REASONS FOR TREATING GLOBAL ECONOMIC JUSTICE AS AN ESSENTIALLY CONTESTABLE CONCEPT[354]

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Abstract:

Contemporary theorists in the fields of international relations and global business ethics are generally gloomy about the extensive cultural diversity that underlies radically different value systems and political norms worldwide. This diversity is tacitly regarded as the bane of efforts to internationalise criminal law and principles of corporate social responsibility [CSR]. In this essay it is proposed, to the contrary, that cultural diversity is best regarded as a vehicle for discovering fundamental convictions about the meaning of global justice rather than the main obstacle to its realisation. An alternative to Hobbesian classic liberal derision of international law is proposed here by relying upon indigenous models of good governance and diplomacy that prevail in the midst of contemporary West Africa's cultural diversity and economic distress. The possibility of global justice requires a conceptual change: from defining global justice as a fixed system of uniform procedures and implacable rules applied impartially and universally, to regarding the very idea of justice as essentially contestable (Alisdair MacIntyre 1973) emerging in a unique hybrid culture provoked by rigorous analytic confrontation between divergent traditions and contrary value systems. Since cultural diversity obtains within social hierarchies just as aggressively as it does across cultures, testimonies are required early in the process of treating global justice as an ongoing deliberative project, so that judicial interpreters come to know something about underclass experience and conditions prevailing in the expanding informal economic sector worldwide.

Keywords: Corporate social responsibility [CSR], Hobbes, international law, Thomas Nagel, West African political culture.

Introduction

A widely shared assumption is that ignominy and indecency in the global arena are incorrigible because cultural multiplicity poses a major obstacle to enforcing justice beyond national borders.[355] Given the vigorous scope of cultural diversity, some influential philosophers regard moral

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[354] An ancestor of this essay was presented to the 2010 International Society for African Philosophy and Studies conference in Accra, Ghana, titled: "On the very idea of global justice and the role of African universities in its realisation." It was never published. Subsequent work was done thanks to an invitation to present a subsequent paper at Nnamdie Azikiew University for UNESCO World Philosophy Day, November 2011, Awka Nigeria, titled "Prospects for crafting global justice consensually: suggestions from models of indigenous African governance," also unpublished.

[355] Samuel P. Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations," *Foreign Affairs.* Summer. vol. 72, no. 2 (1993), pp. 22-28; Walker Connor, "Nation-Building or Nation-Destroying?" *World Politics* vol. 24, no. 3, (1972) pp. 319-355; Lawrence E. Harrison & Samuel P. Huntington, eds. *Culture Matters: How Values Shape Human Progress,* New York: Basic Books, 2000); Eric Zuelow, Book review of *Ethnonationalism in the Contemporary World: Walker Connor and the Study of Nationalism.* Daniele Conversi, ed., (New York: Routledge, 2002). <http://www.nationalismproject.org/book> Accessed October 2006.

relativism as defeating the very possibility of global justice, rendering the notion itself chimerical if not incoherent.[356]

To the contrary, I propose treating cultural diversity as a vehicle for discovering fundamental convictions about the meaning of global justice, rather than the main obstacle to its realisation. Contemporary West Africa is verily a festival of cultural diversity, and demands for international justice are raised and get addressed albeit inadequately on a daily basis. In , through traditional social and political structures, as will be discussed in this exploration of justice in an African social sense and its implications for a more humane and just global economic order. Varied as the West African situation is from country to country, one may take these conditions in some pertinent respects to be representative of conditions in post-colonial societies beyond the African continent. A brief exposure to the political history of West Africa's economies reveals that successful strategies for surviving crises with social dignity have been camouflaged from the purview of the international community. Contrary views about economic justice exist from within post colonial states at different levels of society. The sceptic who disparages international law as either unenforceable or logically nonsensical characterizes global justice as a magnification of the justice enforced within the boundaries of sovereign nation states.[357] I propose treating global justice instead as an intercultural probe in progress[358]—not as a ubiquitous deterrent but as a promethean evolution of practices and precedents—always locally informed and interrogated from afar. Universal consent to a law's enforcement does not depend upon countenancing its author as an unassailable sovereign authority. Instead, political legitimacy is achieved in the global arena because each verdict is adopted as a working hypothesis, prescribed to undergo review systematically case by case through successive assessors' divergent cultural perspectives. On this view, the meaning of global justice is essentially contestable.[359] And its feasibility results from making a fundamental *conceptual* change: from defining global justice as a fixed system of uniform procedures and implacable rules applied impartially worldwide, to regarding global justice as a unique hybrid culture that encourages insights provoked by rigorous analytic confrontation between divergent traditions and contrary value systems. An important corollary in this picture is that the dividing line between one cultural perspective and another is as much determined by economic circumstances as it is by geography and national boundaries.

To give some definite and immediate shape to such an amorphous vision, I restrict this discussion to the limited domain of international business ethics. This will be illuminating partly because allegations against multinational corporations [MNCs] have become so prevalent and varied in the last forty years that there has emerged an industry solely devoted to addressing such issues under the rubric 'corporate social responsibility' [CSR]. Narrowing this critique to international CSR managerial theories is not intended to determine whether in fact MNCs are ethically irresponsible or

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[356] Thomas Nagel, "The Problem of Global Justice," *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 33 (2005), pp. 113–147. Reprinted in *The Global Justice Reader,* ed. Thom Brooks, (Oxford: Blackwell, 2009), pp. 416-438. An example of this tacit scepticism shared by contemporary African intellectuals is found in A.G.A. Bello's remark, ". . . a world government, of whatever form, must therefore remain a dream or an ideal," p. 90 of his "Emmanuel Osigwe Anyiam-Osigwe on the Individual, the State and the World Order," *The Development Philosophy of Emmanuel Onyechere Osigwe Anyiam-Osigwe* vol. 2. eds. Olusegun Oladipo and Adebola Ekanola (2009), pp. 83-90.

[357] Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (1665).

[358] The germ of this idea of depending upon a collective, gradual process for legitimating moral principles cross culturally, was first given to me with respect constructing a universal code of ethics for higher education, by my former Vice Chancellor, medical Professor Clifford Nii Boi Tagoe, in December 2009 when we were preparing his panel contributions to a roundtable discussion for the International Association of Universities, at their annual conference "Ethics and values in higher education in the era of globalization: what role for the disciplines?" Mykolis Romerus University, Vilnius, Lithuania, June 25-26, 2010.

