ETHICS AND THE CONDUCT OF INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AID:
CHARITY AND OBLIGATION

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Comments are welcome and should be addressed to the author:

ABSTRACT

Ethical debate around development aid has gradually grown and diversified, and a field that spans some aspects of policy, organisational and personal practice has partly emerged. After characterising this trend, the paper considers: (1) The key question of the types of obligation, if any, involved in aid; is aid purely charity and beyond obligation(s)? What do different views here imply for roles and conditions in aid? (2) The significance in aid, especially technical cooperation, of inter-personal relations and work-style and life-style issues. (3) Will specified ethical guidelines and codes for aid organisations and aid workers be worthwhile? The paper suggests that even a charity mode of aid entails important obligations concerning manner of operation, and that helpful guidelines are possible. Whether directive codes will help is more open to doubt.

CONTENTS

1. THEMES AND TERMS

International aid work proceeds in a context of more or less explicit moral concerns -- meant to be sufficient to mobilise and justify cross-border transfers – as well as of national sensitivities, cultural and ideological divides, inherited wounds and mistrust, and competing under-proven perceptions of options and effects in long-term processes of massive change. It is a touchy and contentious field.

This paper looks at ethical issues concerning *how* aid is carried out. Sections 2 and 3 will discuss the way that such 'how?' issues have emerged, and situate them in relation to other questions about aid, including most notably the proposed ethical basis for aid. Aid can be based on self-interest; or on obligations of the rich to help the poor; or on charity, the beneficence of the rich, whereby recipients do not receive by right and donors do not give as a duty.[1] Rather than obligation, rich country donors have largely taken self-interest and charity as their bases for giving. These, notably the charity stance, have moulded aid disbursement and evaluation: aid is typically subject to numerous donor-set conditions and must be accounted for in every detail. The obligations are deemed to lie on the side of the recipient, to do as advised and report assiduously; with the exception of the donor's obligation *to its fund providers* to see that their monies are well spent, which is deemed to give it the right and duty to impose whatever conditions it sees fit on recipients. I will probe and query this position, and argue that even a charity view of aid carries important obligations concerning manner of operation.

Sections 4 to 7 examine several major 'how?' questions about the manner and conditions of aid. Is the conventional style of conditionality and control ethically defensible? What are the roles and responsibilities of actors in the aid system? What constitutes corruption, in an ethical sense, in the behaviour and life-styles of aid actors? What forms of exercising power and styles of personal relations might be ethically implied for international aid? Section 8 considers then whether standardised guidelines or codes of ethics could help in such complex and sensitive areas. Section 9 concludes by returning to the theme of charity and obligation.

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[1] Mutual interest and enlightened self-interest are simply more thoughtful variants of self-interest: without gain to the donor there will still be no aid. On 'charity', Williams (1976) describes how the term evolved over the centuries, from meaning Christian love to now typically meaning something cooler, more condescending and discretionary.

By *development ethics* I mean here, following Denis Goulet, work on 'ethical and value questions posed by development theory, planning and practice' (Goulet, 1977:5). I discuss elsewhere (Gasper, 1994, 1996) the scope and boundaries implied by Goulet's definition; they notably depend on how we use the term 'development', but clearly include *both* policy ethics and the ethics of the individual actor. As to the possible character and role of development ethics, it can (seek to) function as: (1) an academic sub-discipline; (2) displacement activity, a display of high-mindedness; (3) secular religion, that delineates and promulgates ways of life; (4) a professional ethics; and/or (5) a broader, looser professional forum than in variant 4 -- since 'development theory, planning and practice' do not define a single profession or well-bounded set of professions and agents -- but with comparable functions to narrower professional ethics. I adopt this fifth, *quasi-professional,* definition of character and role. Development ethics thus in part reflects normatively on what those working in 'development theory, planning and practice' do with and to clients/advisees, students, research subjects, and others, what should they (we) work on, whom should they (we) work for, what criteria should they (we) use; and so on.

Development ethics is concerned with practice, with informing attitudes and choices. This does not mean atheoretical. Much of practical ethics overlaps with normatively-informed policy analysis. Similarly, ideas in development ethics will and should reflect explanatory theories of development, not only general ideas about ethics. If one's development theory emphasises volumes of investment, directed by the best international advice, then one may fret over 'diversions' of scarce resources and seek to enforce rigorous conditions on aid use. Underlying this are debated theories of people and of change: are people 'economic men', essentially comfort-oriented self-interested agents who have to be exclusively guided by rewards and/or threats? how far can goals of fraternity and autonomy be promoted by processes of domination and passivity? If one's development theory emphasises broadbased commitment in the low-income country, local leadership and entrepreneurship (private and public), and mobilisation of local energies and creativity, then one's focus in aid policy and guidelines will often be different than in the direct-and-control mode.

Aid is not the most important topic in development ethics, compared to assessing policy goals, or commerce and debt, child labour, democracy and human rights, or

the exertion of power by the rich through means other than concessional finance. But it remains important, and difficult.

By *development aid* I refer to external aid to low-income countries as provided in explicit concessional resource allocations to increase welfare in those countries.[2] This excludes military supplies but not emergency relief. And as just implied, it excludes some usually more important ways to help, like modifying and then enforcing regulations on trade, debt, property rights, Swiss bank accounts and speculative capital flows, or modifying life-styles in rich countries. My focus on 'aid' as more narrowly and conventionally defined is to keep the paper manageable. Even so, conventional aid spans very widely, across numerous different sectors and activities and a tremendous variety of institutions and countries. Actual or potential resource transfers can also be the lever and cover for extensive policy direction by aid agencies, of greater import than the transfers themselves. I therefore discuss conditionality, in Section 4, though very selectively, with emphasis on political and ethical assumptions.

Aid as discussed here is thus much narrower than 'development cooperation'. I also will not adopt that as the major term for description because, besides being more unwieldy, though various funding agencies shifted to using it twenty years ago the style of many remained in direct-and-control mode.

In sum, this paper does *not* consider all the important value issues concerning development aid, not even all those of current attention in 'the aid community'; let alone does it aim to be a survey or history of issues in development cooperation policy (for those see e.g. Stokke (ed., 1996) and Edwards (1999)). It concentrates instead on:

- the evolution of discussions of ethics and development aid; to see historically how a concern with quasi-professional ethics has emerged and might proceed (especially Section 2 below);

- the key question of the types of obligation, if any, that are involved; is aid pure charity and beyond obligation(s)?; and what implications have different views here? (Sections 3, 4, 5 and 9);

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[2] Following others I sometimes call it just 'aid', a usage that slights intra-national aid. 'International aid' covers military support too; and while 'international humanitarian aid' excludes that and conveys a focus on increasing welfare in poorer countries, it has become reserved for emergency-related aid. The definition here includes emergency relief as well as aid for 'development' construed more narrowly.

- the significance in international aid, especially in technical cooperation, of work-style and life-style issues, including inter-personal relations, and how these are affected by questions of obligation (Sections 6 and 7); and

- whether specified ethical guidelines and codes for aid organisations and aid workers could be worthwhile (Section 8).

2. EVOLUTION OF WORK ON THE ETHICS OF INTERNATIONAL AID

Through to the early 1980s the intellectual basis of aid remained imprecise, especially its ethics. It was vulnerable to attacks on egalitarianism mounted in the 1970s by Bauer, Hayek, Nozick, Lal and others. For example, calls like Peter Singer's -- for everyone to give up as much of what they had as could produce (much) greater benefits for the poor -- seemed to offer critics an easy target: the calls assumed rather than demonstrated moral community, and neglected incentives, disincentives, and matters of past efforts and fair acquisition. In an earlier study (Gasper, 1986) I reviewed the attacks and their excesses; suggested reformulations to give a more adequate ethical basis for redistribution, including international aid; and agreed that development theory had used 'a presumption that LDCs are a different moral sphere, [so that within them] different principles [for example, sweeping redistribution] could be applied than internationally or within DCs. The subject is [therefore, now] likely, if not to disintegrate, at least to change' (Gasper, 1986:138). A similar point applied to the practice of development aid. But while substantial work appeared in the 1980s to clarify the possible justifications for aid, less emerged on its manner of operation

Work in aid ethics has now broadened. One is struck by the field's continuing growth, diversification, and ramifying nature. Ten or fifteen years ago it seemed possible to do a fairly thorough survey, even if one had to include substantial background material on aid, ethics, and theories of development. Since then the core literature has grown considerably, as have the areas to which one must pay attention as background or special topics. The growth reflects more than paper production by academics under increased pressure to publish or perish. Work on ethics is not the quickest or most prestigious route for those keen to be counted. More significant are the following factors.

