Too Early for Global Ethics?

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> *2005 is a year of great opportunity. If everyone who wants to see an end to poverty, hunger and suffering speaks out, the noise will be deafening. Politicians will have to listen.*
>
> Desmond Tutu

Introduction

"Globalisation is the Yeti of . . . newspapers. Everybody knows it, but nobody has ever seen it. What does it look like? Tall, monkeyish, hairy? Or rather weasel-like? With glasses? Like a ferret or a marten?"[1] Globalization means different things to different people, a laudable development uniting humankind or an epidemic crushing the vulnerable peoples of the earth.[2] Whether it is something we can control remains to be seen, but it is certainly upon us. The move to "go global" is such a strong force that hardly any human activity is exempt. We have global treaties, global media, global celebrities, global bookstores, and even a global antiglobalization movement!

Some activities are more successful than others in going global: At the turn of the millennium, 51 of the 100 largest economies in the world were corporations (49 were countries). The combined sales of the top 200 corporations were bigger than the combined economies of all countries worldwide except the biggest 10.[3] How about ethics? Has it gone global yet?

In this paper we analyze the main parameters influencing the "globalization of ethics" and attempt to outline the shape of a useful and realistic international debate on the topic. But why is this inquiry necessary? The answer is easy to provide based on the default definition of globalization ("to operate across national divisions"[4]). If everything else is discussed at the global level, the same should apply to ethics.

Because people from different cultures and beliefs already come together to discuss and negotiate international agreements, it is only a matter of time before ethical issues will be debated. This is unavoidable because complex agreements require an ever higher amount of convergence, as evident in international legislation on economic policy.[5] It might therefore make sense to talk about "global ethics," referring to international debates on ethics. Or does it?

The Definition of Global Ethics

G.K. Chesterton once remarked that somebody who shot their grandmother from five hundred yards was certainly a good shot but not necessarily a good

man. The question "What is good?" has been occupying human beings for millennia and controversies are not subsiding. The academic field of ethics observes, notes, and categorizes such discussions in various ways. *Descriptive ethics* deals with the pure description of ethical beliefs. For instance, in the past, slavery was considered natural and just[6] and burning willing widows with their dead husbands (*suttee*) was considered the right thing to do. Whether an outside observer agrees with the practice or not is irrelevant to descriptive ethics. *Normative ethics* looks at systematical approaches to answer moral questions, aiming to provide a reliable means to distinguish good actions from bad actions. Such means could be Immanuel Kant's categorical imperative or Jeremy Bentham's utility principle. On a higher level of reasoning, *metaethics* hopes to answer questions such as: Can any of the normative ethical approaches claim universal validity? Or is all talk of morality just an evolutionary adaptive illusion?

When one adds an adjective to a noun (*global* to *ethics*), definitions are easily obtained as long as the noun *ethics* is satisfactorily defined. *Global* means "relating to the whole world," so *global ethics* should mean ethics in its individual guises (descriptive, normative, meta) with the addition that it applies to the whole world. Of course, this is already the case with descriptive ethics. The field is only attractive when one looks at various cultures with different ethical beliefs. In this regard, *global* descriptive ethics would be no different from unmarried bachelor.

To add *global* to *ethics* becomes more interesting when one looks at normative ethics. Most normative ethical thought in the West has been of a universalizing nature. If the categorical imperative says: "Do x!", this command applies whether one deals with a stranger or a close family member.[7] Many traditional sub-Saharan ethical systems, on the other hand, are not of a universalizing nature. Before one can decide what one ought to do (What is "x"?), one needs to know in which relationship the agent stands to the object of the decision. For instance, a reason to give somebody shelter might be "because she is my kinswoman," not because she has specific needs.[8] Within such anti-universalizing systems, it is impossible to find one overriding command or principle that will guide all action. Hence, if one wants to find a *global* normative ethical theory, the massive quarrels within Western philosophy will suddenly appear minor.