[359] Here as in the title, I am indebted to Alisdair MacIntyre, "The Essential Contestability of Some Social Concepts," *Ethics,* vol. 84, no.1 (1973), pp. 1-9.

whether and how they do perpetrate economic injustice globally as they are so often charged. Rather, I address the prior normative question of how it might be morally possible or politically legitimate[360] to make such judgments.

Of course, it is one thing to wax operatically about the clarifying and motivating potential of well reasoned disputation across cultural divides. It is quite another thing to spell out what such an agenda for a forum of intercultural deliberation would actually entail. In this contribution I will aim only to show what it *cannot* entail. To this end, I review several ways in which the pursuit of global justice is reduced or conflated with other, arguably non-moral (commercial, political) agendas. In section one I highlight the contrast between affecting courteous diplomacy and meeting the stricter demands of ethical integrity in cross-cultural business contexts. In section two I address another deflation of global justice which confuses it with gains in economic growth, e.g. as measured by indicators spelled out in the UN Millennium Development Goals [MDGs].[361] In section three I review some received complaints that display why the international human rights covenants drawn up in the last fifty years fail to address demands for fairness and justice in world trade and in 'aid for development' policy analyses. Section four surveys features of good regional diplomacy and economic governance in West Africa that remain largely invisible outside the region—historically and politically. Arguably these are features which would nonetheless be essential in building an influential structure in the framework of international economic affairs, so that market values do not prevail exclusively in the global arena. In section five I will review in some detail an example of what can go wrong with a business administration model when this diversity of views is overlooked. The example suggests that the apparent callousness of MNC policies and practices abroad may be traced at least in part to sheer ignorance, not solely to disregard for ethical responsibilities in the global arena.

In conclusion, I will hope to have shown that an intercultural approach to pursuing global economic justice is essentially an ongoing project and would have to proceed in structurally distinct stages. This is because early in the process, testimonies are required so that deliberators come to know something about underclass experience and conditions prevailing in the informal economic sector. Beyond getting the facts straight, philosophical integration is crucial with respect to the diverse connotations and disputed referential extensions of key concepts, in order to get ethically intended praxis to meet its just purpose.

Business *versus* ethics

Sometimes ethical reasoning in the global economic arena has been conflated with efficient strategizing to mollify stakeholders while satiating shareholders. These are two important but distinct sorts of social enterprise. Of course they are closely tied up. As a matter of psychological fact, in all walks of our lives we seek out each other's views and priorities to figure out what is the right thing to do. Very often, but not always, setting things right morally correlates with garnering social approval. Business corporations gain public approbation from the slightest exhibition of concern over ethical problems in the community where they are located. But it is elementary to recognise that the conscientious pursuit of social approval is one sort of concern; the commitment to create and implement a moral policy is quite another. Correlatively, although moral decision making in a multicultural setting very often entails maintenance of cross-cultural consensus, it is not wholly reducible to doing in Rome what the Romans do.

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[360] Thomas Nagel op. cit. (2005); see also John Rawls, *The Law of Peoples,* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999).

[361] Founder of the Earth Institute, Columbia University in New York and Director of the UN Millennium Project, Jeffrey Sachs presented the MDGs to the Secretary-General of the UN in 2005.

Yet as plain as this contrast may seem, several widely read business ethicists theorizing about transnational corporate social responsibility do not concur with this point.[362] Some scholars and practitioners assume—mistakenly, as I will argue—that it is the diversity of cultural expectations existing worldwide which is the primary obstacle to running a business honourably in cash-strapped economies.[363] Husted and Allen claim, for instance, that "social responsibility is about stakeholder management; . . . it is about . . . achieving long term social objectives to create competitive advantage. [It] is about meeting agreed public expectations of [a] business firm's behaviour; . . . it is a way of protecting the firm's strategy from the social issues affecting the firm."[364] And "social responsiveness is [a firm's] ability to respond to social pressures . . ."[365] It would seem from the perspective of these business ethicists that practicing social responsibility across cultural borders involves chiefly unbiased reconciliation of conflicting preferences. Moon and Woolliams[366] depict the practice of corporate social responsibility as requiring a kind of even dealing or impartial compliance with the divergent norms of relevant stakeholders and business operators with respect to their culturally specific styles of body language, dress codes, handshaking, voice modulation, gestures of deference, conflicting responses to moral puzzles, without fearing or favouring any alternative. Applying cross-cultural ethics in this light presumes that the chief virtue is one's resolve to restrain from challenging or questioning or judging any point of view that registers as sufficiently popular on a suitably reputable opinion poll, such as Trompenaars' data base.[367]

This advice conflates the domains of the empirical and the ethical. Consider a regional corporate manager who is obliged to work out an ethical solution to a practical problem, like deciding what minimum wage to fix in an impoverished economy, or how much of the company's fiscal outlay to commit gratuitously to environmental protection measures. To adjudicate among her viable options, suppose she follows the advice of Moon and Woolliams[368] by consulting the Trompenaars data base of 50,000 entries from one hundred countries which summarises statistically the majority response to ethical dilemmas concerning like matters on a national basis. She then recommends a policy commensurate with the dominant views tracked in the country where her franchises are based. She thus attunes her corporate policy to local opinion, or to what Moor and Woolliams call 'the ethical environment'. But in so doing she has confused political correctness with moral conviction. The manager thus skirts the issue of what is the morally right thing to do and instead goes for what the traffic will allow. Like Kant's honest tradesman who always gives the correct change to avoid alienating his customers,[369] she is business savvy. By dodging the challenge of reasoning about the moral worth of public opinion, the regional manager may not have been culpable for doing anything morally wrong but neither is her action just or socially responsible in any robust ethical sense. She

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[362] Over-generalisation is a core error in global discourse concerning African affairs. The case dependent arguments in this essay may not apply elsewhere than West Africa, although I assume close analogues might.

[363] The view of cultural relativism as the key impediment to ethical transnational business practice is conveyed by William C. Frederick in "The Moral Authority of Transnational Corporate Codes," *Journal of Business Ethics,* vol. 10 no. 3, May (1991), pp. 165-177; also in "From CSR₁ to CSR₂: The making of business-in-society thought," *Business and Society,* vol. 33 (1994), pp. 150-164; by Bryan W. Husted and David B. Allen, "Is it ethical to use ethics as strategy?" *Journal of Business Ethics,* vol. 27 no.1/2, September (2000), pp. 21-31; Daniel Litvin, "Memo to the President: A Strategy for Business and Human Rights," *Foreign Policy,* vol. 139, November/December (2003), pp. 68-72.