- First, work on development ethics, including aid ethics, was young fifteen years ago, and most of what has been written has appeared since then.

- Second, work in the related areas has grown equally fast, as part of the tremendous expansion of practical ethics in the past generation, for example in business ethics. Ethical analysis is now more common in social studies than during the positivist regnum of the 1930s through 70s. It would be hard to imagine major assessments of aid being published now that were as philosophically innocent as for example those by Lewis (then chair of OECD's Development Assistance Committee; 1980) or Mosley (1987).

- Third, as new linkages have emerged or been perceived, the number of component and related topics has grown too: participation and empowerment, the nature of well-being and vulnerability, the status of rights and obligations, culture and identity, political and moral community, globalisation, environment, the presumptions of the concept 'development', and more. Growing awareness of global connections leads many to talk now of global ethics or world ethics.

- Fourth, the deep causes and catastrophic consequences of 'complex emergencies' have demanded attention in development studies including development ethics. Enormously difficult emergency situations have raised exceptional moral demands and confusion. Aid agencies, unwilling or unable to respond politically to political emergencies, appear to have become integrated as resource providers into processes of violence and oppression (de Waal, 1997a, 1997b; O'Keefe & Middleton, 1998).

- Fifth, while the relative importance of development aid has declined, some of the causes bring increased attention to aid ethics. Previously considerably greater than private capital flows to low income countries, aid (o.d.a.) is now dwarfed by them in aggregate; some low income countries have become middle income, a few even high income; and aid fatigue, doubts and disappointments and the end of the Cold War have weakened commitment. Despite declining tolerance for taxation and public expenditure, surveys suggest that aid retains large majority public support in donor countries (except perhaps America) but in subdued form. Amongst intellectuals it has lost some of its backing and certainly much of its passion. While always criticised by some on the Right in donor countries, both in principle and in terms of alleged effects, aid was defended in principle by most on the Left, even if they criticised its conceptualisation, handling, and/or effects of some types. But from the 1980s aid came under comprehensive attack by more from the Left (like Gunnar Myrdal) and Greens too, in South as well as North. The attacks on aid's necessity,

moral rationale*, modus operandi*, and observed effects have all grown, and forced more deeply thought responses than earlier.

- Sixth, the rise and rise of *NGDOs* (both international and Southern) in the past 15-20 years has created a much larger 'market' for ethics, including quasi-professional ethics and the delicate *how* issues. NGDO staff and funders tend on average to be more concerned with purposes of development, equitable process, and multi-directional accountability than are their government, bank and inter-government counterparts. The concerns about ethical 'dilemmas' and definition of roles and responsibilities which have grown in the 1990s in NGDOs closely match those seen elsewhere in the caring professions: doctors, nurses, psychiatrists, social workers, priests and so on (cf. e.g. Banks, 1995). Professionals in these fields do--typically--care, in one or both senses. Many work on the 'delivery' frontline, face unforeseen implications and failures closer-up, and listen to recipients. Such practitioners need ethical frames by which they can better understand their situation, structure their choices, avoid debilitating degrees of doubt and guilt, and move forward.

Besides growth, diversification, and increased philosophical sophistication in some of the aid ethics work of the past fifteen years, one sees a healthier balance emerging between experience, abstracted theory, and advice for decision situations. An influential figure like Robert Chambers writes regularly on, in effect, practical development ethics, and spans voluntary and government sector audiences (e.g. Chambers, 1997a, 1997b). In the 1970s and '80s, a great share of attention went to propounding, applying or rejecting the elegant armchair theories and theorems of selected leaders in the revival of prescriptive ethical theory from the '70s, like Rawls and Nozick. In the 1990s we see maturer ethical theory, with wider awareness of the limitations and roles of abstracted theorisation, attention to identifying areas where different ethical theories can agree on their implications or preconditions (see e.g. Nussbaum & Glover eds., 1995; Küng, 1997; Dower, 1998), and growing interaction of ethical theory, practical ethics, and development practice.

3. STRUCTURE: ISSUES IN AID ETHICS

Major areas in international aid ethics have included at least:- *whether and why* such aid should exist, and in which circumstances, if any; second, the *quantities* of aid to be offered by, or required from, specific richer agents, and from *which agents*; third,

for which countries; fourth, for *which sectors and uses*; fifth, questions of *how to conduct aid work*, about the *manner and conditions* under which aid is provided; sixth, how to *evaluate* aid projects and programmes. Before concentrating on questions of manner and conditions of operation, we need to look selectively at other issues which influence them.

Has international aid to poorer countries the right to exist at all? Debate on this grew in the 1970s, led by Right-wing theorists antagonistic to aid such as Peter Bauer, and continued actively in the 1980s. Riddell (1985, 1986, 1987) and Gasper (1986) are critical surveys of the debate (see especially Riddell, 1987, discussed in Gasper, 1994). Opeskin (1997) gives a more recent survey. The following set of viewpoints indicates most of the spectrum.

1. *An obligation exists, the same as intra-nationally:* International aid is seen as morally identical to resource transfers to poorer regions, groups and individuals *within* national boundaries (*and* domestic transfers are considered legitimate and desirable). A family of positions exists here, according to the perceived moral basis for intra-national transfers (needs/utility/rights/ historical debt or connection/ ...). Sometimes it is held that aid should consequently be organised in a similar way to domestic transfers, routinised and with little space for discretion, as one part of welfare policy. But factual constraints differ in the international case and might profoundly affect and limit how and how far the rich can help.

2. *Lesser obligation:* International aid is considered a moral obligation upon richer countries, groups and individuals, but subject to certain major conditions (for example about its urgency and potential efficacy; or about the existence of past and present North-South links) and (thus) in general of lesser priority than obligations closer to home.

3. *Charity:* International aid is beyond obligation -- while to give it is an act of superogatory virtue and commendable, not giving it cannot be condemned. E.g. the former Soviet bloc held that it had no historical links with and hence no present obligations to give aid to the South.

4. *My country first and only*: aid to people in other countries is a betrayal of co-community members at 'home' who have unsatisfied needs and/or other claims -- except when international aid furthers their interests better than would domestic

uses.

5. *A matter solely for individuals to decide:* Charity is commendable, and national boundaries insignificant, but individual self-ownership makes both intra- and inter-national *obligatory* (tax-derived) transfers immoral. This is the implication of the influential possessive-individualist philosophy of Robert Nozick (1974), presented for consideration in development policy by Deepak Lal (1976.) Tax-based aid provided by a donor government is deemed illegitimate, unlike voluntary trans-national aid provided by individuals.

6. *Morally indifferent:* whether a person or group of persons (e.g. an organisation) chooses to help others, either in their country or another, is considered an entirely optional consumer matter. To do so is no better or worse than any other (legal) use of their wealth.

7. *Culturally relative*: here the 'consumer', the entity that adopts life-style options, is an entire culture. Some cultures are 'into' helping others, others are not, and, it is claimed, there are no defensible ways of saying one value position is better than the other. This more casual 'post-modern' stance differs from the nationalist viewpoint -- which certainly believes that its own position is better than others -- but readily coexists with it.

This spectrum of views has more than academic interest. View 4--aid as pursuit of national self-interest--influences some governmental aid, though not (I assume) NGDO aid. View 2--aid as a definite but lower-level obligation--partly fits Scandinavia and the Netherlands, the donors who bind themselves to and implement a substantial target level of support; even if view 3, aid as charity, still influences the manner in which they give. View 5--that foreign transfers by a national government are illegitimate--was long followed by for example Switzerland (which has however shifted to at least provision of aid for respectability and hence self-interest). View 6--foreign aid as purely a morally indifferent life-style option--might be how most corporations view their own tightfist-edness. In contrast, the work of development-oriented foundations such as Rockefeller and Ford, and Ted Turner's immense donation to the U.N., can reflect a stance of benevolent charity (position 3).

All of views 3 through 7 seem widespread in the USA, including amongst powerful Republican politicians. A generation back, in the early days of the American New Right backlash, Sumberg (1973:60) 'looked for...without finding [any] duty laid upon

us. There is no such duty... [Aid] is purely discretionary', even in emergencies and--according to him--even inside a nation. While many pro- (or anti-) aid developmentalists have taken the World Bank and IMF as their greatest foes--seen as bastions of world capitalism, who trample on the rights of the poor by both intervention and neglect--much of the US Right sees them as socialistic relics that prop up the undeserving.

