

# GLOBAL ETHICS IN A PLURAL WORLD

by

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Nationalism, democracy and the market economy are the three ideas that have dominated the political and economic history of our times. They form the basis for a social philosophy that holds the nation-state to be the most appropriate expression of political sovereignty. They require this sovereignty to be exercised through representative democracy, the rule of law, free speech, the protection of individual rights and perhaps, secularism in mundane matters. This school of thought argues for a market economy, with modest public interventions, as the most workable form of economic organisation.

It is a philosophy which has been challenged at many times in the past, most notably by imperialism with respect to the first element, by fascism with respect to democracy and by communism with respect to the market economy.

Imperialism and fascism were no longer influential as ideologies after the Second World War and, after the collapse of communism in Europe in the late eighties, there was a sense that we had come to a defining moment - the phrase used was "the end of history"<sup>2</sup>. From this point on, it was argued, the world could be put on auto-pilot, ideological differences were at an end, and it was just a question of the gradual extension of market economy and liberal democracy to the rest of the world.

Since then there has been a reaction to this ideology, a growing recognition that it has not delivered even in terms of its own objectives and that it has not given people the freedom or the equality that it promises. We see the persistence of poverty, homelessness and marginalization; the phenomenon of growing unemployment, the spread of deviant criminal behaviour including drug abuse and trafficking; the horrors of ethnic violence and the obscenity of ethnic cleansing. These factors have shown the limitations of an ideology which many thought was going to lead to a convergence of the world system to some Kantian ideal.

*A Loss of Faith*

The disenchantment with the direction of development and the emerging world order relates to what are seen as departures of the actual from the ideal for all three elements: nationalism, democracy and the market economy.

Take first the principle of nationalism. The nation state was and still is seen by many as the basis for self-government. Its origins lie in, what could be described as, wars of identity and the struggle for self-determination. But what is the defining characteristic of the 'self' in the terms 'self-government' and 'self-determination'?

Language, race, religion, tribal bonds, historical antecedents, ecological boundaries have all worked to give some groups a sense of togetherness and common purpose as also a sense of difference vis-à-vis others. Nations were sometimes constituted from such groups with a long history of cohabitation and interaction in a given territory. In others this sentiment has emerged as a group came through the traumas of wars and revolutions. It is this sense of an 'imagined community' that confers legitimacy on the rulers and rules of governance. The link with democracy comes from the necessary belief in the equality of all citizens, for if this is denied there are not one but several nations within a given territory.

Today many of these 'imagined communities' are in disarray. Many states are far from this sense of common purpose of a united community. Some even reject the notion of equality for all who reside within their borders. Old identities are being rediscovered and new ones being forged so that the 'self' which seeks political expression in 'self-determination' is less accommodating and more parochial than what the present political geography of the world would allow. At the same time, while these fragmentary identities find political expression, the sovereign states themselves are losing their autonomy because economic, ecological, cultural and even criminal structures and processes are increasingly transnational. The nation-state, the principal expression of political identity at present, is under threat from fragmentation and globalization.

The democratic ideal is that of a community governed by decisions arrived at by all citizens after an informed public debate. Politics is not a profession but an obligation on all citizens. There is no special class of persons who are political leaders. Leadership, to the extent required, is provided by citizens who have other callings, political amateurs, so to speak. The working democracies of today depart substantially from this ideal - politics has become a profession, the distance between leaders and citizens has widened and public opinion is formed from superficial information supplied by an often manipulated media industry.

If ever there was an ideal democracy, one can conceive of what we have today as the result of a linked set of changes in:

- Source of effective authority from citizens' assemblies to elected representative to party bureaucracies;
- Modalities of communication between leadership and citizenry from public meetings to parliamentary debate to media outreach;

- Content of communication from substantive debates to slogans and sound-bites to spin-doctoring;
- Quality of political leadership from statesmanship to factional politicking to manipulative public relations;
- Ends of political activity from the good of the community to the good of the group to the good of the leadership.