[364] Bryan W. Husted and David B. Allen, "Corporate social strategy: toward a strategic approach to social issues in management," Academy of Management Meeting, San Diego, California (1998), p 9; Husted and Allen, ibid. (2000), pp. 23-25.

[365] Frederick, ibid. (1994), p. 154.

[366] Chris J. Moon and P. Woolliams, "Managing Cross-cultural Business Ethics," *Journal of Business Ethics,* vol. 27 no. 1/2, September (2000), pp. 105-115.

[367] Moon and Woolliams, ibid. (2000), pp. 107, 113.

[368] Frederick, ibid, (1991), p. 107.

[369] The allusion here is to Immanuel Kant's *Groundwork of a Metaphysic of Morals* (1785) first section, third paragraph.

may be exhibiting social *responsiveness* as Frederick defined it in 1994.[370] But this seems to be a play on words. An opportunist who notices that everyone's focus is so keenly pinned on a televised football match that he can safely raid the till without being caught, could be called socially responsive in Frederick's sense.

A pseudo-philosophical problem should be dispensed with quickly and parenthetically here. Someone might be tempted to challenge the feasibility of any instrument to gauge something as elusive as social pressure in a cultural setting wholly alien to those who produced the instrument. But this specious worry may be just a variation of overlooking the essentially public and learnable nature of linguistic meaning, and it is readily cured with a quick dose of Quine's model of radical translation.[371] As Donald Davidson famously stressed,[372] there is a limit to how hopelessly uncertain we can consistently imagine ourselves to be when interpreting other creatures' signals or conversations while still regarding them as survival-oriented in their given situation as we understand it. That limit is exceeded if we insist upon speculating about a case where noise taken to be speech is so impenetrably foreign that we could not possibly fathom what its participants intend by it, nor what they might possibly believe or value about their specific situation which might have caused them to create those sounds. For by the same token, in that instance there would be nothing to prompt one interpretation for the sounds rather than another, nor indeed would there by anything to compel us to interpret the sounds as meaningful at all. We would likely regard such an apparition of speech just as we do any apparently random noise, as we normally do the sound of whispering that correlates with the sight of rustling leaves. In the more typical case, once we have sufficient evidence to regard a situation as a cultural context and noise as human speech, we are thereby supplied with the prompts required to begin conjecturing approximate meanings to the noise being made. And from our conjecture of sensible trains of thought—whether or not they accurately characterise the views of others—we can still gain insight about ourselves and the world by comparing and contrasting those breeds of belief, value, and intention with the more familiar interpretations that we claim as our own.

The real trouble with Trompenaars' database as a guide to ethical strategising[373] is that it yields empirical facts about the choices made by questionnaire respondents, but it does no more than that. It does not reflect the moral propriety of those choices. It cannot. Arguably only a philosophically capable moral agent can perform this task; it is not an algorithmic problem. Suppose a computerized data base ingeniously avoids distilling the dissonance of a cross-cultural situation or of a complex society. The output of the data still would not yield a moral judgment. The fact that a practice is socially encouraged does not make it morally acceptable, even among the very people who condone it, covertly or overtly. Popular practice and moral rectitude on a given day may converge, or not, depending upon a host of circumstances. This is partly why there is a constant debate among constitutional law scholars about whether the jurists and legislators of government should try to educate, nudge, and propel their citizens to a more humane, more dignified law-abiding status quo than the one they inherited from their predecessors. The same challenge would preside in the global arena. If global justice were treated as a family resemblance term,[374] its meaning could not be captured as simply the aggregate of all instances of its use. Its meaning would rather transform and grow in unpredictable ways through intercultural analytical debate.

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[370] Frederick, ibid. (1994), p. 154.

[371] Willard van Orman Quine, "On the reasons for indeterminacy of translation," *Journal of Philosophy,* vol 67, no. 6, March 26 (1970), pp. 178-183.

[372] Donald Davidson, "Radical Interpretation," *Dialectia* (1973) pp. 313-328. Reprinted in *Inquiries into Truth and Interpretation,* Oxford: Clarendon, 1984) pp. 125-139.

[373] Moon and Woolliams, op.cit. (2000), p. 111.

[374] I am invoking here Ludwig Wittgenstein's non-essentialist view of word meaning which uncontroversially applies to value terms; see his *Philosophical Investigations,* (New York: Macmillan, 1953) §66-§71.

For those investing in a country whose majority of citizens are undergoing economic difficulties, the question arises: to what extent should foreign fiscal players dominating a field in the private sector be acting as frontrunners of enlightened development? There may be much for CSR consultants to gain by drawing from reasoned disputation between divergent culture-specific perspectives, in order to embellish their own socially inherited views about moral decency and professional integrity, in formulating company options for contributing locally to the promotion of justice in world trade. If corporate managers working in disadvantaged economies are to face seriously the challenge of social and environmental responsibility, they must ask themselves normative questions about the impact of their company's profiteering in a foreign culture struggling with the pressures of extreme economic disarray. Styles of handshaking and dress codes *per se* hardly come into it.

Millennium Development Goals

Within the last decade, a standard answer to such questions has involved reliance upon the UN Millennium Development Goals, authored by Jeffrey Sachs.[375] But apart from the surrealism of pegging their expiration date at 2015, the MDGs talk in numerical terms of minimum standards, foregoing the language of fundamental human rights or of humanitarian ideals.[376] While number crunching results in analyses that are equally accessible across all international languages, by the same token, quantitative descriptions couched in any language are inadequate for making non-market value assessments.[377] More profoundly, some of the mission statements expressed in the MDGs, if fulfilled, might actually exacerbate existing global economic inequities. For instance, MDG no. 8 mandates international partnerships between low income countries and the multinational corporate community, but does not require any legal apparatus to protect host countries against ruthless profiteering for which the MNC community has become notorious. The MDGs have been criticized by uncompromising economists because they adroitly bypass, for example, the needs of subsistence farmers in agrarian economies who are wholly responsible for feeding the majority of externally indebted populations.[378] The MDGs do not address the need for African labour markets to be protected against foreign commandeered exploitation and degradation; nor do the MDGs address the need to control price fluctuation of imported goods; nor do they countenance the need to correct the anomalies created by subsidies and tariffs favouring only G-8 countries' producers and suppliers.[379] Nor do the MDGs address the need to protect African manufacturers from monopolies inflicted by multinational conglomerates. The MDGs focus too simplistically on national aggregates and ignore the internal class-stratified variations in illiteracy, unemployment and poverty throughout national

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[375] Founder of the Earth Institute, Columbia University in New York and Director of the UN Millennium Project, Sachs presented the MDGs to the Secretary-General of the UN in 2005.