Moving from local to global in search for *the* normative ethical system focuses philosophical thinkers even more onto metaethical questions, particularly: Could any single ethical system be the right one whereas all others are mistaken? It is, indeed, in metaethics that the most interesting debates are to be had about global ethics, an all-time favorite question being: Are human rights a Western invention based on nonuniversalizable deontological thought?[9] Or are they the moral basis for human flourishing and happiness worldwide and therefore worth fighting for?[10] A lot of work needs to be done in global metaethics, but it is unnecessary to add the word *global* to *ethics* in this context. Metaethicists were always interested in either (a) universally valid answers or (b) a proof that item a is impossible.

What does this short discussion tell us about the definition of *global ethics*? It means that it does not make sense to speak of global ethics and restrict the word to academic debates in the realm of moral philosophy. In their essence, descriptive and metaethics *have to be global* and to add more normative ethical

systems to the existing jungle will not make a qualitative difference without attempted metaethical answers. That ethics debates in the West were and are often conducted without regard for non-Western moral thought is an empirical fact rather than an essential element of ethics. If this were not the case, one would have to show that ethicists are *purposefully* rather than negligently or patronizingly blinkered (e.g., racist, sexist), which would be highly difficult, if at all possible. But this is not the end of the story. There are more possible meanings of global ethics that we have not yet considered.

We are sympathetic to the view that ethics as an academic discipline in the West has been a biased undertaking in the past, and that—as a 21st century academic—one might want to use the term *global ethics* to distance oneself from this past. In that case, *global ethics* would be *ethics* as it should be done in academia, but one would add *global* to demonstrate one's awareness of past failures (e.g., racism). Although we understand this view, we do not subscribe to it for two reasons: (a) Political philosophers who write about international justice are not described as "global political philosophers"; they are just "political philosophers" working on a global topic. The same should apply to ethicists. Academic ethicists interested in issues of international justice and so forth are still ethicists. If this were not the case, the discipline would either have to adopt a new name whenever issues of global relevance are discussed (and this is increasingly so in almost all areas of metaethics and applied ethics) or they would have to accept that they are purposefully not doing ethics as they should do, except for the small group who call themselves "global ethicists." (b) "Ethics" and its practitioners can be wrong, but so can "global ethics" and its practitioners. However, a separation suggests that one group has got it right and the other has got it wrong. If it were just a matter of defining which specialism one has as an academic (e.g., international justice), one would not need such a distinction (see political philosophy). And although we can see that awareness raising and being open-minded are extremely important, we believe that "ethics" should cover particular and global academic discussions about morality within academia, as it does in any other field.[11]

Still, there is one more possibility for the definition of *global ethics*. When somebody says: "Have you considered the ethics?" or "One could question the ethics of such and such agreement" or "What are the ethical implications of your undertaking?", they are not talking about the academic study of moral principles. They are talking about substance, the attempt to transform the relevant realm into a place more conducive to human flourishing.[12] In the political context, for instance, the British government acknowledges a universal right to medical care as prescribed by Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.[13] It commits itself to a universal service for all based on clinical need, not ability to pay.[14] This is in stark contrast to the U.S. government's approach to healthcare coverage, which is nonuniversal and based on ability to pay. In the United States, an "estimated 15.6 percent of the population, or 45.0 million people, were without health insurance coverage in 2003, up from 15.2 percent and 43.6 million people in 2002."[15] It is needless to say that the question "What are the ethical implications of your undertaking?" would attract more criticism for the American than for the British government as citizens in both countries are likely to affirm that health is a fundamental condition for human flourishing. Given the above, we suggest the following definition for *global ethics*:

> *Global ethics* is not a field of academic study, it is an activity: the attempt to agree on fundamental conditions for human flourishing and to actively secure them for all.[16]

Part of this activity might take place in academic circles, but it can never be meaningfully restricted to them.

The Challenges of Global Ethics

If the task for global ethics is to agree on fundamental conditions for human flourishing and to secure them for all, what are the challenges lying ahead? We shall list five issues. Some of our challenges require explanations, whereas some are self-explanatory and will therefore only be illustrated with examples, such as the first challenge.

