emphasized that the aim of development should be human well-being, and that economic growth can be the means of human enrichment, many of them have not paid attention to the impact of the environment on development. The paper thus suggests that besides social and economic concerns, the quality of life, cultural impact, individual rights and freedoms, and environmental well-being need to be addressed.

**KEYWORDS:** Development. Development ethics. Ethics. Economic justice. Environmental wisdom. Human well-being.

## **RESUMO**

Este trabalho examina o papel da ética na teoria do desenvolvimento e da prática. Há a avaliação crítica das posições éticas concorrentes relativas ao desenvolvimento e são consideradas as dimensões éticas e as implicações de modos dominantes de desenvolvimento, incluindo as políticas e práticas das principais instituições internacionais, governos nacionais e organizações não governamentais independentes. As principais conclusões deste trabalho são que as dimensões éticas do desenvolvimento têm sido negligenciadas em certos estudos de desenvolvimento. Teóricos do desenvolvimento têm se preocupado com as questões sociais e econômicas, e ignorado as questões humanas e de bem-estar ambiental. Como resultado, o desenvolvimento concebido pelos seu “país fundador” não mudou as condições de vida da maioria das pessoas no mundo, chegando, em alguns casos, a levar à pobreza, à desnutrição, às altas taxas de mortalidade infantil, à baixa expectativa de vida, às altas taxas de morbidade, às baixas taxas de cuidados de saúde, à baixa produtividade média e à degradação

ambiental. O integral desenvolvimento humano exige respeito por valores religiosos essenciais e, embora os especialistas em ética de desenvolvimento tenham examinado as consequências morais de desenvolvimento e enfatizado que o objetivo do desenvolvimento deve ser o bem-estar, e que o crescimento econômico pode ser o meio de enriquecimento humano, muitos deles não têm dado atenção para o impacto do ambiente no desenvolvimento. Este trabalho, portanto, sugere que, além das preocupações sociais e econômicas, a qualidade de vida, o impacto cultural, os direitos e liberdades individuais e o bem-estar ambiental precisam ser abordados.

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** Desenvolvimento. Ética de desenvolvimento. Ética. Justiça econômica. Sabedoria ambiental. Bem-estar humano.