[376] Political economist Frank Hormeku, of Third World Network-Africa, addressing NETRIGHT, April 2006, Teachers' Hall, Accra.

[377] Michael Sandel discusses the importance of non-market values for assessing conditions in the global arena in his 2009 BBC Reith Lectures *A New Citizenship*. The Reith Lectures. Lecture 1: "Markets and Morals," June 9th transmission. BBC Radio 4. Transcript accessed August 10, 2010.

[378] Millennium Development Goal 8 requires countries to establish "further an open, rule-based predictable, non-discriminatory trading and financial system. . . *deal comprehensively with the debt problems . . . through national and international measures to make debt sustainable in the long term . . . make available the benefits of new technologies, especially ICT, in cooperation with the private sector*." My emphasis.

[379] A familiar example is the US and European cotton subsidies of US$1 billion annually, artificially bloat world wide supply, undermining the more competitive high quality suppliers in Mali and Chad whose consequent net loss reaches US $147 million annually, according to Fair Trade Report, released November 2010. BBC Worldservice *Network Africa* News, November 15, 2010.

territories. It has been argued that the correction of such regional imbalances is crucial to achieve sustainable economic growth.[380]

Human rights covenants

As an alternative to the MDGs, it is standard to consult the range of United Nations compacts and other world body documents for benchmarks and starting assumptions to establish codes for doing business in depressed economies.[381] The relevant institutions that appear to exist for encouraging respect for the UN treaties are the United Nations with its Declaration of Human Rights and its agencies in The Hague: the International Court of Justice which is the judiciary organ of the United Nations, and the International Criminal Court which was erected by a treaty established in 2002 called the Roman Statute. Since the jurisdiction of these bodies is not universally legitimated, their injunctions and proceedings can be, and have been, criticised as arbitrary and capricious. The principles of international law imply no rights and no obligations for third states that have not signed up to the Roman Statute, without that third party's consent.[382] They have no bearing whatsoever on the activities of MNCs which preside in the international arena under the protection of what is demarcated as 'the private domain'. Corportations are in some sense obliged by national legal instruments to respect the company laws of countries in which they do business. Yet ironically these UN covenants can still generate anomalies if one confuses the pursuit of ethical policy with the embrace of practices that are approved within a specific geographic region or trans-regional economic class. For example, from the little one can gather through reports issued by the UN Centre Against Apartheid in the 1980s, a prime example of such a *reductio ad absurdum* was the original Sullivan Principles, chartered in 1977 for American companies doing business in South Africa.[383] The Sullivan Principles were the directives by which American corporations earned formal consent to operate in South Africa by maintaining the standards of social welfare officially condoned at the time. Americans built infrastructure that facilitated apartheid laws (i.e. miners' single-occupancy dormitories, Township housing, and the Bantu schools that ran at $^1/_5$ the cost of educating white Afrikaner children). Compliant American corporations assiduously abided by discriminatory labour regulations, until they were prohibited from doing so in 1994—i.e. the policy blatantly colluded with apartheid. Yet semantically, the Sullivan Principles were "entirely consistent with" the human rights covenants inscribed in the UN Declaration and the European Convention, the Helsinki Act, the OECD Guidelines for multinational enterprises, the ILO Tripartite Declaration, the UN Code of Trans National Corporate Conduct, to name just six such compacts.[384]

The case of the Sullivan Principles for doing business in apartheid South Africa illustrates the obvious fact that the private sector of the global arena does not compel in any way ethical business

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[380] Abena Oduro, "How adequate are the MDGs for the achievement of poverty reduction and development in Ghana?" *Reclaiming the Human Sciences and Humanities through African Perspectives,* eds. Helen Lauer and Kofi Anyidoho (Accra: SubSaharan Press, 2012), pp. 381-387.

[381] Richard Falk, "Human Rights," *Foreign Policy* vol. 141, March/April (2004), pp. 18-20, 22, 24, 26, 28; Frederick op.cit. (1991, 1994); Ralph Hamann, "Introduction," *The Journal of Corporate Citizenship,* vol. 28, December (2007), pp. 15-29; Michael Ignatieff, "The Attack on Human Rights," *Foreign Affairs,* vol. 80, no. 6, November-December (2001), pp. 102-116; Daniel Litvin, op.cit. (2003); Darryl Reed, "Corporate Governance Reforms in Developing Countries," *Journal Business Ethics,* vol. 37 (2002), p. 223-227; G.J. Rossouw, A. van der Watt, and D.P. Malan, "Corporate Governance in South Africa," *Journal of Business Ethics,* vol. 37, no. 3, May (2002), pp. 289-302.

[382] 1969 Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties.

[383] These remarks may bear no relation to the Global Sullivan Principles publicised in 1999, the content of which I have no idea. See "The Sullivan Principles: No Cure for Apartheid," UN Centre Against Apartheid Notes and Documents No. 16/80, issued May 1980. *Associated Press* May 12, 2008.

[384] In 2008 apartheid victims were reported as suing 36 US corporations including Bank of America, Bristol Myers-Squibb, Colgate-Palmolive, Exxon Mobil, Hewlett Packard, IBM, Nestle, "for aiding in violations of international law," William C. Frederick, op.cit. (1991), p. 176 n. 1.

practices in regions that feature troubled and vulnerable national economies. As already noted, the international commercial norms which shape the global political economy are not binding by any formally enforceable, legal instruments.[385] Yet the authority of multinational corporate elites is insuperable. International norms of trade are invincible only because they protect the movement and accumulation of privately commanded profits of investors who, financially, back among the most powerfully endowed military-industrial conglomerates—perhaps in the history of modern civilisation. Secondly, development consultants whose advice is promulgated internationally by the knowledge-distribution agencies of these same conglomerates, remain more or less oblivious to the cultural values and beliefs not already included in the global chorus of military and economic authorities. This is not for lack of their individual concern, ethical responsibility, diligence, or formal training. The absence of authoritative voices able to articulate first-hand experience of twentieth century economic injustices is an indication of the colonial legacy of modern political history,[386] as I will try to show in the remainder of my remarks.