Challenge 1: Global Inequalities, and Inequities That Are
Almost Impossible to Remedy

- Nutrition: More than 800 million people in the world go hungry, with an estimated 6 million children in the developing world dying from hunger-related diseases each year. The United Nations Development Program estimates that the basic health and nutrition needs of the world's poorest people could be met for an additional $13 billion a year.[17] The Iraq campaign cost the United States $151.1 billion during the fiscal year 2003, more than 11 times as much.[18]

  As a result of undernutrition, worldwide, between 100 and 140 million children suffer from vitamin A deficiency. In 250,000 to 500,000 children, this deficiency leads to blindness and for half of them to death within 12 months of losing their eyesight.[19]
- AIDS/HIV: The population of sub-Saharan Africa accounts for just over 10% of the world's population, but for almost two-thirds of the people living with HIV. Southern African countries have HIV prevalence rates of over 17% and Botswana and Swaziland over 35%. Only 7% of those affected in developing countries have access to antiretroviral drugs. If infection and treatment rates continue as they are, 60% of today's Southern African 15-year-olds will not reach their 60th birthday.[20]
- Missing women: Amartya Sen calculated that 100 million women were missing in the world in the early 1990s because of sex bias in relative care.[21] Since then, economists have developed highly sophisticated demographic techniques to produce reliable estimates of gender bias in mortality. More refined calculations have slightly reduced Sen's estimate to 87 million, giving current figures (early 2000s) at 95 million.[22] The main reasons women are missing in the world are sex-selective abortions, particularly in China and India,[23] and female infanticide.[24]

Challenge 2: Cultural Differences in Moral Perspectives

Most cultures have their own views on what distinguishes a good action from a bad action or a good person from a bad person. Simplified, one could say that

Western moral perspectives rely heavily on the concepts of individualism and human rights and usually prioritize human over other life forms. In contrast, the African moral outlook has been described as "eco-bio-communitarian,"[25] implying a preference for community values over individualistic values as well as a recognition of the interdependence of life on earth. Similarly, the essence of the Asian worldview has been described as "a holistic harmony"[26] with a higher esteem for social over individual values and no strict dichotomy between humans and nature. These perspectives do not exclude each other, but, coupled with well-established traditions, present a great challenge for those attempting to agree on fundamental conditions for human flourishing. Besides, serious concerns have been raised that some cultures (Western ones) are impervious to others, even though there is a great potential for mutual enrichment.[27] The barriers for intercultural agreement seem, indeed, insurmountable. A concrete example often given in this context is female genital mutilation (FGM).

Most people believe that health is one of the *most fundamental* conditions for human flourishing, and one might assume that intercultural agreements can easily be achieved in this area. We take *fundamental* to mean that the associated condition, health in this case, should not be put at risk for something considered less fundamental. However, this is what many people from Western cultures believe to have happened when confronted with FGM. It significantly endangers health in order to ensure chastity. The health and well-being implications from FGM are—among others—severe pain, shock, urine retention, ulceration of the genital region, haemorrhage or infection leading to death, possible transmission of HIV, long-term incontinence, painful sexual intercourse, difficulties with childbirth, anxiety, and depression.[28] If a culture prioritizes a goal (chastity) over health while accepting such extreme consequences, the goal will have to be considered as a more fundamental condition of human flourishing for this culture. In that case, chastity is more important than health and it must be enforced (rather than, e.g., culturally instilled) with operational procedures on children despite the associated risks. The implications for intercultural dialogue on moral perspectives will be clear to readers from both sides and should not be lingered on. It is obvious where challenges lie. Considering this example, how is one to achieve agreement on the fundamental conditions for human flourishing? The challenge is humbling.