Our sense of identity requires that we think of ourselves as part of this or that community, actual or imagined. A sense of community derives from shared values about economic, social and political relations. In the past they were derived perhaps from a shared religion and communities were organized around temples, mosques and churches. In our more secular times we think of ourselves as part of the community which inhabits the city or the settlement in which we live. Yet, what we are seeing is a breakdown of communities and a loss of institutional effectiveness. The net result of this debasement of democracy is, at the very least, a mistrust of ‘politicians’ and ‘politics’, low voter turnouts, and the growth in influence of wealthy, well organised special interest groups who often challenge the fundamentals of the liberal ideal. Thus we face a potential loss of legitimacy for the government in the eyes of the people whose sovereignty is the constitutional basis for democracy.

The economic counterpart of the democratic ideal is supposed to be a market economy based on perfect competition, freedom of choice and fairness of outcomes. The departures of the actual from the ideal are even more marked in the operations of the market economy - the concentration of wealth and market-power, barriers to entry and other departures from equal opportunity, an unacceptable inequality of outcomes and the unequal distribution of the burdens of market instability. Even the strongest believers in the virtues of the free market would recognise that in some cases the underlying conditions for the efficient and equitable operation of markets do not hold, for instance when there are externalities or the goods exchanged are public goods. But even here the fundamentalist would seek procedures that simulate a relationship that mimics the market. There are also differences of opinion among those who are less fanatical but who accept the value of a free market economy about the nature and extent of justifiable restraint on the free exchange of goods and services and the values and objectives that define justifiability.

The problem is not simply one of market failure but whether civic virtue and solidarity is possible in a capitalist world. In the nineteenth century there was a vigorous debate in the United States as to whether industrialisation and wage labour were consistent with maintaining the virtuous and independent citizenry that a self-governing republic required. Some thinkers, for example Thomas Jefferson, believed that political liberty was safe only when no one was economically beholden to another.<sup>3</sup> Today when confronted by vast corporate bureaucracies and a small plutocracy of corporate leaders, who are often transnational and for the most part only accountable to shareholders, the loss of agency can and does lead to a certain lethargy in the exercise of civic rights and responsibilities.

The market organises relations between persons in terms of the equality of worth of the goods and services exchanged implying that such a cost-benefit calculus should underlie all relations of this nature, or at least those that involve transactions in goods and services that, on account of their scarcity, have a potential market value. A contrary view would argue for altruism and solidarity, for loyalty and responsibility and for custom and tradition in relations between persons - not just in familial relations but also in social and political relations and in the exchange of goods and services. It would demand that space should be created for unrequited transfers of goods and services and value-based bounds on the outcome of market based relations.<sup>4</sup>

The problem is, therefore, that the system of nation-states, organized as market-based democracies, is being undermined by globalization and fragmentation, the debasement of democracy, the inequities of the market the erosion of solidarity and the decay. There is a pervasive sense of a loss of control and a sense of moral decay that is alienating individuals and vulnerable groups from the social and political structures of which they are a part and marginalizing countries from the international system. What we have are groups excluded from:

- Development processes-which manifests itself as poverty
- The economy- which shows up as unemployment
- The mainstream of political, social and cultural processes which shows up as marginalization, discrimination and rootlessness,
- Security networks- which show up as vulnerability

The central issue of our time is to address this problem of exclusion, alienation and anonymity within each society and the interactions between them. This will require us to reexamine the paradigms that guide economic, social and political policy at the national and global and recognize that these policies must be driven by an ethical consensus.<sup>5</sup> The need for the latter is perhaps greatest at the level at which the instrumentalities of power are the weakest. Hence we focus next on the need for a global ethic.