The invisibility of West Africa's indigenous political norms

The strengths of indigenous traditions of governance in Africa are largely invisible to the international gaze. Quite intentionally and without apology, there is much more to African governance and economic activity than may ever be permitted within the purview of international surveillance.[387] Overlooking the inclusion of indigenous leaders in Ghana would severely handicap any forum convened to craft a policy of redress, reconciliation, or rehabilitation in response to a specific allegation of MNC injustice anywhere in the country. And yet the intercultural contexts as they are formally sustained by world bodies and regional consortia in West Africa typically do not include traditional leaders. Normally it is only the modern elite members of every region of Africa that are selected as representing their populaces at the level of global agency. Traditional institutions of governance are regarded summarily as ornamental relics of an ineffectual primordial past. It is modern elites who control proceedings in the public domain—including of course the international arena—so, wittingly or not they also monopolize the voice of authoritative experience taken into consideration in the process of conclusive decision making. Unless measures are taken to protect against it, standard methods of consensus and deliberation will discount procedurally the voices of authority operating at the social levels of genuinely conflicting interests.[388] This is why some progressive activists advocating social and economic redress regard testimony *prior* to deliberations as key to the delivery of justice.[389]

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[385] Ann Claire Cutler, "Locating 'Authority' in the Global Political Economy," *International Studies Quarterly* vol. 43, no.1 (1999), pp. 59-81; Darryl Reed, op.cit. (2002), p. 240; Richard Falk op. cit. (2004), p. 22.

[386] Claude Ake, *Democracy and Development in Africa.* (Ibadan: Spectrum Books, 2001; first edition Washington DC: The Brookings Institution, 1996).

[387] These include sophisticated land distribution and family law, jurisprudence, social services including educational trusts, aid to the elderly, orphan aid, and holistic health care delivery, strict enforcement of environmental conservation policies. Helen Lauer, "Depreciating African Political Culture," *Journal of Black Studies* November vol. 38, no. 2 (2007), pp. 288-307.

[388] Mark Lance, "Fetishizing Process," *Institute of Anarchist Studies.* (Washington DC: Georgetown University, 2005). Accessible online <http://zinelibrary.info/files/Fetishizing%20Process.pdf>.

[389] Lynn Sanders op cit. (1997). I am grateful to Daniel H. Levine, Maryland School of Public Policy, for drawing my attention to the literature critiquing the elitism and hegemony prevalent in many consensus based systems. Quoting Levine in email correspondence: "the official denial of power is a mask for the operations of fairly rigid power hierarchies" which exclude those for whom access to juridical redress is denied systematically, University of Ghana, Legon November 2011. A similar concern is demonstrated in the abuses of land tenure rights committed in chieftaincy systems, decisively by Kojo Sebastian Amanor, "Custom, colonial ideology and privilege: the land question in Africa," *Reclaiming the Human Sciences and Humanities through African Perspectives,* eds. Helen Lauer and Kofi Anyidoho, (Accra: Sub Saharan Press, 2012) pp. 280-289. See also his "Custom, Community and Conflict: Neoliberalism, global market opportunity and local exclusion in the land question in Africa," presented to the International Symposium: *At the frontier of land issues: social embeddedness of rights and public policy* in Montpellier France, May 17-19 (2006). Accessed online November 2007: <http://www.mpl.ird.fr/colloque_foncier/Communications/PDF/Amanor%20TR.pdf>.

Elected officials in modern African democracies are regarded among the worst offenders in this respect of suppressing interests that might conflict with MNC profits. In response, modern states in Africa are perpetually subverted by the ordinary citizen on account of their geographic boundaries being anachronisms of former colonial intrusion, their inherited Western bureaucratic apparatus being sluggish and corrupt, their fiscal management policies being foreign imports, their compulsively distracted loyalties being monopolized by their dealings with greed motivated foreign venture capitalists. Africa's central states lose credibility insofar as they must deal with MNCs rather than confining their focus to custodianship of their citizens. Africa's modern state leaders lose credibility through the mandate they are obliged to fulfil by number eight of the Millennium Development Goals.[390] It is contentious whether central state governments of post-Independence Africa are adequate to represent those sectors of their populations who are most often victimized or have most to lose by MNC policies in general or through the impact of particular initiatives (e.g. oil drilling in the Niger Delta, export of poultry and rice to markets in Ghana, mechanised trolling and dredge-fishing of Senegal's waters). Political philosophers are in dispute as to whether the problem of good representation in developing economies is rooted in the method of government composition via multi-party electoral politics.[391] Modern state structures make the ancestors furious[392] because in large measure successive governments in Africa have designed their commercial and tax laws, domestic labour policy, emigration procedures, and centralised public services to serve foreign capital interests.[393] About this there is no dispute: central government agents in West Africa are compelled to act as reliable borrowers and accommodating business partners with MNCs in the global arena. For this priority they sacrifice their obligations to provide their constituents with social services (health care delivery, education, basic utilities, decent affordable housing, minimal wages). So the job of defining and fulfilling the stewardship duties of government most often falls to traditional authorities. Africans hold radically divergent views about their various systems of traditional authority, as to whether and how there should be integration of these indigenous governments into the central state apparatus of their constitutional republics and federations. This controversial aspect of African political culture and heritage requires the attention of international relations theorists who purport to advise Africans on the subject of good governance.

Since the 1980s the concern about good governance has been joined with concern over the fiscal management methods advised by the Bretton Woods institutions and the impacts of MNC activities in Africa. Some business management analysts argue that the current symptoms of organisational dysfunction faced in African corporations are historically rooted in centuries of euro-centric racism.[394] The Deleuze specialist Martin Fuglsang regards the history of corporate business

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[390] It may be speculative but not wholly misguided to imagine that the remote, invincible and elusive power of General Motors and Exxon, Anglo-Ashanti Gold and Dutch Shell Oil Company today make roughly the same impression upon contemporary residents of West Africa as was imposed by the giant slave forts of Elmina, Cape Coast and Gore Island upon ordinary residents along this coast four hundred years ago.

[391] On the counterproductive effect of multi party electoral politics in African countries undergoing economic development see Kwasi Wiredu, "The State, Civil Society and Democracy in Africa," *Quest,* Special Issue: *State and Civil Society in Africa,* June, vol. 12, no. 1, (1998), pp. 240-252.