Challenge 3: Difficulties in Determining Moral Perspectives

In an attempt to agree on the fundamental conditions for human flourishing, one might have to free the essence of moral thought in any culture from the fragments of social customs, economic conditions, and political realities (or show that this is impossible). For instance, depending on political realities, the veiling of women might be regarded as moral as it ensures the protection of their modesty (Iran) or it might be regarded as immoral (in French public schools) as it brings ideology into the context of children's education. Depending on economic conditions, poaching might be morally acceptable in conditions of famine and to feed one's family, but not as a leisure pursuit without the relevant economic pressure. Finally, social customs are not always readily distinguishable from moral thinking. For example, a reply to FGM could be that it is not an ethically informed practice. Instead, it is a social custom, which

ethically minded individuals within the culture do not approve of or would not approve of if they were not socially conditioned.[29]

Challenge 4: Lack of a Relevant Global Decisionmaking Body with Enforcement Authority

Assuming the formulation of fundamental conditions for human flourishing had been successful and the obstacles to such flourishing had been identified, the next step would be the attempt to secure them for all. On a global level, this is most likely to require a global decisionmaking body *with* enforcement authority. Why this is a challenge today, despite the existence of various United Nations organs, shall be explained using the example of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). The FAO is a United Nations forum that aims to negotiate international agreements and debate international policies on food and agriculture. In this regard, it is a *global decisionmaking body*. However, when it comes to applying international agreements, it has no genuine enforcement authority. One of the biggest ethical problems in the world today is lack of food security. The FAO defined food security as follows:

> Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food which meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.[30]

Instead, as mentioned above, 800 million people suffer from chronic hunger. As early as 1996, the World Food Summit in Rome ended with a pledge by 186 governments to "reaffirm the right of everyone to have access to safe and nutritious food, consistent with the right to adequate food and the fundamental right to be free from hunger."[31] Almost 10 years later, on November 24, 2004, the FAO adopted *voluntary guidelines* to "support the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security."[32] Despite being an international forum linked to the United Nations, the FAO has no enforcement authority to ensure that the 1996 pledge undertaken in Rome is realized.

Another high-profile international agreement is similarly based on good will and voluntary compliance rather than enforcement: the eight Millennium Development Goals.[33]

Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger.
Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education.
Goal 3: Promote gender equality and promote women.
Goal 4: Reduce child mortality.
Goal 5: Improve maternal health.
Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases.
Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability.
Goal 8: Develop a partnership for development.

All current 191 member states of the United Nations have pledged to meet these goals by 2015. However, progress during the first four years (2000–2004) has been erratic, according to Kofi Annan[34] (partly due to the division of the international community following the events of September 11, 2001, and the war on Iraq). In sub-Saharan Africa and in the least developed countries,

hardly any progress on any of the goals has been made. On the contrary, new HIV infections, for instance, showed an all-time high. One also needs to note that, except for Denmark, the Netherlands, and Sweden, no developed country has yet published its report on how to achieve goal 8, in other words, how to act as a credible donor country in the pursuit of the millennium goals.

Ironically, the only international organizations with considerable enforcement powers are the ones mostly blamed for worsening the situation of vulnerable peoples worldwide: that is, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Trade Organization (WTO).[35] The case of the WTO is of particular interest because it affects the lives of the majority of the world's population directly. The WTO deals with the rules of trade between nations, thereby providing a platform for international agreements relevant to almost everybody who buys goods. Unlike most other international organizations, it has the power to enforce its agreements and penalize noncompliance with trade sanctions.[36] One of the main WTO agreements "Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights" (TRIPS) consists mainly of a very elaborate regime of enforcement. Attempts to include ethical issues such as benefit sharing in TRIPS have been opposed by powerful Western countries.[37]

Challenge 5: Historical Injustices

Problems do not come in convenient time slices, ready for our problem-solving skills, without regard for the past, as Robert Nozick convincingly argued 30 years ago.[38] Historical injustices have to be dealt with or at least acknowledged before looking toward the future. They come in a variety of forms and severity: There is (a) state-sanctioned violence and murder (Stalinism, Pol Pot regime), (b) group exploitation and abuse (slavery, colonialism), or (c) attempted genocide (Holocaust, Rwanda). They almost invariably have caused widespread social damage, which is imprinted in the psychology of future generations. It is notoriously complicated to deal with historical injustices in a legal manner. From the Nuremberg trials of Nazi leaders to the recent trials of Rwandan Hutus, from compensation calls from descendants of American slaves to calls for debt cancellation due to colonial abuse, the legal process is mired in loopholes and uncertainties. Punishment of original perpetrators is almost always very difficult (due to time lapse and legal hurdles) whereas descendants of perpetrators often find it unjust to pay for "the sins of their fathers." Nevertheless, this is a serious hurdle in creating a productive international dialogue, as it is always implicit in the mistrust shown between discussants.