### ***The Need for a Global Ethic***

The starting point must be to recognise that the basic principles that define political, social and economic structures cannot be value-free. There is a great deal of talk today about life in the global village. As Kofi Annan, the Secretary-General of the United Nations has said: "If that village is to be a truly desirable place for all of us on the planet, it must be embedded in and guide by broadly shared values and principles"<sup>6</sup>

The conception of an individual in the ideology of liberal democracy and free-market economies is that of a person who is isolated and unencumbered and who has rights and entitlements. This ideology demands that political and economic processes be capable of reconciling conflicts between the rights of different individuals and offer procedural justice. The paradigm for interpersonal relations, at least between strangers, is the legally binding contract. But, in fact, individuals accept constraints on their rights

and entitlements not simply out of respect for another person's rights and entitlements but out of a sense of obligation to history, family, neighborhood, nation, religion, ethnic group and even to humanity as a whole. In politics not only do people need procedural arrangements for reconciling conflicts of rights but also an active citizenship which encompasses commitment to civic virtue and a willingness to accept obligations as a member of a neighborhood, a city, a country, the world. In economics they accept the pursuit of self-interest; but the "ice water of calculation" is warmed by a sense of solidarity and social responsibility<sup>7</sup>.

Equality before the law and in the political process as well as equal opportunity in the market place are important but not enough to describe what people look for to satisfy their sense of obligation and belonging. Human beings are not disembodied pursuers of maximum utility or some other abstract principle. Historical antecedents, cultural traditions, their religious beliefs, and their unconscious psyche also shape their behaviour. They see themselves, not as isolated and unencumbered individuals but as members of a family, clan, community, nation and, hopefully, of the human race- with obligations that arise from such memberships. Nor can we ignore this on the grounds that these attachments are matters of sentiment and not of principles. This may be relevant in a philosophical analysis of the coherence and justifiability of ethical belief. But if our interest is more in motivations that affect choice, then we need to recognize that each of these identities finds expression in the aims that they pursue in social, political and economic relations.

Values matter, but values differ. This diversity would perhaps be the case even in a community that is homogenous in terms of its religious beliefs, history, methods of upbringing, and education. But today the jurisdictions that are relevant for social discourse are more diverse in all of these respects and range, in geographical terms, from the global to the local. Multiculturalism is the norm at the national and, most certainly, at the global level. Our problem is to reconcile diverse cultural loyalties and the need for a sense of community with that which is good and valuable in the liberal ideal, the sense of tolerance and respect for others. Parochialism, fundamentalism and communalism, which are so frequently sources of violence and stress, are the enemies not just of a liberal order that is neutral between ethical alternatives, but also of a plurilateral global ethic.<sup>8</sup>

If a global community did not exist then we would not need a global ethic. The world is a community, in part, because all who are in it share in risks, such as those that arise from weapons of mass destruction, environmental stress, the globalization of crime and the interdependence of economic prospects. In the words of Jurgen Habermas the world today is "an 'involuntary community' founded on the sharing of risks"<sup>9</sup> However, interdependence is not the only reason why we need a global ethic. There is also a sense in which the equal moral worth of every individual is central to the idea of democracy and therefore requires us to agree upon the moral consequences of this sense of a universal human community.

But does a global ethic have to be a universalising ethic? The European Enlightenment believed in the notion that human nature has some universal

characteristics and that humans have shared ends, which are enough to bring them together in social institutions informed by a universal morality. It is a belief that underlies the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, which is a product of a global process that involved participants from many cultural traditions, and related efforts to articulate a shared vision of human dignity that should define relations between and amongst individuals and the State.

Universalising claims can arise from some notion of the ‘ends of history’, or in a more recent instance from an empirical judgment that we have reached the end of history. Western imperialism was based to a certain extent on such a notion with its cry of “manifest destiny,” and even Engels justified territorial conquests in Europe on the basis of “the right of civilisation as against barbarism, of progress as against stability”<sup>10</sup>. A global ethic that draws largely on just one cultural tradition will never attract the willing allegiance across cultures without which it loses its very purpose. It must draw on all ethical traditions and leave room for diversity in its interpretation and application.