[392] Paraphrased from a quotation of Ali Mazrui, *The Africans: a triple heritage.* (London: BBC publishers, 1986) p. 11; featured by Damian Opata, p. 135 of "The beautiful interpreters are not yet here: the poverty of a metaphysics of state and civil society in Africa," *Quest* vol. 12, no. 1 (1998) Special issue: Proceedings of the international interdisciplinary colloquium: State and civil society in Africa, July 13-18, pp. 135-150.

[393] Recently broadcast remarks of President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, if in earnest, suggest that Liberia may become a singular exception to the general rule within the next decade. *BBC*

[394] Stefano Harney and Nceku Q. Nyathi, "Race, Revolution and Organization," *Philosophy and Organization,* eds. Campbell Jones and René ten Bos, (London: Routledge, 2007) pp. 133-142. These symptoms include disaffection, under-performance, factionalism, nepotism, deflection of resources, abuse of facilities, excessive turnover or stultification of personnel, disarray, aimlessness, *aporia*; see B. B. Puplampu, "Toward a Framework for Understanding the Distressed Organization: Insights from Practitioner-Based

structures in Africa as indelibly linked to the "internal apparatus of capture in capitalism."[395] Even if such diabolical characterisations are taken to be figurative, some West Africans engaged in corporate ventures and related professions themselves remain unimpressed by these deconstructive styles of analysing African socio-economic history. They see such references to former colonial attitudes and practices as the direct causal determinants of today's economic disorder as exaggerated and anachronistic.[396] However, what the imagery does indicate, indisputably, is the growing disparity between the wealth and privilege prevailing in the formal economic sector on the one hand, and the grinding poverty sustained by a majority of West Africans subsisting in the agrarian, pastoral, and informal commercial sectors of their national economies. These two poles of experience in developing capitalist economies constitute either end of a continuum of diverging subcultures, the extremes of which grow evermore incommunicado in formal discursive contexts.

This emergence of radically divergent cultures as effects of class dynamics in West African perverted capitalist economies[397] is not at all unique to the region; it may be seen as an effect of the 'globalisation' of capital expansion more generally observed. People in Accra and Lagos have more in common with New Yorkers and Londoners and residents of Delhi and Moscow today than they do with their compatriots in distant 'rural' regions of their own countries.[398] This is evident not only in the way they live (the languages they speak, the clothes they wear and the food they eat), but in the diseases they contract, i.e. in the way they die. These cultural walls of silence building up alongside economic class divides in part sustains the global economic order by maintaining ignorance of important details about living conditions outside the formal sectors of national economies in transition. So it is in West Africa, that the degree to which social despair has been alleviated by the royal lineages and their ancient systems of governance remains vigorously disputed among intellectuals and culture spokesmen occupying different class strata.[399] Yet there is no gainsaying that modern state structures have been regarded as unfortunate perversions of governance in the collective West African experience for over half a millennium. So it is a commonplace, as much among street-sellers as company board members, to be cynical about the adage that elected politicians are employed to meet the concerns and needs of their constituents. For it is hard to dispute such cynicism in countries where a large sector of citizens do not speak any language in common with the members of parliament for whom they count as constituents. A widely held perception in West Africa is that the domain of electoral politics is a field akin to commercial business where success is measured with impunity by the accrual of personal wealth.

It needs to be stressed that the conflicts arising between local community activists resisting the intrusion of MNCs and their in-country agents are not due solely to contemporary *perceptions* and *attitudes* towards foreign business based on collective memory of trans-Atlantic trade. The conflict over oil drilling in the Niger Delta is an illustrative case in point.[400] Contrary to the perspective

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Organizational Interventions in an Emerging Economy," *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research*, Fall vol. 57 no. 4, Fall (2005) pp. 246-258.

[395] Martin Fuglsang, "Critique and resistance: on the necessity of organizational philosophy," *Philosophy and Organization,* eds. Campbell Jones and René ten Bos, (London: Routledge, 2007) pp. 133-142.

[396] I owe this point to A.T. Konu, retired Registrar of the University of Ghana, Legon, in conversation November 2011.

[397] Samir Amin, "The use of false concepts in the conventional discourse on Africa. (Is Africa really marginalised?)" in *History and Philosophy of Science for African Undergraduates,* ed. Helen Lauer (Ibadan: Hope Publications, 2003), pp. 130-135.

[398] Helen Lauer, "Depreciating African Political Culture," *Journal of Black Studies* vol. 38, no. 2 November (2007), pp. 288-307.

[time] Lecture/Seminar series of the Institute for Democratic Governance (IDEG) in 2007. Tribe vs. Nation. See also Kojo S. Amanor, op.cit. (2006, 2012).

[400] There is a voluminous literature documenting the negative impacts of MNCs in Africa; well known popularizations include Walden Bello's *Deglobalization.* (London: Zed, 2004); Joseph E. Stiglitz, *Globalization and Its Discontents,* (New York: Norton, 2002); and William K. Tabb, *Unequal Partners: A Primer on Globalization* (New York: New Press, 2002).

learned by corporate executive guidelines for managing public relations,[401] one might argue that it is chiefly the *actual* legacies left by international trade and commerce agencies themselves throughout history that contribute to the ethical problems encountered for foreign business investors today. These problems cannot be addressed without more information and awareness exchanged between stakeholders at all levels of West African economic development. To consider further the evidence of vertically drawn cultural divides: at a wider geographical level, the political organs aimed at regional integration formed by West Africa's central state bodies are comparably criticised for being out of touch with the populations whose interests they are supposed to protect in the global economic arena. In 2003 a Nigerian critic of ECOWAS observed that "a major flaw [of ECOWAS] is the absence of popular support and participation [and this is] . . . typical of most modern Africa's regional and sub-regional integration projects."[402] These cases indicate that breaches of communication about economic injustice in Africa can easily be oversimplified as a matter of insiders not divulging facts of the matter to the continent's outsiders. As observed, 'vertical' interclass disaffection significantly stymies vital flows of information as well.[403]

Yet any intercultural exchange within and between nation states must take place in the public domain of one cultural space or another. This suggests that in order to facilitate global justice as the outcome of intercultural confrontation, it must be orchestrated stage by stage. Early in the proceedings, attention must be focused upon narratives, anecdotes and personal accounts of local problems from individuals in the uncelebrated non-elite sectors of both national and global hierarchies. Nor is it just empirical data which needs gathering to develop moral policies that will be recognised as legitimate interculturally—both within and beyond national borders. Recognising and grappling with conceptual contrasts may prove to be just as essential for meeting the moral demands and practical challenges of global justice that international MNCs encounter.