The Process

How can we move from the situation today, with the above outlined challenges, to a situation more conducive to human flourishing? We outline three initiatives we believe to be essential in global ethics.

Initiative 1: Increased Intercultural Dialogue to Understand Commonalities

One of the main results of globalization is increased awareness of world cultures, social norms, and traditions. Cultural differences have been intensely studied in terms of their potential for clashes,[39] but much less has been done to

highlight cultural commonalities, with a few laudable exceptions. As a result of Iranian President Khatami's suggestion to embark on a "Dialogue amongst Civilizations," Kofi Annan created a group of 20 eminent persons meant to represent all major world religions and cultures to develop and discuss a future model of coexistence and mutual understanding.[40] Similarly, Ruth-Gaby Vermot-Mangold from Switzerland would like to foster dialogue about peace with her 1,000 peace women[41] initiative. Vermot-Mangold and her team started collecting names of 1,000 women quietly fighting against war, violence, and injustice. The plan is to apply for the Nobel Peace Prize in 2005, 100 years after the first female Nobel Peace Laureate (Bertha von Suttner) and to enable those women to meet, share experiences, and record their struggles from the proceeds of the award. These high-profile, but rare initiatives have not yet produced a wider dialogue in the community, although the former did emphasize the need to establish common ethical standards.[42]

Dialogue is a prerequisite for the attainment of human flourishing. It promotes understanding between cultures, creates the relevant platform for international cooperation, and promotes international solidarity. It should, therefore, be fostered worldwide on a local, regional, and international basis. The need for a multilayer promotion of intercultural dialogue has been identified by the UN, but lack of funding appears to have stalled this effort.[43] Nevertheless, in the current situation where cultures seem to be shifting further apart, renewed efforts to establish such a dialogue are necessary. Within the context of global ethics (*attempting to agree on fundamental conditions for human flourishing and secure them for all*), the main goal has to be to reach a common understanding of terms and concepts that denote each culture's moral codes and behavioral prescriptions.

Initiative 2: Trust Building Exercises to Overcome Historical Injustices

Intercultural dialogue requires willing parties to enter such a process. Willingness depends, among other things, on the perceived truthfulness of the other party in its genuine motivation to enter the dialogue. If the parties trust or can be made to trust each other, the process is already a success. Unfortunately, past experiences get in the way of trust building, as they are constant reminders of injustices committed by one group/culture against another.[44] To promote dialogue, it is therefore essential to face historical injustices head-on.

To find appropriate means of doing justice is not easy. It has been suggested that, in the case of historical injustices, "the best way of doing justice to the collective legacy is by keeping the memory of the injustice alive and mourning the victims through political education."[45] On the other hand, it has been maintained that only compensation and reparations will heal the injustices of the past (e.g., continued compensation for slave laborers from the German state[46]).

Trust-building measures need to ensure networking and communication opportunities between groups for mutual learning. An open, transparent, and, above all, honest approach in facing past injustices and wrong deeds is an essential prerequisite for the success of such an endeavor. Truth commissions in connection with trials of perpetrators can help redress the balance in a meaningful and nonvengeful manner. For instance, the South African Truth and Reconciliation Committee's recording of gross human rights violations under

Apartheid (1960–1994) to achieve reconciliation is greatly admired internationally, if not always nationally.[47] Such processes would invigorate trust between cultures and open the way for meaningful intercultural dialogue.