The view that guided most aid, both governmental and NGO, appears to be #3: aid as charity not obligation. When combined with a performance ethic and one-way accountability this has affected the way aid is carried out: full of options for donors, stiff with restrictions for recipients. The performance ethic rarely extended to checking whether close conditionality achieved its own performance targets. Doubts as to whether it does (see Section 4) and the very fact of failure to check would lead one to investigate the power relations, culture and psychology of aid.

These issues of obligation or its absence are not pursued further here (see instead e.g. Gasper, 1986), but influence our discussions through affecting other matters.

From which agents? Even if aid is administered like charity, tax-funded aid is not just *provided by* those who felt like doing so. Funds raised on a basis of obligation (as in view 2 above) are doled out on the basis of discretionary charity (view 3). Obligatory contribution might yet be defended on grounds of operational simplicity and necessity; and/or as something that over time balances out. If I am in the majority which likes aid, unlike you, but you are in the majority which likes motorway construction, which I don't, and tax-funds go for both purposes, then you can think of your tax as going to motorways but not aid and I can think mine goes for aid not motorways (but the latter expenditure is far greater). A different defence of the combination of obligatory contribution and discretionary allocation holds that if an obligation to give aid rests on a principle of promoting welfare or need-fulfilment or so on, then the aid must be administered and used so as to indeed promote the objective. We will consider later whether the means selected do ensure it.

How to evaluate international aid? Too often, evaluation is seen as a purely technical exercise, and excessively narrow criteria and sources of information are used. Hoksbergen (1986) investigates which and whose views of good development--what are the good life and fair process?--are used in different evaluation approaches in aid,

such as in donors' versions of cost-benefit analysis. Approaches for evaluating aid expenditure depend too on the core rationale adopted for aid. If that is the same as for domestic transfers then aid should be evaluated in the same way, no easier, no harsher. If it is an instrument of national self-interest, then it is evaluated for that. If it is non-solidarity charity then, deem some, every dollar must be closely accounted for.

3.1 How to conduct aid? - manner and conditions attached; working with real, complex people and coping with messy operational choices

Whether, how much, to whom and for what have been the traditional aid ethics issues. Aid evaluation too has received great attention, even if its value choices are hidden. These traditional issues matched the locations and training of head office aid managers and development economists. Now an enlarged range of 'how?' questions about manner and style of operation have become prominent, and add a necessary dimension. Section 2 suggested reasons for the trend.

Typical new concerns are the fear that aid can sometimes have disastrous unexpected effects--so how should staff deal with such risks?--and the feeling that aid personnel often face painful dilemmas, where whatever they do will involve severe moral costs. An influential paper by Hugo Slim (1997a, 1997b), for example, notes a series of risks in emergency relief: 1. risks to the helper (who might lose health or life); 2. risks to the supposedly helped (who can be pressured or facilitated to follow a disastrous direction); 3. risks of helping people who prove to be villains or who at least should not be helped, such as oppressive armies or dictatorial governments; and 4. risks of becoming villainous, if the practice of moral compromise (and, perhaps, the exposure to horror) fosters cynicism. The same types of risk can apply in non-emergency aid. Direct risks to aid workers will be less, but the other three types are just as relevant outside emergencies.

In the following sections I analyse some (not all) of the key choices in the conduct of aid, including imposition of conditions by funders, the roles adopted in aid work, expatriate life styles, and dialogical versus monological interaction The widespread embarrassment and even secrecy in discussing organisational and personal conduct make information and literature limited. Gaps exist between on-the-record proclamation and off-the-record practice and anecdote. Sometimes there might also be a false pride that ethical problems affect only others ('the Italians/Belgians/Pakistanis/ Nigeri-

ans'); or a wish not to draw attention to a checkered past -- 'You don't criticise me, I won't criticise you'. These factors hinder analysis, but do not remove the need for it.

> ..there is hubris and hypocrisy in what I write; hubris because who am I, who have been wrong so often, to examine others' errors ?; hypocrisy, because I do not live what I say. But hubris and hypocrisy are bad reasons for keeping quiet. (Chambers, 1997a:xviii).

4. CONDITIONALITY AND CONTROL

> Hamelink conveys the reality, weight and dangers of 1990s conditionality:

> > Development co-operation creates explosive contradictions between political conditionalities that press for good governance, democracy and respect for human rights, and... economic conditionalities that impose such austere measures that the resulting inequalities can only be controlled by highly undemocratic policies ! (1997:15)

More routinely, aid resources have continued to be largely made available only for pre-specified broad purposes, under set conditions, via set and increasingly elaborate procedures, and at project level often still in pre-specified forms ('...one photocopier, three PCs of type X, six airtickets, etc. etc.'). Programme aid and balance-of-payments-support have dropped project-level conditions, but were introduced precisely as vehicles for policy-level conditions, since projects were too slow-moving for this (Saasa & Carlsson, 1996; Stokke, 1996). Conditionality has remained normal.

Serious *a priori* arguments exist for conditionality. 'An obligation to further the fulfilment of basic needs is not an obligation to make transfers which will not have that effect... recipient as well as donor duties may accompany rights: a right for poverty to be relieved also implies a duty on recipients to use aid for that purpose' (Gasper, 1986:159). We see this later with reference to emergency relief and to gross corruption. And, says a former senior Indian civil servant who is fiercely critical of many other aspects of aid: 'Although they bristle at the thought of northern imposition, pressure on southern governments to make [pro-poor] choices is both legitimate and necessary' (Malhoutra, 1997:146).

Yet we know also that fungibility and shunting, in economists' appealing terms, mean that many conditions are illusory--aid permits growth of other expenditures than those specified, sometimes only to a small extent, sometimes not--and, further, that insistence on new official policy does not ensure changed ground-level practice. In the 1990s increasing attention has gone to how condition-heavy compares with condition-light or condition-free aid (e.g. Stokke, ed., 1995). The case for heavy conditionality

does not seem to rest on evidence of its *effectiveness*, whether at project level, or in the first-generation of recent policy conditionality (centred on economic liberalisation and structural adjustment) or the second-generation (centred on `good governance', democracy and human rights) (ibid.).

Here let us focus rather on conditionality's *legitimacy*. Note for example the possible hypocrisy in imposing requirements that one does not apply at home; e.g., especially for Europeans, liberalisation of agricultural markets.[3] Legitimacy and effectiveness do influence each other--conditions perceived as illegitimate are less likely to be effective, and conditions found to be ineffective will lose legitimacy--but they are different; some illegitimate conditions could be effective.

Condition-less or condition-light aid transfers seem to be rejected by donor governments in part because of the following assumptions:

1) Condition-less transfers are sometimes perceived as an admission of historic guilt, and/or as an open-ended statement of obligation within a world community. Donors have exempted themselves from historical responsibility, by postulating (i) a dark view and/or extreme uncertainty as to what would have happened without colonisation; or (ii) the alleged irrelevance now of events of fifty to five hundred years ago; or because of (iii) not having held colonies themselves, with a subsidiary assumption that non-colonised non-colonisers did not benefit from the colonial system and its supply of labour and goods. (Gasper, 1986:168-79, reviews these debates.) In fact developing countries do not in general argue for historical compensation, but instead for equitable present opportunities; but this claim too implies a structural obligation on rich countries which most of the latter reject.

2) Aid is charity, so that donors can impose on it whatever requirements they see fit.

3) Aid is donors' money, given out of kindness to non-citizens; hence it must be used well (and donors will say what is fit and well); it is not 'pocket money'/ 'spending allowance', and should be exhaustively accounted for.

4) So it must be exhaustively pre-planned, and the degree of achievement of pre-set objectives must be checked *ex post*. Constituent assumptions here include #5, 6, 7 and 8 below.

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[3] Gasper (1986, section 7) considers arguments about hypocrisy and national sovereignty, and presumptions when giving advice across national borders, including possible presumptions about moral community.

5) Recipients are unreliable and if left to themselves will not use funds effectively for desirable purposes.

6) Donors know better than recipients; and donors know well.