The ethical impulses that drive individual behaviour are seldom monolithic. Most of us are confronted by moral dilemmas that we resolve in one way at one time and in another way at some other time. We do not expect to follow the same moral standard in every context in which we are required to judge the acceptability of acts that are basically similar. Actions that we would consider selfish in the context of a family may well be acceptable in a larger context of the economy. Behaviour that would be criticised as inconsiderate of others in a neighbourhood may be tolerated in wider geographical context. Whether an act is considered cruel depends, regrettably, on whether the victim is a friend or a foe.

The real hope for a global ethic rests precisely on this incoherence in the moral character of individuals. In the words of Sir Stuart Hampshire:

We are citizens who have a feeling for justice in public affairs, only because we have faction-ridden souls, ambivalent desires and the experience of contrary impulses...and we are persons who are normally on dispute with ourselves<sup>11</sup>

The threat comes from fundamentalists of different persuasions who want a single set of rules to apply to all persons, at all times, in all contexts, an attitude captured well in the French term for such persons - *integriste*.<sup>12</sup> Fundamentalism involves a type of ethical imperialism where a group seeks to apply its beliefs beyond the group, without the willing acceptance of these beliefs by the others. It often involves the misapplication of norms relevant for one sphere, say religious practices, to another, say community relations. Above all fundamentalists seek to apply rules rigidly, without the tempering effect of compassion that allows one to respect and tolerate differences and even forgive lapses, as the less doctrinaire often do, at least for those who have a claim on their affections. But we must also recognise that fundamentalism thrives when there is a moral vacuum. As Michael Sandel says: “Fundamentalists rush in where liberals fear to tread”<sup>13</sup>

A problem of a different character arises from the close links that subsist between religion and morality in most cultures. Monotheistic religions are virtually required to

believe in the equality, at least of all believers, before the one God. Some of the proselytising monotheistic religions require the believer to convert others to the faith. Thus their treatment of non-believers and their incapacity to accommodate gods other than their “One” leads to intolerance, not just of other concepts of divinity but also of differences in moral codes, cultural norms and social practices.

Some would argue that ethical norms are not comparable across cultures and that there is no universal basis for defining the right and the good. Such relativism is a good corrective to the fierce rigour of fundamentalism. However it does not provide a basis for devising acceptable procedures for the functioning of multi-cultural jurisdictions that, on account of interdependence, sentiment or mere historical accident, require a common framework of norms and core principles.

What could these core principles be? At the very least one can accept a thin consensus that, in any dispute, particularly a moral dispute, all sides should be heard. John Rawls developed a political conception of justice based on fairness and described a procedure that would allow persons with differing comprehensive moral concerns to agree on a basic structure for social cooperation.<sup>14</sup> But if we stop here, and bracket all ethical concerns other than fairness and procedural justice, we may be aiming too low. A stronger consensus may be possible if we recognise that some virtues like respect for life, charity, love and truthfulness find a place in wide variety of ethical belief systems. and that the challenge is to draw out the implications of this commonality for a global ethic.

If people who are in a position to choose always make similar choices, for instance life to death, freedom to slavery, good health to illness, knowledge to ignorance, then, as Brian Barry suggests, such a revealed preference could provide a set of core principles that would allow us to judge at least some elements of every society and provide therefore the principal elements of a global ethic.<sup>15</sup> Judging by the outcome of recent global processes, the elements for a shared vision of a good and just global society could be<sup>16</sup>

- An economy that provides the material means and public services required for human dignity;
- A sense of responsibility for the welfare of others, particularly future generations;
- Commitment to equality of status and of opportunity;
- Respect for diversity, the right of others to be different;
- Political processes that are inclusive and participatory;
- Commitment to non-violence-an acceptance that differences can be resolved in peace

These broad principles provide but a beginning; the challenge is to devise a process that can draw out the implications of this commonality for a global ethic.