Initiative 3: Ethics Review for Enforceable International Agreements

Over the past decade, many countries established national ethics committees.[48] In most cases, their task is twofold: (a) to create a national forum for dialogue on ethical questions in the life sciences and (b) to advise policy makers drafting new national legislation.[49] As a result, one would hope that new legislation is better informed by ethical considerations. Similar bodies responsible for dialogue on the international stage are the UNESCO's International Bioethics Committee (IBC) and the Intergovernmental Bioethics Committee (IGBC).[50] However, although the committees foster dialogue on an international level, their main advisory tasks are restricted to advising member states. In this regard, their responsibilities are not analogous to national committees. If they were, the IBC and the IGBC would inform binding international legislation, such as the TRIPS agreement of the WTO. This is not the case, but in order to move the agenda of global ethics forward, it ought to be. Binding international agreements need an ethics review if conditions of human flourishing ought to be ensured for all.

Ethics, in this sense, should not be used as a platform in itself. It ought to be added to already existing discussions, for instance, about science and technology policy, trade, and the environment. The complex relationships in such areas require a common terminology to be developed and used. To add ethics to such discussions would automatically foster dialogue, thereby procuring the first condition for realizing global ethics, namely, the agreement on fundamental conditions for human flourishing.

Is it not paradoxical to ask for an ethics review of international agreements before agreement on the fundamental conditions for human flourishing has been achieved? Yes and no. Yes, from a rigidly analytical point of view, where one aims for maximum consistency of one's system of thought. No, if one accedes that real-life progress is often made in little steps with the overall goal in mind (e.g., the first attempts at anesthetics were grisly in comparison to the status quo, but we are glad somebody started on this road).[51]

Conclusion

To set global ethics apart from ethics as an additional academic exercise is not meaningful. Descriptive ethics and metaethics always had a global focus. Adding further normative ethical systems to already existing ones (e.g., Chinese philosophy) does not add a new dimension to normative ethics, although it does make metaethics more interesting (e.g., are universalizing systems of ethics deficient or not?).

Global ethics should therefore not be seen as a field of academic study, but rather as an activity: the attempt to agree on fundamental conditions for human flourishing and to secure them for all. It is needless to say that this is not just an ambitious task; it is a task that *cannot* be achieved by one generation. In this sense it is too early for global ethics. The main challenges are global inequities of an extent impossible to remedy; deep cultural differences in moral perspec-

tives; complex relationships between social, economic, and cultural determinants of moral perspectives; lack of global decisionmaking power with enforcement authority relevant to ethical themes; and an ubiquity of historical injustices hampering dialogue.

Steps toward achieving the goal of global ethics are increased intercultural dialogue; trust building; and—most important—adding an ethics review to ongoing global negotiations on specific issues; for instance, science and technology policy or trade and the environment. International agreements with enforcement capacities have to be informed by ethical considerations in the medium term.

It is too early to talk about global ethics adequately. The discussions will come naturally to a critical point as a result of intercultural exchange and other more pressing issues that need international solutions. The first step for the foreseeable future is to include ethics in discussions—for instance, as an ethical review of major international agreements. Healthcare ethics, environmental ethics, and science and technology ethics are obvious candidates for development at present. The attainment of truly global ethics is a task for future generations. Our generation's task is to open the door to the possibility.