Consider the very notion of justice itself. In much of West Africa, when two or more parties in a primordial public are in conflict, they seek a neutral party to mediate. If this fails, a formal hearing is sought in an established legal structure, presided over by a recognized authority who might be a traditional leader i.e. a royal in the village whose equanimity is respected. When called on to resolve the conflict, this assessor is not expected to establish which party is the winner and which the loser. Judicial process is not a competition according to traditional African political culture. Justice in this system is not served by determining who is legally right and who is wrong. Rather, conflict resolution through these procedures is the "restoration of an equilibrium that previously prevailed

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[401] According to Ed Nusbaum, the CEO of Grant Thornton International, ". . . key factors driving businesses globally towards more ethical business practices are a desire to keep costs down, to build brand and to secure staff, indicates the way in which corporate social responsibility (CSR) activity penetrates many areas of a business's operations. It also suggests that how a business is perceived is now as important as how CSR practices impact on the bottom line." *Corporate Social Responsibility: the power of perception,* Grant Thornton International Business Report (2011), p.2 Accessed January 10, 2012 <http://www.grantthornton.co.nz/Assets/documents/pubSeminars/IBR-2011-CSR-Report.pdf>

[402] A. I. Asinwaju, "The implementation of ECOWAS treaty protocols," p. 715 in *Ghana and Africa in the World Essays in Honor of Adu Boahen,* (ed) Toyin Falola, (Trenton, New Jersey: Africa World Press, 2003), pp. 715-729.

[403] In Ghana significant class divides rooted in educational opportunity continue today to reflect the disparities in social service created by British colonial rule who invested institutions, goods and services to the southern coast where foreign trade and administrative centres were located, disregarding the three northern regions and forest belt regions of the country as inconsequential. This is well established as a key contributor to lasting inequities in Ghana's economic development. See Ivan Addae-Mensah, *Education in Ghana: A tool for social mobility or social stratification?* J.B. Danquah Memorial Lectures (Accra: Ghana Academy of Arts and Sciences, April 2000); and Jacob Songsore, "Population Growth and Ecological Degradation in Northern Ghana: the Complex Reality," in *Ghana: Changing Values / Changing Technologies,* edited by Helen Lauer, (Washington DC: Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2000), accessible online at <http://www.crvp.org/book/Series02/II-5/contents.htm>; also the point is evidenced and expanded fully in his *Regional development in Ghana: the theory and the reality,* (Accra: Woeli Publishing, 2003).

before the conflict arose."[404] This contrast between meanings of justice and expectations of what its administration should deliver, is just one example of the many that might emerge in a rigorous deliberation about how to define and deliver solutions to the crises riddling the economic landscapes of West Africa's modernity. So it appears that without allowing individuals from different economic and social strata to explain the local problems they face and perceive as impacts of large scale business from their own points of view, efforts at corporate-driven reconciliation and reparation will be uninformed and possibly futile.[405] Business management theorists speculating on solutions to social and economic development problems can go seriously awry, for lack of exposure to the conditions and the value orientations of those whose claims of injustice they wish to address. I give one entertaining example of this kind of breakdown of theory below.

Intercultural blind spots

A widely received domestic concern emerging in West African corporate sectors is the entitlement to quality work. Business management specialists Norman Jackson and Pippa Carter[406] propose a diagnosis for the structural causes and attitudinal factors compelling habitual overwork of waged employees. They propose a universal prescription based on the contrast between "work in itself" (which may be self-determined) *vs.* "imposed work" (salaried labour).[407] But they seem unaware that their depiction is limited to the atypical conditions of wage labour in late-capitalist welfare states. Consequently their proposal of "labor extensification" for solving the stresses of overwork[408] is wholly inappropriate advice for subsistence agrarian economies. The extensional incongruence of 'workload' as defined in the two cultural contexts is so great that what is meant to be a lighthearted analysis is virtually offensive in its irrelevancy to the "workers of the world." For example in Ghana often the only alternative to keeping too busy to have *time* to eat, is the option of having nothing *to* eat. In most faltering economies of Africa, overwork is unrecognizable as any deviation from the norm. Background material conditions add significantly to the intrinsic pressures of a particular business operation's disorganisation. For instance one deleterious effect of inadequate road networks is their impact upon the nutritional intake of the children whose parents belong to the wage earning professional class in Ghana, who are further constrained, not relieved, by the supplementary "not work" of commuting. This aspect of extra curricular work-related stress would go wholly unnoticed on the Jackson and Carter model. Many families with two high wage earners are in traffic on average four to six hours each day. Nine percent of their primary school age children have measurably stunted growth because they are undernourished, due to negligence of house help or the notorious 'meals on wheels' syndrome that plagues so many middle class families commuting in and out of Accra and its luxury suburbs.[409] A perverted capitalist system prevents some people from doing any salaried work at all and others from doing nothing but work. For civil servants on a lower rung of the informal sector, two or three jobs in Greater Accra attract an income that meets the cost of public transport to the workplace.

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[404] I am grateful to Professor Divine Amenumey, History Department, University of Cape Coast, Ghana, for this succinct account. See Helen Lauer, op cit. (2007) p. 302.

[405] This has been well documented in the Women in Development literature since the 1980s. See the excellent, seminal compendium by Patricia Stamp, *Technology, Gender and Power in Africa,* (Ottawa: International Development Research Centre IDRC, 1989).

[406] Norman Jackson and Pippa Carter, "Workers of the world . . . relax! Introducing a philosophy of idleness to organization studies," in *Philosophy and Organization,* eds. Campbell Jones and René ten Bos, (London: Routledge, 2007a), pp. 143-156. For more of the same see their *Rethinking Organisational Behaviour: a poststructuralist framework,* (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 2007b).

[407] Jackson and Carter, ibid. (2007a) p. 153.

[408] Jackson and Carter, op cit. (2007a) p. 150.

[409] Delali Badasu studied the phenomenon in Ghana during 1998 of severe stunting due to malnourishment. She observed in as many as 9% of children in a cross section of all the economic classes that were studied, not just the lowest income families. Stunting occurred in high income groups of middle and upper income suburbs of Accra where working parents carry children in automobiles before and after working hours, or leave their children responsible for their own food intake or dependent upon low income house-helpers who are often themselves hungry older children; see her "Urban Households Coping with Child Care," Paper delivered to the *3rd Annual Conference Historical Society of Ghana: Tradition and Modernity in Ghanaian Urbanisation,* July 17th (2004) University of Ghana, Legon. Also for statistics of cross-class malnourishment see *Situational Analysis 2000*, Ghana Report for ISSER and UNICEF, p. 41.