### ***The Dialogue of Cultures***

Any moral code that is sought to be applied across societies and cultures must be based on freely given consent, therefore on consensus.<sup>17</sup> How we get to a formulation of

a universal morality applicable across societies and cultures is as important as the end result itself. Samuel Fleischacker, in his contribution to the UNESCO Universal Ethics project urges us to recognise that “moral norms tend to be inextricable from cultural ones.”<sup>18</sup> He argues for a cultural dialogue open to both similarities and differences across traditions which allows each to be acknowledged, understood, even delighted in, and rejects legislative or philosophical approaches that do not permit the “slow building of respect that a global ethic needs.”<sup>19</sup> We need more than just a respect for the rights of others to be different. We need empathy and understanding. These cannot be secured by law but only by a meeting of hearts and minds. That meeting should be the real purpose of the cultural dialogue.

The dialogue can take place only if there is an underlying sense of urgency, built perhaps on the sense of shared risks and a need to find a *modus vivendi* for living together. If it is to be constructive, it cannot be simply a confrontation of opposites. It would need an attitude well captured in John Rawls’ precepts of reasonable discussion put forward in his discussion of a process to identify an “overlapping consensus” among persons with differing moral doctrines:

First the political discussion aims to reach reasonable agreement, and hence so far as possible it should be conducted to serve that aim. Second, when we are reasonable we are prepared to find substantive and even intractable disagreements on basic questions. Third, when we are reasonable, we are ready to enter discussion crediting others with a certain good faith.<sup>20</sup>

The dialogue concerning the need to develop a global ethic cannot be simply a diplomatic process designed to negotiate treaties and covenants between sovereign governments. Diplomatic dialogue is important as long as the monopoly of authority and legitimacy stays where it is. But governments cannot be separated from the culture or, more correctly to use the plural, the cultures that support them. Religious leaders, teachers, academics and intellectuals, community leaders, authors and artists, lawyers, doctors, and a host of ordinary citizens shape the ethical premises that guide these cultures. They are the ones who have to be reached in the cultural dialogue for they will determine the possibility of a consensus far more than the formal participants in a diplomatic process.

A dialogue between cultures must recognize that we think of ourselves not just as unencumbered individuals but also as members of a variety of religious groups and communities and as inheritors of diverse cultural traditions. The dialogue has to be structured to give expression to all of these identities not just through individuals but also as collectivities. The dialogue should not be separated from the normal contacts between communities, cultures and religions. What we need is an ecumenical spirit, a willingness to talk and to listen where and when moral questions arise in these contacts.

Another ingredient for a successful dialogue is “the habit of argument within solidarity”<sup>21</sup> This means the acceptance of responsibility for the well-being of one’s fellow members in a community so that solidarity is seen not as charity but as empowerment, as a necessary condition for the survival and development of the community, as an ingredient in the cement that binds it together.



But is there some sentiment that binds together all humans, some type of species loyalty that goes beyond local and national allegiances? In a sense the great global religions did create a supranational consciousness. A Muslim or a Christian or a Buddhist shares common beliefs and even a certain sense of community with fellow believers in other countries and cultures. In our more agnostic time a sense of community can emerge as education, travel and communication break down barriers of strangeness and the practical requirements of economic, ecological and political interdependence bring people and nations together in contracts, covenants and treaties.

In the world of diplomacy and commerce relationships and commitments are moving beyond the bilateral structures of colonialism to a broader multilateralism and deeper forms of regional integration. Global and regional networks of activist groups, professional and trade associations are establishing webs of influence over diplomatic and commercial processes. The United Nations and a host of other multilateral organisations provide the platform for negotiation and dialogue that increasingly engages what could be described as an international civil society.<sup>22</sup>

Two features of these multilateral processes are of particular importance for the emergence of a global ethic. The first is that the diplomatic process is driven not just by the balance of power but also by the search for rule based international regimes for regulating relations between states even in situations of conflict. Agreements that have been concluded for managing international commerce and for coping with specific environmental problems and shared resources beyond national jurisdiction. These compacts are based not just on the recognition of interdependence and mutual benefit, but also on what could be described as ethical principles involving an agreement on what constitutes right and good behaviour. This ethical dimension is even more explicit in the agreements that deal with human rights, humanitarian and refugee relief, development assistance, and certain aspects of disarmament. The point here is not that these agreements are adequate but that they do seek to set a standard of acceptable behaviour, which, regrettably, is not always observed.