Notes

1. Wackwitz S. Und ewig fiept das Tamagotchi. *Die Woche Extra* 1997;December 19:25 (our translation).
2. A false contrast; an ideal start to enrage the critical thinker but catch everybody else's attention.
3. Anderson S, Cavanagh J. *Top 200—The Rise of Corporate Global Power*. Washington: Institute for Policy Studies. Available from: http://www.ips-dc.org/downloads/Top_200.pdf, accessed January 22, 2005. First calculation based on a comparison of corporate sales with country GDPs.
4. *The New Oxford Dictionary of English*. For a summary of more detailed definitions, see Schroeder D. *Work Incentives and Welfare Provision—The Pathological Theory of Unemployment*. Aldershot: Ashgate; 2000:131–6.
5. For instance, the World Trade Organization is in the process of converging national legislation based on great cultural differences (e.g., United States, China, Cuba, Russia) within its trade-related agreements, an unprecedented and enforceable step at the global level.
6. Aristotle. *Politik*. Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag 1981:8ff (1254a–1255a).
7. Of course, not all Western moral systems are universalizing. A feminist ethics of care, for instance, is more akin to sub-Sahara African thought than to Kantian deontology.
8. Appial AK. Ethical systems, African. In: Craig E, ed. *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. London: Routledge, accessed June 11, 2004 (www.rep.routledge.com).
9. Sakamoto H. Towards a new "global bioethics." *Bioethics* 1999;13:191–7.
10. Nussbaum M. *Women and Human Development: The Capabilities Approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; 2001.
11. At the research seminar in Birmingham, the point was raised that although one does not seem to distinguish political philosophers and global political philosophers, one does distinguish academics working on international law from those working on national law. But does it really make sense to speak of academic work on national versus international ethics outside the small confines of descriptive ethics? And even here, one's field would be descriptive ethics, not global descriptive ethics, whether one looked at the ethical beliefs of English miners or those of the San community in Namibia.
12. To illustrate that such questions are an unavoidable part of life in Western Europe, an example from today's TV Guide (*Radio Times*, January 22–28, 2005:64). The program: "Reality—So You Think You Can Teach." The text: "We've all seen the ads suggesting how rewarding it is to be a teacher, and some of us may be tempted to give it a go. *But you may question the ethics* of unleashing a trio of celebrities on young children for our entertainment" (our emphasis).
13. General Assembly of the United Nations. *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*; 1948. Available from: http://www.un.org/Overview/rights.html, accessed: January 22, 2005.

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14. Department of Health. *Your Guide to the NHS*. 2000. Available from: http://www.sdah-tr.trent.nhs.uk/pdfs/patient/nhs_guide.pdf, accessed January 22, 2005.
15. DeNavas-Walt C, Proctor BD, Mills RJ. *Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2003*. Washington: U.S. Census Bureau. Available from: http://www.census.gov/prod/2004pubs/p60-226.pdf, p. 14, accessed January 22, 2005.
16. We are aware that any attempt at defining a concept potentially closes off other possibilities and therefore dialogue. We hope to stimulate dialogue nevertheless.
17. Bread for the World Institute. Available from: http://www.bread.org/hungerbasics/index.html, accessed February 3, 2005.
18. UPI. In fact. *Prospect* August 2004:9.
19. World Health Organization. *Micronutrient deficiencies—Combating vitamin A deficiency*. Available from: http://www.who.int/nut/vad.htm, accessed January 22, 2005.
20. UNAIDS. *2004 Report on the Global Aids Epidemic—Executive Summary*. Geneva. Available from: http://www.unaids.org/bangkok2004/GAR2004_html/ExecSummary_en/Execsumm_en.pdf.
21. Sen A. Missing women. *British Medical Journal* 1992;304:586–7.
22. Klasen L, Wink C. A turning point in gender bias in mortality? An update on the number of "missing women." *Population and Development Review* 2002;28:285–312.
23. See note 22, Klasen, Wink 2002.
24. United Nations Population Fund. *Missing—Mapping the Adverse Child Sex Ration in India*. Available from: http://www.unfpa.org.in/publications/16_Map%20brochure_English.pdf, 2003, accessed May 30, 2004; United Nations Population Division. *Too Young to Die: Genes or Gender*. ST/ESA/SER.A/155. 1998.
25. Tangwa G. Globalisation or Westernisation? Ethical concerns in the whole bio-business. *Bioethics* 1999;13:218–26.
26. Sakamoto H. Towards a new "global bioethics." *Bioethics* 1999;13:191–7.
27. Tangwa GB. Bioethics; An African perspective. *Bioethics* 1996;10:183–200.
28. World Health Organization. Female genital mutilation. Available from: http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs241/en/, accessed January 23, 2005.
29. Of course, this challenge could easily be regarded as paternalistic, according to the maxim, "The true ethics is ours. If one removes customs from other culture's ethical essences, this is what will appear."
30. FAO. *Food Security: Concepts and Measurement*. Available from: http://www.fao.org/documents/show_cdr.asp?url_file=/DOCREP/005/Y4671E/y4671e06.htm, accessed March 2, 2005.
31. World Food Summit. *Rome Declaration on World Food Security*. Rome: FAO. Available from: http://www.fao.org/documents/show_cdr.asp?url_file=/DOCREP/003/W3613E/W3613E00.HTM, accessed January 22, 2005.
32. Riddle J. FAO adopts right to food guidelines. Rome: FAO. Available from: http://www.fao.org/newsroom/en/news/2004/51653/index.html, accessed January 23, 2005.
33. United Nations. *UN Millennium Development Goals*. Available from: http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/, accessed January 24, 2005. For serious concerns about the first goal, please see Pogge T. The First UN Millennium Development Goal, at: http://www.carnegiecouncil.org/media/1076_pogge_millenniumgoal2.pdf, accessed June 9, 2005.
34. Annan K. Implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration—Report of the Secretary General. A/59/282. Available from: http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N04/465/40/PDF/N0446540.pdf?OpenElement, accessed January 24, 2005.
35. For a comprehensive view of the IMF and its sister organization the World Bank's policy impact on world poverty, see Chossudovsky M. *Globalization of Poverty*. London: Zed Books; 1997.
36. As of October 13, 2004, the WTO had 148 member countries and had processed more than 300 trade disputes. World Trade Organization homepage. Available from: http://www.wto.org/, accessed February 4, 2005.
37. Some developing countries have lobbied the WTO, unsuccessfully so far, to include "benefit sharing" in TRIPS in order to protect the rights of vulnerable indigenous populations. SciDevNet homepage. Available from: http://www.scidev.net/dossiers/index.cfm?fuseaction=dossierItem&Dossier=7&CFID=6138436&CFTOKEN=ab3824090f669c4d-71137DF2-B0D0-F03F-736A75DC90FC6841, accessed February 7, 2005.
38. Nozick R. *Anarchy, State and Utopia*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers; 1974:153–5.
39. Huntington S. *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. New York: Simon & Schuster; 1996.
40. Annan K. *Brücken in die Zukunft—Ein Manifest für den Dialog der Kulturen*. Frankfurt: Fischer, 2001.