7) While structural transfers are dependence-creating (though not if in the European Union's Regional Fund?), tight project-, programme- and policy- conditionalities are not seriously inimical to trust and recipient ownership and learning. Implicitly it might be held either that these are unimportant, or that:

8) a passive and indebted recipient has no better options and so--regardless of liberal and democratic language in other parts of aid policy--can be dictated to, steered and driven, and will yet continue wholeheartedly trying and learning.

In many situations, some of these assumptions are questionable, sometimes all.

To consider just assumption 8, in reality recipients have feelings of dignity, re-act if treated as children or delinquents, and nearly always have counter-weapons. 'The secrecy of national experts, their refusal to attend meetings, write reports or accept advice from expatriates, and their "misuse" of donor funds could all be seen as forms of resistance' (Crewe, 1997:75). This rings true to my experience. Such matters remain largely unrecorded, but one exception is Robert Klitgaard's book *Tropical Gangsters*, an account of work as an adviser in Equatorial Guinea during 1985-88.[4] The story is punctuated by Ministers and senior officials steadily missing appointments with foreign delegations and advisers, or keeping them sweating long and hard outside in non air-conditioned anterooms.

> The IMF agreement with the government stipulated that the only capital investments allowed in the government budget were 'counterparts' to existing foreign aid projects. Nothing but what the aid givers wanted to do, could the government do.
> So maybe the ministers were busy seeing people like us. Or maybe they were annoyed deep down at aid with so many strings and nooses attached, and avoided seeing us. (Klitgaard, 1991:27)

If one's theory of development centres not on volumes of investment but on building confidence and capacity, people, organisations and institutions, including capacity to learn, decide and mobilise resources in one's own unique situation, then co-determination in projects and policies is vital in place of conventional modes of aid (see

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[4] No explanation is given for the title besides this (p.12): 'The harsh conditions of underdevelopment encourage tropical gangsters of every variety--government, business, and international aid giver' (if 'giver' is still the best term).

e.g., Saasa & Carlsson, 1996; Schuftan, 1998a).[5] And this theory often seems to work (see e.g. Uphoff, 1996; Klitgaard, 1991; Dere, 1997). A complementary type of capabilities theory, deriving from Amartya Sen, receives much official deference currently as the basis of 'Human Development' thinking.[6] But international aid seems still too little conducted in ways really focused on strengthening of capabilities.

Even if one accepts the idea of aid as charity, the form of detailed conditionality does not necessarily follow. It is *condition-heavy before-and-after,* with intensive *ex ante* specification and control and intensive *ex post* accounting and evaluation of expenditures and outcomes. Much evidence indicates that this style's background assumptions--points 5 through 8 in our list--are all often wrong. In addition, intensive before-and-after checking often tends to focus on pre-set programme goals which have become outdated and to miss some important effects. Condition-free/light transfers, sometimes with detailed assessment only *ex post* and done 'goal-free', may therefore often be more effective.[7] Even small amounts offered on an easier *ex ante* basis might build trust.

The OECD's Development Assistance Committee in 1996 recommended a move from the present parent-child conditionality relationships to donor-recipient partnership, a term adopted by for example the new Department for International Development under the Labour government in Britain. Advisory committees and aid agency policy statements remain some distance from aid practice, and finance, trade and foreign affairs ministries have more power. But aid language is now moving in the right direction.[8]

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[5] Schuftan (1998b) favourably contrasts conditions proposed pro-actively by a prospective recipient (perhaps backed by the expertise of national and transnational bodies) with those set unilaterally by a funder.

[6] Sen uses 'capabilities' to refer to the set of attainable lives that a person could choose between. A second sense of 'capabilities', as personal powers and skills, is used by Nussbaum and others, and is more relevant here (Gasper, 1997c).

[7] (a) In philosophers' language, donors if consequentialist should adopt rule- rather than act-consequentialism, i.e. adopt procedures which overall promote good results over the longer term, not seek to second-guess and control every aspect. Deontologists who put major emphasis on recipients' dignity and rights might also accept such procedures. (b) In evaluation language, *'goal-free'* evaluation implies no restriction of attention to pre-set programme goals, instead openness to the actual range of favourable and unfavourable results. It suits situations of 1) divergent stakeholder interests, where a programme's goals might downgrade or ignore some groups, and 2) weak advance knowledge, where programme learning-by-doing and field-level innovation can create designs better than any set at the outset -- in other words it suits many or most development aid situations.

[8] A Dutch policy under preparation in 1999, for aid to nineteen partner countries, will hopefully add substance to such words.

5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Language and images mould our conceptions of roles. In the North, the New Right introduced the images of 'consumers' and (even though end-users are often not the purchasers) 'customers' for public services, rather than the image of citizenship, despite sometimes brandishing that term. In international aid, users are not fellow citizens and everything remains discretionary. A policy statement such as this one from Newcastle City Council in Britain remains distant in aid relations: 'it is unethical and ineffective to be working with people without sharing fully objectives, plans and information on which these are based' (cited by Banks, 1995:107). Can the image of *global* citizenship become a useful influence on thought and action about roles and responsibilities, or will it be rejected by ordinary citizens in more fortunate *nations*? For how feasible are its implicit requirements for sufficient material support to allow exercise of some rights as `global citizens'?

Instead, charity--in the sense of 'giving voluntarily to those in need' (Oxford English Reference Dictionary, 1996)--has been a principle central to aid. Many argue that it gives a weak basis, because of its lack of donor obligation and of recipient right to receive. 'We do not want charity because it demeans. With the money earned from trade you can buy what you want. You cannot demand what you need from people who are helping you' (Mazide N'diaye, in Barratt-Brown, 1997:35). In the modern NGDO world to call an organisation a 'charity' is not a compliment. Common criticisms match images of organisations that channel charity: as unbusinesslike, inefficient, condescending and disempowering to recipients, and as complacently judging themselves by the goodness of their intentions or extent of their efforts rather than by impacts. (Patton, 1997, presents this as 'the charity model of evaluation'.) De Waal castigates 'Charitable action [that] needs only vague principles: [since] it is driven by an emotive concern for the poor' (1997a:134). Allegations of self-regard go so far as to see charity (and 'philanthropy') as grounded in Puritan-type concerns with self-improvement through self-disciplining and partial renunciation.

The term 'development co-operation', successor to the more unilateral 'aid', itself became suspect (see e.g. Sizoo, ed., 1993), partly because not sufficiently acted upon. The predominant practice in the 1980s and 90s has been strong conditionality and donor control, as discussed earlier. But we should operationalise a good term rather than move on again. The Sizoo study, entitled 'Beyond Development Cooperation', ap-

peared in two minds; it often also talked of 'How can we participate in development co-operation in another way than the way in which it is currently operating?' (p.3). These two responses, 'beyond cooperation' or new-style cooperation, can be combined by conceiving of *co*-operation with respect *both* to development in the South and in the North. This notion was adopted by the Netherlands on a minor scale following the Rio environment summit.[9] The ideal is to move aid beyond short-termish project and programme links, or longer-term patron-client relationships, towards structural partnership for the indefinite future. (Stokke, 1996:101-3, offers an agnostic assessment.)

So one option has been to shift from the language—and practice--of 'aid' as charity, to that of 'international co-operation'. And one version of this shift would ground relations more clearly and supposedly more firmly in an idiom of long-term enlightened mutual interest, with negotiated framework agreements for actions in donor and recipient countries to co-manage a dangerous world of environmental threats, international migration, drug trafficking, and global crime and disease.

Another option seeks a stronger grounding of aid in binding obligations, for example to match already internationally agreed fundamental human rights. Broughton (1996:1) declares: 'Charity is an inadequate basis for humanitarian action and should not be carried into the next century... The fact is, internationally recognised human rights are the most coherent and forceful expression of humanitarian ideals available'. A commonly felt weakness of positions that assert binding obligations--that they seem to require nearly endless giving--can be remedied by a do-one's-fair-share principle of contributive justice. This would be compatible with a view that the rich have, in philosophers' language, an 'imperfect obligation': an obligation to provide some aid, but not an obligation to support each and every individual case of need.

Both co-operation and obligation seem a more equal basis for aid relationships than that found in discretionary charity. 'The peculiarity of the aid relationship... is its inequality.. this means that [its] normal state of affairs is dysfunctional. There is an in-built tendency to marginalising one of the parties..' (Saasa & Carlsson, 1996:141). But while the co-operation option emphasises global links, only the binding obligations option implies also a version of global citizenship.