The second feature is the growing involvement of civil society in the multilateral process. Local and national activists have come together in global networks to lobby and agitate for human rights, women's advancement, equal opportunity for the disabled, the protection of the elderly, the eradication of poverty, worker's rights, the protection of the environment, development support and debt relief for the materially impoverished countries and other such causes. They are driven by ethical impulses that cut across the boundaries of nations and cultures. Precisely because such activist groups are outside the formal structures of national governance and the system of states, their emergence as international collectivities provides a basis for moving beyond the balance of power to a norm based world order. By conveying to the powerless the sense that they are not alone they help to counter the helplessness engendered by the vast bureaucracies of power. And, as in the case of the global religions they generate a fellow-feeling and a sense of a community of concern that cuts across other, more parochial loyalties. This educative,

socializing function of the political process is as its substantive purpose and is crucial for the emergence of a civic identity.<sup>23</sup>

In a fragmentary way a global civic identity is emerging and Richard Falk for instance has spoken of a new ‘global citizenship...premised upon global or species solidarity’<sup>24</sup>. It is this sense of global citizenship that can confer legitimacy and moral authority on the institutions of global governance. There is however a danger that a gulf may emerge between global activists and transnational players who are a part of this global civic community and others in their societies and cultures that remain tied to more parochial identities. Diplomats, corporate leaders, globe-trotting academics and international activists may think of themselves as global citizens. But in the political processes that matter at the local or even national level, they are a minority. It is impractical to imagine that a global ethic or a cosmopolitan identity can replace more parochial loyalties based on history, cultural traditions and religious beliefs. A way has to be found to link the global with the parochial and allow them to coexist.

### ***An Ordered Pluralism***

Those of us who are not fierce fundamentalists have multiple loyalties and, corresponding to this, multi-faceted identities. In some contexts, say survival in a famine, we may place the interests of our family above the interests of the community while in certain others, like isolating a family member with a communicable disease, the reverse may be the case. Similarly in voting for budgets and taxes we may place the interests of the community above those of the country but not so if the defence of national territory is at issue. There is no hierarchy here with one level of loyalty always superior to another. In this sense a global ethic has to be thought of not as being hierarchically superior but, more modestly, as something that applies when we consider our responsibilities as human beings to be more important than our loyalties to a nation or neighbourhood or family. The central problem of a global ethic is to secure an agreement on how and when these different loyalties should be determined.

The process of arriving at and the content of a global ethic have to include within it the rules that would allow the latitude of interpretation and application that can accommodate the diversity of ethical concerns that is the reality of the world today. Mireille Delmas-Marty argues for an ordered pluralism that seeks initially to harmonise moral codes rather than unify them. This approach recognises, what the European Court of Human Rights acknowledges as the ‘national margin of appreciation’, a margin that may vary with the strength of the consensus on each principle, and that is founded on a process whose legitimacy is derived as much from a consensus building in civil society as from the law making power of sovereign States.<sup>25</sup>

The central element of an “ordered pluralism” must be an agreement on what is relevant where. This may not be as definite as setting an agenda for a negotiating process and the areas that are agreed to be of common ethical concern may expand over time. Even today we would accept our obligation to act as part of a human community at the expense, if necessary of other loyalties, to stop genocide, prohibit slavery, assist innocent

victims of war, strife and disaster, or protect children. Tomorrow, we may be willing to extend our sense of obligation to other areas like eradicating poverty or protecting freedom of belief.

The expansion of this area of common concern depends not so much on a shared theology but on the evolution of each person's conscience, which may be shaped as much by literature, art and the mass media as by philosophical debate. A cultural dialogue that accepts the legitimacy of all ethical traditions and then tries to find common ground, not through disputation but through empathy and understanding stands a better chance of arriving at a core that would command widespread allegiance than a more formal diplomatic process. The time for diplomacy and formal agreements comes later when a developing consensus needs to be crystallised in a more coherent form and be given the legitimacy of legislative approval.