41. 1,000 Women for the Nobel Peace Prize 2005 homepage. Available from: http://www.1000peacewomen.org/de/html/, accessed January 24, 2005.

42. As expressed in article 4 of the 56/6 UN General Assembly Resolution on "Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations." Available from: http://www.un.org/documents/ares566e.pdf, accessed February 7, 2005.

43. The report of the UN Secretary General on "Dialogue among Cultures" is clear on that point. Available from: http://www.un.org/Dialogue/sponsor.html, accessed February 8, 2005.

44. A telling example is the use of the term "crusade" in connection with the war in Iraq, which created feelings of strong unease among Muslim cultures, who had suffered in the past from Christian crusades. See, for example, Bush: The crusade must go on, at: Defence News, http://www.defencetalk.com/news/publish/article_002061.shtml; accessed June 9, 2005.

45. Adam H, Adam K. *The Politics of Memory in Divided Societies*. In: James W, van de Vijer L, eds. *After the TRC—Reflections on Truth and Reconciliation in South Africa*. Cape Town: David Philip Publishers; 2000:32–47 at 47.

46. Bundeministerium der Finanzen. *Bericht über die Stiftung "Erinnerung, Verantwortung und Zukunft"*. Available from: http://www.bundesfinanzministerium.de/Anlage17876/Bericht-ueber-die-Stiftung-Erinnerung-Verantwortung-und-Zukunft.pdf, accessed January 24, 2005.

47. James W, van de Vijer L. Introduction. In: James W, van de Vijer L, eds. *After the TRC—Reflections on Truth and Reconciliation in South Africa*. Cape Town: David Philip Publishers; 2000:1–5.

48. For a list of all European committees, see National Ethics Committees. Available from: http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/biosociety/bioethics/bioethics_ethics_en.htm, accessed January 25, 2005.

49. For an example, see the Danish Council of Ethics. Available from: http://www.etiskraad.dk/sw293.asp, accessed January 25, 2005.

50. For more information, see Bioethics. Available from: http://portal.unesco.org/shs/en/ev.php-URL_ID=1372&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html, accessed January 25, 2005.

51. It would take a separate paper to outline how an ethics review prior to binding international guidelines would look.