Ethics of Global Development: Agency, Capability, and Deliberative Democracy, David A. Crocker (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 432 pp., $99 cloth, $43 paper.

This book is a testimony to the coming of age of development ethics as a separate subfield at the crossroads of ethics and the social sciences—in particular, development studies. David Crocker provides a historical sketch of the emergence and growth of development ethics over the last decades, and also revisits some of his own earlier work in the field to add newer analyses, extensions, and reflections. The result is Crocker's theory of the ethics of development, which is based on an agency-focused version of the capability approach, enriched by insights from the theory of deliberative democracy.

The book is divided into four parts. The first part offers Crocker's characterization and understanding of development ethics—described as a broad interdisciplinary field with internal diversity, based on a set of shared beliefs and commitments (pp. 40–43). These include a global rather than a local focus; giving priority to the severely poor; the belief that development practices and theories all have ethical aspects and can benefit from an explicit ethical analysis; the recognition that "development" (in its mainstream understanding) has created as many problems as it has solved and that development strategies should be contextually sensitive; and a rejection of a number of development models, such as those that are unconcerned with inequality, those that aim at economic growth maximization for its own sake, or authoritarian models where political liberties are sacrificed to meet physical needs. Yet Crocker also detects a number of important disagreements among development ethicists—for example, over the field's scope (should we study only the global South

or the whole world?), the range of topics it should investigate (should we restrict ourselves to the study of international development assistance, or also engage other topics, such as international trade, capital flows, migration, civil conflict, and state fragility?), whether or not it should aspire to universalist moral norms, and whether development ethics needs to commit to a specific notion of well-being or human flourishing (pp. 43–51).

In the remaining three parts of the book, Crocker presents his own contribution to development ethics, which is based on the capability approach. Part two gives an account of the ethical foundations of the capability approach. This is the most philosophical section and perhaps a little inward-looking. Crocker offers a number of interesting detailed philosophical analyses, yet this part may be a bit too specialized for some readers.

Part three applies and extends the capability approach by means of two case studies: consumption in affluent countries and communities, and hunger and famines in poor areas. These case studies show how an agency-focused capability approach has much more bite in addressing questions of moral responsibility than is often thought. Yet to acquire this bite, the capability approach needs to be extended or combined with other theories. In the first case study, Crocker discusses the consumption ethic developed by the Spanish philosopher Adela Cortina, which balances a concept of autonomy (which is similar to Amartya Sen's notion of agency) with principles of responsibility and justice, resulting in a

framework that can guide affluent citizens in their consumption decisions. In the case study on hunger, Crocker draws on the work by Sen and Jean Drèze on famine prevention to argue that "the ethics of food assistance should be incorporated within and subordinated to an ethics of and for development" (p. 280), and that contemporary discussions on famine and hunger prevention should join Drèze and Sen in "abandoning recipient and beneficiary language and replacing it with the language of agency and deliberative participation" (p. 283).

Finally, in the fourth part Crocker argues that the capability approach should be merged with the theory and practice of deliberative democracy in order to enrich development ethics. Apart from giving the reader a useful entrance to the huge literature on deliberative democracy, Crocker shows, by revisiting Sabina Alkire's groundbreaking local capability-enhancement project in Pakistan, how such micro-development projects can be strengthened by giving local people the right to deliberate with the funders about the project's continuance, or by reporting and sharing the information gathered by the investigators with the community.

Overall, *Ethics of Global Development* is a highly readable, informative book that draws much of its strength from Crocker's long career in development ethics, including his work in such organizations as the International Development Ethics Association (IDEA), and his profound knowledge of a long period of disciplinary and interdisciplinary debates. In that sense this book is not for scholars only. In addition, it makes specific contributions to the more theoretical debates on the capability approach and on participatory democracy. Most important, by working through a range of debates and issues in development ethics, Crocker makes a convincing case for the agency-focused version of the capability approach. By stressing capabilities and functionings, he argues that development questions should focus on people's quality of life rather than on instrumental values. Crocker's point throughout the book is that the notion of "agency" is crucial for the kind of development ethics that he finds most convincing and helpful in contributing to actual change. This agency-focused approach gives us effective means to critique mainstream discussions and practices in development policies, and to propose alternatives that pay more attention to people as agents of change than as beneficiaries of development polities.

On the downside, the unfolding of his account of development ethics proceeds at a slow pace and stretches over more than four hundred pages. For scholars used to the most technical and advanced arguments in this field, this book takes too many words to say what it wants to say, and discusses much elementary material. There is quite a bit of repetition in this book—a good thing for pedagogical purposes, but not necessarily for time-constrained specialists. Thus, the specialist will certainly find interesting insights and novel arguments, but will have to work through lots of basic material.

This book is highly recommended to anyone who wants to know what development ethics has to offer, or who wants to engage with arguments on the role of the capability approach and ideas of deliberative democracy in development ethics. Crocker's lucid writing style and his long experience in the field make this not just an important contribution to the scholarly literature on development ethics, but also excellent for teaching purposes.

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