We must also accept that a global ethic will have a degree of fuzziness which allows varying interpretations of a common principle. Take free speech for instance - one must accept that each culture will define it in a manner that is consistent with its norms of appropriate social behaviour. If such a margin of interpretation is not allowed than an agreement can only be realised when norms of acceptable behaviour are more uniform across cultures. Allowing for a margin allows for evolution, and over time, the margins may become narrower. The actual outcome of an ordered pluralism based on a cultural dialogue may well be untidy but it would have the strength of an ethic that resides in the heart rather than the head.

An ordered pluralism is a way of defining the ethics of tolerance. It specifies limits to tolerance in the form of some inviolable norms that we all accept as a necessary consequence of our humanity. It circumscribes a space for tolerance in some areas where an agreement is fuzzy and leaves a margin for interpretation. It seeks a better understanding of differences in other areas where a consensus does not exist. An ordered pluralism is a middle path between sectarian fundamentalism that seeks to overwhelm all other ethical traditions and a relativism that is content to let all ethical traditions function independently of one another.

Global interdependence and our sense of common humanity require that we develop an ethic strong enough to provide a basis for global cooperation on many issues. This paper has focused on the cultural dialogue and ordered pluralism required to implement such an ethic. This approach may also be relevant within nations that have a multiplicity of cultures and ethical traditions. Beyond this, social cohesion at the national level requires that citizenship be seen as a source of obligations to others and as a basis for individual rights. Citizenship must also be exercised, not just through constitutional structures of governance, but also through a civil society organized in interest groups, community associations, municipal institutions and advocacy bodies. A global ethic would amount to little if it is not accompanied by measures to bring democracy closer to people and make markets more mindful of equity. These programmatic dimensions, however, are beyond the scope of this paper.

Democracy began with a cry for liberty, equality, and fraternity. We have achieved much with respect to the first and at least recognized a commitment to the second of these goals. But the third has been overwhelmed by individualism. The principal task of a global ethic is to correct this neglect and assert the obligations of solidarity.

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<sup>1</sup> The views expressed in this are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of the United Nations. They draw on various statements made by him at preparatory meetings for the World Summit on Social Development, held at Copenhagen, 1992. His principal debt is to the Coordinator of this Copenhagen Summit, Jacques Baudot, and to the organising spirit of the Triglav Circle, Barbara Baudot, for their insistence on recognising the ethical dimension of social development.

<sup>2</sup> Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man*, (New York, The Free Press, 1992). In fairness to Fukuyama one must note his later work which recognises the perils of amoral individualism. See Francis Fukuyama, *Trust, The Social Virtues and the Creation of Prosperity*, (New York, The Free Press, 1995).

<sup>3</sup> Michael J. Sandel, *Democracy and its Discontents*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996) 177

<sup>4</sup> Minimum wage legislation, labour rights, social welfare provisions and development assistance are all examples of value based bounds or unrequited transfers.

<sup>5</sup> This programmatic dimension is not developed in this paper.

<sup>6</sup> United Nations, *Partnerships for a Global Community: Annual report on the Work of the Organization, 1998*, by Kofi Annan, (1998) 6

<sup>7</sup> Karl Marx argued that the logic of cost-benefit calculation would inform all social relations in a capitalist economy

<sup>8</sup> The call for a global ethic has come recently from Commission on Global Governance in their report, *Our Global Neighbourhood*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995). Also UNESCO, *Our Creative Diversity*, by the World Commission on Culture and Diversity, 1996.