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[9] Bhutan, Benin and Costa Rica are the chosen counterparts. Only the latter has much capacity to counter-analyse development at home, in the Netherlands, and internationally.

Aid will not be easily moved from charity mode. The rich are keen neither to accept external involvement in discussing their 'own' affairs, nor to acquire responsibilities internationally. 'The bottom line is that donors don't want to accept the financial obligation that would flow from the recognition of rights. Assistance as it is now structured leaves the donor in control' (Broughton, 1996:9). I will therefore highlight obligations entailed in development aid even on a charity basis. They will apply too in the other possible aid regimes (based in cooperative compacts or human rights) that we mentioned.

A 1997 NVCO (Netherlands Association for Culture and Development) conference on ethical choices in development cooperation featured a 'Socratic dialogue,' or in fact polylogue. Cees Hamelink invited a panel of senior aid officials from government and non-government organisations to reflect on the appalling outcomes in certain cases where their agencies had been heavily involved, for example Rwanda/Zaire and Bosnia, as well as the thousands of avoidable child-deaths each day in poor countries; and to consider the charges against them of non-reciprocity in how they work and the requirements they impose. At the end of the two-hour polylogue he asked the panel if they personally felt any guilt. All said no.

Matters of guilt are complex not easy; even more so in matters on such a large scale. One should not judge individuals by the groups and societies of which they are members, and which constrain and mould them (Gasper, 1986, section 6.3). I do not propose to draw conclusions easily from the NVCO panel: great risks exist of stereotyping and demonising, at the cost of thoughtful diagnosis. We can instead note how the panel members found shelter--by defining themselves into narrow constrained roles. We might see this also if we discussed other policies recommended and/or supported by donors which proved mistaken, such as cases of excessive import substituting industrialisation or misdesigned structural adjustment. Donors accept shares of the credit, but generally not shares of the blame.

In sub-Saharan Africa in the 1980s, for example, some colonial concoction states established as a frame for primary produce export were left behind by trends in world markets and then devastated by, first, the combination of 1970s easy lending and 1980s soaring interest rates, second, sweeping structural adjustment programmes enforced from Washington, based on little understanding of local conditions, and third,

the ethnicisation of resource conflicts, plus botched (alternately stingy and brutal) interventions by Northern agents (de Waal, 1997b; Middleton & O'Keefe, 1998).

For operations in the resultant 'complex emergencies', Slim (1997a) in effect advocates delimiting relief NGOs' responsibility by delimiting their mission statements. In two out of four illustrative 'scenarios' he advises that relief agencies should follow a mission of supplying relief to those in need and not assume the responsibility for what others will do with the resources supplied. If others misuse resources provided for relief, then even if one knew for sure they would do so, that is deemed their responsibility not the NGOs', who simply do and should provide resources for relief, and should claim no more than that.

This vision of responsibility and self-evaluation seems to remain at Patton's `charity model' level. Two objections arise: first, the *prima facie* strangeness of putting matches within reach of pyromaniacs, resources at the disposal of killers; and second, concerning a possible misconception in the generalised mission statement, which should be to provide *relief*, not *resources* regardless of whether they promote relief. We must not conflate two questions: who is responsible for killings? (the killers); and what should we do now to help? (keep the matches away). 'We were not responsible' does not imply 'We should do the same again'; for the obligation must be to help, not necessarily to supply. De Waal (1997a, 1997b) warns against relief NGOs' inherent temptation and drive to raise and supply resources first and try to understand later, demonstrated on a tragic scale with the Rwandan refugees in Zaire and Tanzania.[10]

Ethics which judge in terms of alleged moral necessity regardless of expected effects offer one way of coping with responsibility. For example, resting in one's role as bureaucrat, following orders and especially rules, reduces stress; one's life as an independent moral agent then begins only outside the office. Banks speaks of '*defensive practitioners*' who stick to a safe interpretation of agency rules or their contract and no more.

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[10] Slim in fact seems torn in two and later adopts a different language, of 'trade-offs', 'fieldcraft', pragmatism and compromise (1997a:16), rather than supplying resources regardless of how others will use them. For his fourth scenario highlights misuses to which relief resources are prone, including seizure or 'taxation' by armies, and fuelling further war, even genocide. In some cases it can be known for sure that this is or will be the case -- as in the Hutu-militia controlled refugee camps in Zaire during 1994-96. See Gasper (1999) for a fuller discussion.

In contrast, '*reflective practitioners*' (a term from Donald Schön) reflect in and on action, recognise moral conflicts and understand their sources, and take responsibility for handling them and making choices. They will for example not automatically adopt a work-style and life-style as if these were rules-of-the-office, prerogatives of the administrators of charity; but treat them instead as matters for reflection and judgement. Sections 6 and 7 look now at such questions; Section 8 then considers how far professional codes might guide the sorts of choice we have discussed.

6. CORRUPTION, LIFE-STYLES AND PERSONNEL

> Big money, big car, big salary - they have the local people running around for them. [Comment on officials of some Northern NGOs, by a Thai participant at a 1996 IDEA global ethics conference, Aberdeen].
> Donors are dominating politically, culturally, financially, methodologically and in every other respect. In my organisation we think we should cease the sending of personnel. It fosters self-interest and bureaucratic inefficiency. We should be putting money in the budget of the receiving organisations. (Anton Johnston, Sida: p.21 of Posthumus, 1997)

If I mention to 'non-development' acquaintances in Europe that I am writing on 'development ethics' the most common reaction is: ah yes, the corrupt misuse of aid, the jerry-built road washed away by the next rains, the cuts for members of the President's family (including the President). The words 'development' and 'ethics', filtered through the Western mass-media, convey this issue alone. Conditions attached to international aid about non-corruption are indeed necessary and worth enforcing. The work of Transparency International, for example, has great importance. These conditions are however not the only concerns, and there can be a trade-off between maximum possible reduction of 'diversion' of funds, by fierce and frequent monitoring and auditing against fixed targets, and leaving space for people to learn and grow through trial and error. Aid staff would (like the Red Cross) not automatically report apparently criminal activity, if doing so jeopardised their primary roles.

Consider now a lavishly well-paid (especially when visiting) visiting Northern aid agency official or aid-funded adviser berating some locals for sustained abuse of aid-funded resources--perhaps a not uncommon scene. (Klitgaard, 1991, recounts some versions.) Some questions arise.

- Does he or she expect Southerners to live like monks, when faced with the well-fed

and well-perked Northern visitor or expatriate?[11]

- Are the sorts of social pressures and commitments that our official or adviser might cite at home, as excuses for not having fulfilled other obligations, not accepted by him/her here for Southern counterparts?

- Can a different but clear form of corruption also be seen in the type and quality of work done by some visiting or longer-contract foreigners?

In each of these three respects, equality of stringency/leniency could be required, for credibility, equity and long-run effectiveness.

'Perks and perds' and their possible impacts deserve attention. The United Nations style *per diem* system, practiced through most of the aid world, perhaps has roots in colonialism. An official sent 'out-of-station' is paid large amounts per day in addition to his/her salary and travel costs, in order to cover all possible hazards of life amongst the heathen and to sustain a style of life sufficient to impress upon them the status and resources of his/her organisation. Rarely is the full amount spent. But is criticism here different from for example a niggardly advice not to provide or partake of free drinks from an international aid budget when welcoming visitors? I think yes. The 'no free drinks' advice misses the point of offering hospitality and displaying friendship. The difference, besides the scale of funds involved, is that rather than bringing people together, as a reception does, the lavish *per diem* might have both distancing and negative demonstration effects with respect to counterparts.

We must allow that individuals, from North or South, cannot organise their lives as if they were philanthropic foundations.[12] They live as group members, employees, spouses, parents, residents, in particular contexts of expectations and obligations, whose sufficient fulfilment is a condition for their continuing membership. However, if international aid officials and consultants cannot see themselves as also involved in forms of structured moral relationship with those they advise or impose on in the course of their work, then the actual relationships are likely to be shallow, shifting and anomic.

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[11] Our Thai observer contrasted the big money, big car (and no doubt tax-free) NGO expatriates, with others who live like locals, and build on local capacities and styles. He compared the latter group to the Thai ideal for (yes) Buddhist monks: those who lead despite having 'no guns and no prison'.

[12] 'Much of contemporary moral philosophy is concerned with... agent-relative principles... such principles are central to ordinary moral thought... Typical agent-relative principles.. [would] allow us to spend income on our friends rather than famine relief [DG: or rather than only on famine relief]... They may also permit each agent to devote attention to their own particular concerns in a manner disproportionate to their value considered from an impartial perspective' (Honderich ed., 1995:18-19; rearranged).