Contrasting starkly with Jackson and Carter's thesis, the causes behind dysfunctional stresses of overworking in Ghana cannot be relegated to theological principles (like the Protestant work ethic) or to individuals' acquired personality disorders (like misplaced loyalty or dislocated identity). No-tech households require that most work is conducted outside the formal sector and outside office hours. So the prescriptive contrast which Jackson and Carter draw[410] is inadequate to capture the conditions in subsistence agrarian economies. In Ghana the majority of children are engaged in "work in itself" as defined by Carter and Jackson, for they are not earning a regular wage. But they will never join a viable workforce since they are woefully stuck in "not-work" activity and denied what for them would be a privilege, of being restricted to the "imposed work" schedule of daily school attendance or a trade apprenticeship. Most children lucky enough to attend school must engage in petty labour ("not work") for four to six hours a day to help bring food to their families and manage their own school fees.[411] Thus the "not work" that Jackson and Carter encourage can exacerbate the problems they purport to solve. For instance on the pretext that most labour in Ghana is non-salaried without any traceable fixed income, the statistical services unit in Ghana's Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning is under no obligation to maintain a national unemployment index.[412] And to comply with World Bank dictates (which are fashioned on the basis of reports and cutting edge "poststructuralist" advice that consultants like Jackson and Carter produce) the government of Ghana recently encouraged new college graduates to find their feet in 'private entrepreneurial' activities instead of seeking salaried jobs in formal corporate structures. The negative implications for tax revenue collection and other knock on effects of a bloated informal sector of fragile economies lie beyond the scope of many analysts in development economics who romanticize self-reliance as if it were the driving motivation behind joining the vast majority in non-wage commercial and agrarian subsistence labour.[413] As it manifests in Ghana's bloated informal sector, Jackson and Carter's "not-work" solution is an orchestrated institutionalization of mass unemployment. To call this an improvement over the stresses imposed by the salaried job sector is at best a nasty joke.

In order to humanize management policy, Jackson and Carter further recommend upgrading our regard for *human* resources as we now do our *natural* resources. They assume that this approach will inspire a tidy transfer of environmental ethics, principles of ecological cultivation, environmental protection and resource preservation, to the domain of manpower.[414] This brainstorm is particularly repugnant in a postcolonial society where the Victorian legacy of viewing human populations as extensions of local flora and fauna still lingers like a depressing stench over labour management policy. Carter and Jackson ultimately appeal for legitimacy to Bertrand Russell's famous essay, "In Praise of Idleness."[415] But reflections about the meaning of life posed by an icon of the privileged aristocratic English gentry do not help to confront the consequences of perpetuating today's global division of labour, even if those reflections have an elegant socialist flavour. The fundamental questions that Ghanaian CSR consultants need to face do not concern what it *means* to be human so much as *who* is to be counted and *treated* as human. And correlatively, contrary to the claim of these theorists, "the future direction of organisation studies" depends not upon *whether* philosophical questions regarding overwork will be asked, but rather *which* philosophical questions will be asked. This correction cannot occur without continual intercultural checks on the connotation of words in use and the local conditions in which they refer.

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[410] Jackson and Carter, op cit. (2007a), p. 153.

[411] See Judith S. Sawyerr's reports on public schools in Ga West (completed in December 2005) and in Dangme West Districts of Greater Accra (completed in October 2006) commissioned by the Greater Accra Branch of the Ghana National Education Campaign Coalition (GNECC). Also see her "Failures in the Provision of Free Public Basic Education in Ghana," in *Tinabantu* (*Journal of African National Affairs*) vol. 2, no. 2, August (2006).

[412] Dr. Anthony Tsekpo, Senior Research Fellow of ISSER, University of Ghana Legon and member of the Tripartite Committee of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, in conversation, June 2006.

[413] See for instance Kwame A. Ninsin's correctives of Naomi Chazan's romanticised theory of self employment in the informal sector, "Informalization and Ghanaian Politics," *Ghana: Changing Values / Changing Technologies* ed. H. Lauer, Washington DC: Council for Research in Values and Philosophy (2000). Online at <http://www.crvp.org/book/Series02/II-5/contents.htm.>]

[414] Jackson and Carter, op.cit. (2007a); see also David Dawson, "Applying stories of the environment to business," *Journal of Business Ethics,* vol. 58 no. 1/3, April-May (2005), pp. 37-49.

[415] Bertrand Russell "In praise of idleness," (1932) *In Praise of Idleness and Other Essays,* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co, 1935).

Conclusion

The considerations canvassed here suggest that a major obstacle to addressing the problems regarded as injustice in fragile economies is the ignorance that obtains between cultures. We noted that the cultural boundaries inhibiting such vital knowledge obtain both vertically and horizontally: cultural contrasts that obscure a workable notion of global economic injustice are determined by economic and social class divides within a nation as well as by the geographic and historical divides between nations. Perhaps because the political elites of modernity play such a critical role in the dissemination of knowledge internationally, domestic facts about people coping with severe economic inequities and social hardships in African nation-states remain largely opaque to G-8 country leaders and to the multinational business experts whom they consult. Speculations of how one would apply principles of corporate social responsibility internationally to alleviate these injustices are likely to fall short of their purpose. So it is crucial that advocates of global justice critically engage with the heirs of indigenous political culture whose voices are typically overlooked in official assemblies of modern global discourse.[416] It appears that testimony is uneliminable in any intercultural process of formulating what economic justice would mean in those regions most urgently demanding its delivery. Because of this requirement, the search for a workable definition of global justice is best served by treating it as an open textured concept whose connotations are necessarily local and culturally dependent, clarified, deepened, and changing over time, through intercultural contestation and interrogation. The very structure of ethical reasoning itself might provide *a priori* reasons for expecting that intercultural disputation will be a source of moral insight without needing to speculate the existence of cultural universals. I have yet to analyse the potential of normative disagreement in this light.

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[416] Lynn Sanders counsels the importance of testimony in democratic process in "Against Deliberation," *Political Theory,* June, vol. 25 no.3 (1997), pp. 347-377. So do Iris Marion Young, "Activist challenges to deliberative democracy." *Political Theory,* vol. 29 no.5, 2001, pp. 670-690; and Archon Fung, "Deliberation before the revolution." *Political Theory,* vol. 33 no.2 (2005), pp. 397-419.