<sup>9</sup> Jurgen Habermas, *La paix perpetuelle, le bicentenaire d'une idee kantienne*, Cerf, 1996 quoted in, Mireille Delmas-Marty, "Three Challenges to a Common Law for Humanity", in *Archive of Participant Contributions in the Universal ethics Project*, (Paris: UNESCO, 1998), 86

<sup>10</sup> Quoted in Brian Barry, "Against Cultural Relativism", *Archive of Participant Contributions in the Universal ethics Project*, (Paris: UNESCO, 1998), 65

<sup>11</sup> Sir Stuart Hampshire, "Address to Second Meeting of the UNESCO Universal Ethics Project" in *Archive of Participant Contributions in the Universal ethics Project*, (Paris: UNESCO, 1998).

<sup>12</sup> This usage of the French word "integriste" as a better substitute for fundamentalist is suggested in Sir Ralf Dahrendorf, "Towards the Twenty-First Century" in *The Oxford History of the Twentieth Century* eds. Michael Howard and Wm. Roger Louis, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).

<sup>13</sup> Sandel, 322

<sup>14</sup> John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971); John Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993)

<sup>15</sup> Brian Barry, "Against Cultural Relativism", *Archive of Participant Contributions in the Universal ethics Project*, (Paris: UNESCO, 1998), 69

<sup>16</sup> The global processes that have dealt with ethical issues include all of the processes that deal with Human Rights and the cycle of UN Conferences held in the nineties, notably the Conference on Environment and Development held at Rio de Janeiro in 1992, the World Conference on Human Rights held at Vienna in 1993, the Conference on Population and Development, held at Cairo in 1994, the World Summit on Social

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Development, held at Copenhagen in 1995 and the Fourth World Conference on Women held at Beijing in 1995.

<sup>17</sup> The Latin “con-sensus” means “feeling with”. This is presumably obscured for people who misspell it with a c which suggest - if anything - some sort of counting procedure”. See Brian Barry, “Against Cultural Relativism”, 56

<sup>18</sup> Samuel Fleischaker, “From Cultural Diversity to Universal Ethics: Three Models” in *Archive of Participant Contributions in the Universal ethics Project*, (Paris: UNESCO, 1998), 102. According to Fleischaker, *op.cit.*, the term “culture” was coined in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century by the followers of Herder “to find a secular replacement for [the] network of daily practices that religions had once underwritten.”

<sup>19</sup> Ibid. 109,110

<sup>20</sup> John Rawls, “The Domain of Political and Overlapping Consensus,” in *New York University Law Review*, (1989), 233-55, reprinted in John Rawls, “The Domain of Political and Overlapping Consensus”, in *Contemporary Political Philosophy*, eds. Robert E. Goodin and Phillip Pettit (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 275-276

<sup>21</sup> Sir Stuart Hampshire, “Address to Second Meeting”, 128.

<sup>22</sup>The reference here is to the growing involvement of non-governmental organizations in the diplomatic processes of the United Nations. The number who have consultative status with the Economic and Social Council has gone up from 41 in 1948 to 1521 in 1998. They constitute a civil society in the sense that they are free associations, not under the tutelage of governments or international bureaucracies, and have a significant influence on policy. There are also many instances of norms set by non-governmental organizations to coordinate and regulate the behavior of members. On the characterization of civil society see Charles Taylor, “Invoking Civil Society”, *Philosophical Arguments* (1995): 204-224. Reprinted in Charles Taylor, “Invoking Civil Society” in *Contemporary Political Philosophy*, eds. Robert E. Goodin and Phillip Pettit (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 303-335.

<sup>23</sup> Tocqueville in his *Democracy in America* draws attention to the educative role of town meetings and municipal institutions.

<sup>24</sup> Richard Falk, “The Making of Global Citizenship” in *Global Visions: Beyond the New World Order*, eds. Jeremy Brecher, John Brown Child and Jill Cutler, (Boston: South End Press, 1993), quoted in Michael J. Sandel, *Democracy and its Discontents*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996), 341.

<sup>25</sup> Mireille Delmas-Marty, “Three Challenges to a Common Law for Humanity”, in *Archive of Participant Contributions in the Universal ethics Project*, (Paris: UNESCO, 1998), 86.