These relationships have their own minimum consistency requirements. In terms of use of aid staff's own money and time, the principle of in any case contributing one's fair share of a reasoned programme of support to those in extreme need (which would be more than many presently give) can form one requirement of moral consistency, when demanding commitments to equity by poor countries (Gasper, 1986:182-6). Failure to do so could affect even credibility to oneself.

The biggest contribution and duty we should expect from foreign staff remains in the quality of their work. Expatriates, short-term and long-term, consume a great proportion of aid and can vitally affect (well or badly) the capacitation and empowerment of local staff. We often read statements of the type 'Over 70% of X's so-called aid is spent in X or on X's nationals'. A Norwegian professional working for NORAD in Mozambique, or a Dutch aid scholarship for studies in the Netherlands, are indeed examples of tied aid, a form of conditionality: the goods or services must be sourced from the donor country and might thus be more expensive than from the open market. But they are still of significant potential benefit to the recipient and the main question is instead how well do they function, technically and in fitting with local needs and capacitation.[13]

The answer overall is hard to judge; the answer in specific cases is quite often disturbing. Neither innocuous nor rare are highly experienced and skilled but cynical foreign consultants ('which conclusion would you like?'; see e.g. Gasper, 1987). Klitgaard's unusually public, human and frank *Tropical Gangsters* contains a sad parade of too many useless aid-funded advisers: incompetent, easily discouraged, self-serving, or all of these. Take just two cases: 'Stanley', the Canadian mining and hydrocarbons expert, whose work day ran from 9.30 to 12 and 1.30 to 3, ending at the local lunch time; and 'Jean', the French consultant hired from aid funds, who 'would bomb back to Paris once every month or so, flying first class from Douala ("It is the company's policy", he said)' (p.177).

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[13] Crewe (1997:61) reports: 'Africa, Asia and South/Central America have over 150,000 expatriate residents or visitors working in development projects'. To give perspective, for a population of say 4.5 billion people this is equivalent to 150 expatriate residents *or* visitors in a country with the population of Norway or Denmark. Crewe identifies common problems with external short term staff, but extends the arguments too automatically to resident expatriates, helped by her use of 'expatriate' to cover both types.

Rather than accumulate anecdotes, let us identify different scenarios and options. Consider four (out of more) possibilities; all are non-empty sets. Situations vary of course across time, place, and sector.

1) Local staff are available, and better (because of greater local knowledge and sensitivity) or equally good and cheaper. So expatriates should not be used. Crewe (1997) and Chambers (1997a) recount 1980s' misconceptions and exaggerations by Northern staff concerning deforestation in the South (blamed on residents' collection of fuelwood), and the aid-funded wave of mis-oriented 'better' stove projects in which foreigners displaced local professionals, after which the projects were abandoned. Crewe adds that *locally designed* stoves are now selling well in many countries, oriented to actual consumer needs and wants.

2) Next, a situation the same as case 1) except that the foreign donor finds it less easy to work and keep influence through local staff, whereas it will be held accountable at home. To exemplify one common practice, Crewe describes her appointment as the inexperienced foreign 'advisor' to much more experienced domestic professional counterparts. Though sometimes innocuous, this sort of use of external 'experts' can help to apparently depoliticise decision-making--while in reality restoring it to the powerful, who choose and steer the 'experts'. (Crewe mistakes the practice for a consequence of the category 'development', but it is more widespread.) Even in terms of their own present criteria, donors should judge by *ex post* results, not seek solace through rituals of *ex ante* control; the implication may be to use locals more often.

3) Local staff are not more effective, nor more cost-effective; but can become so after a training-and-transition period that includes learning-by-doing and almost certainly some trial-and-error. Implication: train and support.

4) Local staff are not, and will not become, more effective or cost-effective, but employing them transfers money into a poor country (and, usually, to previously *relatively* poor people?) rather than to a Northern bank account. Implications here depend on, *inter alia,* the scale of the performance difference, the importance of the work concerned, and the degree of significance of exposing Northerners to sustained periods of work in the South. This last factor arises for the other cases too; its weight depends partly on how far the Northerners watch and learn in the South and communicate back in the North.

Other possibilities exist too, when Northern staff perform valuable training and capacity-building roles, or when mixed teams have advantages. Overall however the analysis tends towards a general policy of phased, but not total, localisation--as is happening. In some countries programmes are largely operated now through local staff and local consultants. This trend occurs even within a perspective of aid as discretionary charity, where funders have no obligations such as a duty to *co*-operate and work through local nationals. Many consider the pace of transfer too slow. It might occur faster if aid were seen instead as an 'imperfect obligation', where one has a duty to help, even though no obligation to help any given country or case. Acknowledgement of duty might bring perception of co-operation as a constituent obligation.

7. POWER, WORK-STYLES AND PERSONAL RELATIONS

> ...our mission's leader had sternly lectured a group of ministers in a class-roomlike setting at the Ministry of Education. He had simply laid down the law... In order to receive the loan for the economic rehabilitation project, Equatorial Guinea had been obliged to agree to a number of conditions... These measures made sense, but I recalled how some of them were invented: in a suite at the Impala fifteen months ago, in something of the fashion of "Let's see, what else would be a good idea...". (Klitgaard, 1991:73).

Aid and aid work require supportive attitudes. This is one benefit of exposure of Northerners in the South (and vice versa), though not to be pursued by displacing well-suited Southerners from jobs. The popularity of direct personal sponsoring of children and schools in poor countries might have lessons too.[14] An approach to aid as if it did not concern people and build friendships (not just 'friendship' as in the solidarity slogans) may get into trouble.

I earlier cited Klitgaard's *Tropical Gangsters* as illustrating the superiority of aiding and supporting local ownership of policies and projects. In a bifurcated colonial concoction state in the 1980s, enmeshed in structural economic crisis and years-long unresolved negotiations with the IMF, a locally owned and grounded policy framework gradually takes shape with the help of a sympathetic foreign advisor, and an agreement with the Fund is finally reached. In parallel to that account the book presents Klitgaard's relationships as an individual--at work, at play, friendly, 'businesslike', neutral,

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[14] It also carries warnings. Such support should not create invidious distinctions. Funds prompted by the story of a particular child should go to all children at his/her school or village; the sponsor should receive reports on that child but not expect that the child receive treatment not available to his/her peers. Needs of the children take priority over those of the affluent donors.

conflictual, and combinations of these. The parallelism is not for light relief, 'human interest' around a 'real' narrative of disembodied decision processes and impersonal socio-economic action. Rather it suggests the contribution of personal relations in establishing trust and helping strengthen capacities.

Klitgaard's intimate account of his work illustrates this theme more memorably than could generalities. We do not have to like Klitgaard or make him a moral exemplar to yet see lessons. He is a structural adjuster. He recounts his friendships with attractive local young ladies, oblivious of possible local reactions (male Guinean friends of the same age as the bevy of ladies are little visible in the book).[15] And, working in a key position in a miserably poor country, in effect almost equally involved in life and death matters as Slim's anguished NGO personnel, Klitgaard writes less of dilemmas (though something on those) or guilt, and more of surfing and partying. Depression and angst are probably not qualities demanded for 'hardship postings', rather an ability to work with others.

Centrally, the story conveys how relations with counterparts matter; in his case with a set of Ministers. Early on Klitgaard describes the orthodox model of interaction. A World Bank delegation lectures eight sullen Ministers like naughty schoolboys.

> Greetings were exchanged but their faces weren't smiling... One had his brow knotted in what looked like anger... Most were listening with their arms crossed. Heinz was laying it on them: the need for maintenance, the need for repairs, the need for a change of mentality about capital goods...
> Heinz finally finished. The Foreign Minister thanked him and asked the others for their comments. One minister complained that the amount of the proposed loan was too small. The Vice Minister of Finance said the project should be administered by the Ministry of Finance and should involve fewer expatriates. Heinz commented back. Then the meeting ended, stiffly. Class was over... (p.46)
> [According to a Latin American member of the later IMF-World Bank delegation:] 'All the power is in the hands of a clique from Mongomo. The country is very corrupt... You have to treat [the leaders] just like little children.... Don't discuss or show a lack of resolve, just tell them exactly what to do.' (p.73)[16]

If the two premises, on power-holding and corruption, were valid in general for Equatorial Guinea, the proposed corollary--dictate, don't discuss--is not. The Ministers with

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[15] Klitgaard ruefully records a visitor's comment: 'You guys have so much more money than they do. All the women want you because you have money and status and access to culture and fun and things that are just impossible for them to get otherwise. You have your projects with your offices and you have your trips back home.. You have too much power' (p.198).

[16] The IMF repeatedly humiliates the government by declaring unacceptable the expenditures for it to take its turn to host the annual meeting of the Central African Economic Union.

whom Klitgaard works are dedicated to their country (and understand it better than nearly any foreigner), intelligent, assiduous, determined, and not willing to be treated as children. Rendering them powerless, if even possible, would not build legitimacy and capacity. The alternative model of interaction worked better, for all; but required skill, effort and goodwill.

Barriers include mutual stereotyping. This is worse and more culpable on the funders' side but present on both.[17] Practices of blaming the victim (linked to often derisory levels of historical knowledge) and self-idealisation are common on the funder side, even though staff only administer (and share in) the aid funds rather than provide them. 'Giving builds up the ego of the giver, makes him superior and higher and larger than the receiver', warned John Steinbeck (1951:lxiv; cited by Klitgaard, 1991:13).

Thus a more downbeat, and more typical, example than Klitgaard's is the ham-fisted imposition by Sida of its own version of the logical framework approach [LFA] for its projects (*its* projects). In parallel to increasing talk of local ownership, building local capacity and so on, low-trust management imposes more and more, time-consuming, even humiliating, compulsory procedures upon recipients. Each donor specifies its own versions and Sida was not an exception--other than in later presenting critical reflections on its own behaviour (Gasper, 1997b: 4-5).

> 'ROPPS [result-oriented planning and project management; the Sida version of LFA] thus became one of many methods and systems which different donors have more or less forced on recipient countries' (Rylander, 1995:6).
> 'In some of the examples...it is clear that Sida's attitude has not been characterised by respect for its Zambian and Zimbabwean partners in cooperation... there does not seem to be a "corrective mechanism" which comes into action when unreasonable requirements have been made... a lack of respect for the development aspirations of the partner countries can be a "killing factor" for the LFA method' (ibid.:18).

This applies for development aid in general.

8. GUIDELINES, CODES OF ETHICS, CODES OF CONDUCT?

The types of choice and indeed dilemma we have looked at are standard fare in professional ethics. We cannot eliminate tensions and trade-offs. My commentary above contains conflicting notes, such as on when to enforce conditions and when not.

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[17] 'Europeans think in dichotomies, we don't', declares a distinguished African scholar, self-refutingly (quoted in Posthumus, 1997:15). Klitgaard (in a chapter on 'Them and Us') and Crewe give insights into mutual stereotyping and foreign staff tactics to claim superiority.

But codes and guidelines could make us more conscious and skilled in coping with the difficulties.

Banks suggests that the idea of professional codes prioritises a professional's role qua professional. She notes in turn three views of being a professional (1995:123): (i) as an official: the bureaucrat; (ii) as seller of highly skilled services: the independent professional; and (iii) as servant or even missionary: the committed idealist, whose ideals may concern inter-personal relations and/or structural change. The committed idealist role has suffered from the apparent implication, largely unworkable and perhaps even undesirable, that we should each spend most of our energies and incomes striving to reduce suffering. More workable and justifiable could be a duty that we each do our fair share (Gasper, 1986). In general, a competent practitioner understands and seeks to balance the various roles and values.

Let us distinguish four broad types of code or guidelines.

'Pointers' or informal guidelines point out issues and provide general advice; they involve neither absolute rulings nor an enforcement mechanism.

Codes of ethics are more formalised statements of general principles that can help provide identity and morale to a profession and a framework for more detailed codes of practice. Some are simply *more formalised guidelines*. Others are *directive codes of ethics* and become in places more determinate: certain types of action are absolutely prescribed or proscribed. In both variants there may be an enforcement mechanism for some matters (such as for plagiarism or mis-reporting of research results).

Codes of practice provide detailed guidance and regulations about many aspects of procedure (e.g. also about how and how much consultants should charge). They are often specific to a particular agency or sector.[18]

For the types of ethical issues in the conduct of aid that we have looked at in this paper I suggest that useful ethical guidelines are possible. Codes of practice in specific aid agencies, NGOs, consultancy organisations and so on could sometimes help too; but that is not my focus. I have doubts whether an effective general code of ethics more detailed and directive than guidelines is attainable, for reasons I will explain. However, experience with ethical codes and guidelines for development and relief is

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[18]:For example a draft code of conduct for NGDOs appeared in South Africa in 1997; NGDOs in Bangladesh reportedly agreed a code in 1995.

fairly recent. So I will refer to the nature of the aid cases that we have looked at, and to the longer and better studied experience with codes and guidelines in some possibly comparable fields of work.

Millerson (1964; summarised by Banks, 1995) looked at several professions and proposed *factors relevant to having a code of ethics*, including the following.

- The setting of the practice. A professional working alone needs guidance more than does an individual in an institutional setting, since the latter takes few decisions independently, Yet we must note the possibility of what professional ethics now calls 'administrative evil' in bureaucracies, and both the importance and difficulty of 'whistleblowing'.

- When trust relationships should prevail between professional and user, especially trust concerning life and property.

- High complexity of techniques involved. Codes can remind professionals to provide the best service, and counterbalance users' limited understanding.

- Direct contact with user. Direct personal contact can be abused (by either side).

Broadly these factors concern practitioners' need for guidance and clients' need for protection.

Each factor sometimes applies in international aid, but often not. Millerson was preoccupied with the type of profession that deals with individual user-clients. International aid's distance from its user-clients--they are not even fellow citizens, and are increasingly handled via Southern intermediary organisations--might raise both the dangers of unethical behaviour and the difficulties of countering it. Also usually less applicable to international aid are other predisposing factors: that a group of professionals aspires to be treated as a recognised profession; and seeks integration and a stronger shared identity, through a statement of values. Millerson added that introduction of a code is much harder when--as found in aid--there are no standardised forms of training, qualification, employment and work.

The substantial experience with codes in a partly comparable quasi-professional and inter-disciplinary field, social work, gives us a fuller impression of the matters codes can cover and warnings of the difficulties involved. Social workers in the North, argues Banks, are meant to tidy up around some of the contradictions of advanced capitalism. This bridge role, trying to help people who cannot cope by themselves, and preventing them from becoming socially harmful, is attempted within very limited

budgets and little scope for structural reform to reduce causes of the problems. It produces a stress-ridden and unloved profession. They become scapegoats for the tensions and hypocrisies of their societies, often attacked either as heavy-handed instruments of paternalism or as ineffective slaves to procedure who intervene too little and too late. Might one draw a comparable picture for aid workers internationally?

As surveyed by Banks, drawing on several other authors, experience with ethics codes in social work has been problematic.

- Some codes offer long, pious, *ad hoc,* poorly ordered lists of values (e.g. without distinctions between levels). These problems reflect standard cognitive and political difficulties in specifications of goals, though some improvement in ordering and logic is usually possible.

- Long lists of principles, even if well-ordered, do not always help much: the principles are typically vague and/or often conflicting or cry out for exceptions.[19] They serve then like proverbs, as a reminder or first intimation of ethical issues.

- Enforcement is very difficult, due to shortage of information. Rules and stated duties cannot substitute for attitudes of caring, compassion, and sympathy. To have more influence, codes should be part of initial and ongoing training which draws links between cases and principles.

- Values tend to be partly distinctive to each profession; it is harder to specify codes for multi-disciplinary teams.

- Similarly, the more diversity in values there is between users and professionals, and the more that users are supposed to be involved, the harder it becomes to write codes: 'To the extent that the professions are now expected to work *through* the community rather than *on* it, the position of codes of ethics has shifted from the centre of professional life to the margins' (Downie & Calman, 1987:244; cited by Banks, 1995:88-9).

Concerning the values covered, the social work experience carries a further warning. The codes stress relations to users and are near-silent on structural roots of social dysfunction. Responses to wider causal forces and injustices receive little or no attention, although most codes mention a commitment to social justice (Banks, p.77). The rele-

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[19] In social studies, a requirement of informed consent for research from those studied surely cannot extend to research on corruption, for example.

vant analogy for us would be a code or guidelines for development aid professionals that said little or nothing on potential roles and responsibility in trying to influence Northern policies, structures and ideologies which counteract and vastly outweigh development aid.

An underlying question concerns the meaning of being a professional: is it a calling, a lifetime vocation, or just a job? System reform is likely to place demands outside a forty hour work week. The issues apply in development aid too: should one's personal life and professional life embody the same principles (as proposed in the Swedish social workers' code), or is personal life quite separate (as in some other codes), or at least partly separate, so that one can more easily survive as a member with ties and obligations in one's own milieu ?

In international development circles, guidelines and codes of ethics are often viewed sceptically.[20] There can be no universal instructions book; each situation is somewhat unique. Directive codes are liable to become too definite, and to breed cynicism through their innumerable exceptions and lack of enforcement. Clear-cut rules can be too simple, a source of ('defensive practitioner') comfort more than of good choices, as was warned earlier for the case of relief NGOs. Guidelines attempt less and may achieve more. Unlike uniform answers, general principles do not mandate uniform treatment; for they must combine with case specifics to generate any conclusions.

The relevant criterion is not: are guidelines a sufficient tool to resolve all ethical problems? but: can they help? Some sets of guidelines are extremely brief, no more than a list of good intentions.[21] But other cases show that more can be said without vacuity. The British Sociological Association's Statement of Ethical Practice is fuller and more helpful, while clear that its role is 'to inform members' ethical judgements rather than to impose on them an external set of standards. The purpose is to make members

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[20] At the 1997 Netherlands NVCO conference on 'Moral Choices in Development Co-operation', a draft Code of Conduct for Development Workers (dating from 1993) brought forth doubts from Southern participants: what can codes do without enforcement mechanisms and sanctions? what can they do if hearts are untouched? (Posthumus, 1997:28). The Code contained: (a) very brief sets of guiding values; (b) proposed 'Guidelines', four pages of 'should' and 'should not' which in my terms are closer to a directive Code of Conduct and came with the idea of (c) a Commission to rule on complaints. It received much criticism when drafted and remains unadopted. Illustrating a different approach was the report for NVCO on 'Beyond Development Cooperation' (Sizoo ed., 1993), which offered not a Code but reflections on issues, more lively in both content and style and possibly more effective.

[21] E.g. the Society for Applied Anthropology's Statement on Professional and Ethical Responsibilities, or the ethics statement from the U.K. Political Studies Association.

aware of the ethical issues that may arise in their work, and to encourage them to educate themselves and their colleagues to behave ethically' (BSA, 1996:1); thus, in Schön's terms, to become 'reflective practitioners'.

Guidelines, well prepared, should help. They will require a mixed content, with attention to (deontological concerns with) treating persons with respect, and (consequentialist concerns with) promoting good effects, including where necessary through system-reform. The mid-1990s Code of Conduct for disaster response programmes, adopted by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and many relief NGOs, and the follow-up proposal for an ombudsman to encourage and guide application of the code, to a large extent fit this description, as examples of formalised guidelines. For 'Humanitarian emergencies... do not lend themselves to clear, explicit rules and set-piece enforcement procedures... an ombudsman ideally should...fulfil the roles of monitor, facilitator and advocate of reform... rather than as a controlling or policing agent' (OPWG, 1998:23-24). The few exceptions to this style in the Code reflect the traditional Red Cross absolute rejection of pursuing a political agenda - and indeed what else could be said publicly?

Guidelines and codes are not a substitute for attitudes of care and qualities of character: rules have to be interpreted, and are sometimes lacking or inadequate, and many matters lie beyond the realm of obligation. We need to attend to ethics of care and ethics of character as well as ethics of justice.[22]

9. REVIEW AND CONCLUSION

In discussing ethics of development aid, I considered it as part of an emergent quasi-professional ethics around an existing quasi-professional field of development practice and theory. There was little work on ethics of aid until about the mid 1970s. Its growth since then reflects New Right attacks on cross-border concessional transfers; increasing criticism from the South; various doubts and disappointments in the aid world, for example during the 1990s in 'complex emergencies', and increased concern about ethical dilemmas and risks from misjudged action (Section 2). The rise of

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[22] '*Ethics of care*' have been advocated by some feminist philosophers as an alternative to rule-seeking '*ethics of justice*'. '*Ethics of virtue*' stress the role of good character; Slote (1995) notes various types, for example where virtues supplement general rules, as dispositions to obey the rules or behave in ways that further the goals adopted in the rules, or in skilled and well-motivated interpretation and use of the rules in cases. In some usages, virtue conduces to going *beyond* duty (Gasper, 1986: 182-3, 197-8).

NGDOs has created a larger market for explicit aid ethics, including on the delicate issues of operating style, not only issues of whether, how much, and for which countries and activities. By the late 1990s the body of work on aid ethics has become extensive and diverse. The questions we touched on each deserve books, and can lead us to further matters concerning ideologies, power, and control of knowledge (see the sombre concluding analysis in Saasa & Carlsson, 1996).

I have concentrated on issues about the manner and conditions under which aid is provided, with reference to how these are influenced by conceptions of the moral basis for aid (Section 3). Most donors accept little effective responsibility (except when there are successes). Rich country donors have adopted self-interest and charity as the basis more often than obligation. The charity stance--that aid is not given as duty nor received as of right--has influenced how aid has been disbursed and evaluated: usually subject to numerous conditions and to be accounted for in every detail with reference to pre-set input and output targets. The obligations are held to be the recipient's, to do as advised and show one has done so; except for the donor's obligation--to its fund providers--to check how the funds are spent.

Tensions exist between growing awareness of our limited understanding and control, and hence of the risks of doing harm (Sections 2, 3, 5), and the tendency yet to seek security and certainty through detailed pre-set plans and conditions (Section 4). I argued that this tendency rests on insecure assumptions, of strong and superior donor knowledge and unreliable yet controllable recipients. Considerable evidence exists of the superiority of co-determination in aided projects and policies -- for mobilising information, ideas and commitment and for strengthening capabilities -- *thanks to* its acceptance of recipient rights and dignity.

I further suggested in Sections 4 through 7 that even a charity view of aid brings important obligations concerning manner of operation. Obligations of moral consistency could include (i): to not demand that others do what one is not willing to practice oneself; and (ii): to contribute one's share towards what appear reasonable programmes, regardless of whether others (yet) do. A general obligation of effectiveness requires more specifically that: (iii) donors be oriented to achievements, not only conscience-salving through the 'performance' of accountability rituals. And it then seems to imply that, (iv): *ex post* evaluation be wide-ranging and learning-oriented; (v) aid-ers should work with others by treating them as people, adults, and in collegial fashion, not in gen-

eral as children or delinquents; and, typically (vi) should *co*-operate and work through local nationals. These last two claims are contingent on various considerations influencing effectiveness, rather than being inherent obligations - a status that some people might however grant them on other moral grounds.

Charity will retain a role even in a world with aid reconceptualised in 'development compacts' or regimes of human rights. Its other directly relevant dictionary meaning is: 'kindness, benevolence'. Further meanings are 'tolerance in judging others' and 'love of one's fellow humans', holding others dear. Charity is non-obligatory, discretionary, *and* commendable, a virtue. The 'do-your-share' principle matches what is feasible as a universal codified requirement; but superogatory generosity remains desirable. When we look at development organisations, they typically rely on generosity in giving *of oneself,* in time and spirit not merely money. In both government and non-government milieux, from global to local, the assiduous and inspiring leader -- the James Grant, Mahbub Ul Haq, Mohammed Yunus -- who for example defines, designs and brokers share-arrangements remains vital.

I suggested finally that there is indeed scope for useful *guidelines* on aid ethics in the sense of pointers, advice and sometimes attention-commanding indicative codes; and raised some doubts whether codes of a more definite directive type will have the subtlety, flexibility, and vivacity required (Section 8). I wonder how frequently we can sustain conclusions of '*Always* do A, never do Z'. Consider again the question of appropriate levels of hospitality using development aid funds. Creating a suitable ethos requires good judgement rather than directive codes and statutes. Such a choice of approach is comparable to that for a reflective rather than a defensive practitioner stance. 'Guidelines' in my usage are (unlike directive codes) ways to promote discussion, not to substitute for it. They are only one way, and are not self-implementing. Other ways to widen or refresh awareness of issues and options are essential too, plus promoters of action, otherwise guidelines alone will gather dust on the shelves.

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