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Corresponding Author	Family Name	Navin
	Particle	
	Given Name	<b>Mark</b>
	Suffix	
	Division	Department of Philosophy
	Organization	Oakland University
	Address	Rochester, MI, USA
	Email	navin@oakland.edu

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**Abstract** Among Anglo-American philosophers, contemporary debates about global economic justice have often focused upon John Rawls's *Law of Peoples*. While critics and advocates of this work disagree about its merits, there is wide agreement that, if today's wealthiest societies acted in accordance with Rawls's Duty of Assistance, there would be far less global poverty. I am skeptical of this claim. On my view, the Duty of Assistance is unlikely to require the kinds and amounts of assistance that would be sufficient to eradicate much global poverty. This is because the DA cannot require societies to rapidly or radically change their ways life, and because the kinds and amounts of assistance that are most likely to eradicate global poverty would cause rapid and radical changes to the ways of life of the societies that undertook them.

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**Chapter 14** 1  
**How Demanding Is the Duty of Assistance?** 2

**Mark Navin** 3

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**14.1 The Duty of Assistance** 15

The world's wealthiest societies ought to do more to assist the world's poorest societies, 16  
 but it is unclear whether John Rawls's Duty of Assistance (hereafter DA) is among 17  
 the reasons why this should be so.<sup>1</sup> Most of the world's poor live in societies that 18  
 lack the institutional means to provide for their basic needs.<sup>2</sup> In his *Law of Peoples*, 19




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<sup>1</sup> For helpful feedback on this paper, I thank Samuel Freeman, Kok-Chor Tan, the philosophy faculty of Oakland University, the participants in the 2010 AMINTAPHIL conference, and the editors of this volume.

<sup>2</sup> Certainly, all too much poverty exists in societies that possess (otherwise) well-ordered institutions, where it results from the deliberate efforts of domestic elites. However, instances such as these – where poverty is caused by domestic human rights violations – do not account for much of the world's

M. Navin (✉)

[AU1] Department of Philosophy, Oakland University, Rochester, MI, USA  
 e-mail: navin@oakland.edu

20 John Rawls introduces the DA as a response to this injustice. It requires developed  
 21 societies to “help burdened societies to be able to manage their own affairs,” by  
 22 assisting in the development of “political and cultural traditions, the human capital  
 23 and know-how, and...the material and technological resources needed to be well-  
 24 ordered.”<sup>3</sup> The DA aims at more than mere subsistence. It targets the satisfaction of  
 25 persons’ basic needs, which include all the needs that “must be met if citizens are  
 26 to be in a position to take advantage of the rights, liberties, and opportunities of  
 27 their society.”<sup>4</sup> This includes healthcare and education, among other social goods.  
 28 If developed societies could hit the target at which the DA aims, our world would be  
 29 free of much of today’s worst economic injustices. In this way, the DA identifies a  
 30 demanding goal for international economic justice. However, I will argue that the  
 31 DA may not require donor societies to sacrifice much in pursuit of this (admittedly)  
 32 demanding goal. For this reason, I will argue that the DA is an inadequate response  
 33 to contemporary global economic injustices.

34 Many others have criticized Rawls’s Duty of Assistance. Some have claimed that  
 35 global economic justice requires the ongoing regulation of international inequalities  
 36 of wealth and income, which the DA does not require.<sup>5</sup> Others have argued that the [AU2]  
 37 DA focuses too much upon the institutional needs of societies, rather than upon the  
 38 basic needs of individuals.<sup>6</sup> Still others have argued that the DA detracts attention  
 39 from broader structural and historical injustices of the global economy.<sup>7</sup> However,  
 40 many critics of the DA have claimed that wealthier societies would have to make  
 41 significant sacrifices to satisfy that principle’s demands, and that such sacrifices

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(worst) poverty. For that reason, principles of poverty eradication that respond to the problem of (what Rawls calls) ‘Outlaw States’ are not central to efforts to alleviate global poverty. For the idea of ‘Outlaw States’ and the difference between them and ‘Burdened Societies’, see John Rawls, *The Law of Peoples* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 5. See Nancy Kokaz, “Poverty and Global Justice,” *Ethics & International Affairs* 21, no. 3 (2007): 317–336 for the role that responses to human rights violations may play within a broader Rawlsian scheme to alleviate global poverty.

<sup>3</sup> *The Law of Peoples*, 111, 106.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 38 n47. This quotation continues: “These needs include economic means as well as institutional rights and freedoms.”

<sup>5</sup> For advocacy of global distributive justice, see Thomas W. Pogge, *Realizing Rawls* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989); Charles R. Beitz, *Political Theory and International Relations*, Revised. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999); Darrel Moellendorf, *Cosmopolitan Justice* (Boulder: Westview Press, 2002); Kok-Chor Tan, *Justice Without Borders* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004). For arguments about the inadequacy of the DA in comparison to global distributive justice, see Thomas Pogge, “‘Assisting’ the Global Poor,” in *The Ethics of Assistance*, ed. Deen K. Chatterjee (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 260–288; Chris Armstrong, “Defending the duty of assistance?,” *Social Theory and Practice* 35, no. 3 (2009): 461–482.

<sup>6</sup> Thomas Pogge, “Do Rawls’s Two Theories of Justice Fit Together?,” in *Rawls’s Law of Peoples*, ed. Rex Martin and David Reidy (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 206–225.

<sup>7</sup> Kok-Chor Tan, *Toleration, Diversity, and Global Justice* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000), 176.

would be sufficient to eradicate (much of) global poverty. That is, even though its critics claim that the DA is deficient in one or more respects (e.g., that it does not address the sources of international inequalities of wealth), many of them agree that the DA requires wealthier societies to act in ways that would bring about the end of (much) global poverty. For example, Thomas Pogge (a prominent critic of the DA) says that the DA:

supports a critique of most of the more affluent societies today for doing far too little toward enabling poorer societies to be well-ordered. Given the magnitude of their failure and indifference, this critique might well qualify those wealthier societies as ‘outlaw states’ in Rawls’s sense.<sup>8</sup>

Pogge’s idea seems to be that, from the point of view of the DA, the existence of large amounts of preventable global poverty condemns the world’s wealthier societies. If the world’s wealthier societies were doing what the DA required, fewer poorer societies would be burdened by the absence of well-ordered institutions. As one might expect, many of those who are sympathetic to Rawls’s account of international justice say similar things about the DA’s demands.<sup>9</sup> For example, Rex Martin says that fulfilling the DA’s requirements “would involve a high level of commitment. The delivery of such aid would be expensive, costing far more than the wealthier states are currently laying out.”<sup>10</sup>

I am skeptical of the ‘consensus view’ that the Duty of Assistance requires far more from developed societies than they are currently doing. Specifically, I think it is unlikely that the DA can require the kinds and amounts of assistance that, under current conditions, would be sufficient to eradicate global poverty. I will argue that this is because the DA cannot require societies to provide assistance when doing so would result in rapid or radical changes to their own ways of life. Since many of the forms of international assistance that are likely to be most effective against global poverty are also likely to cause rapid or radical changes to the ways of life of donor societies, the DA is unlikely to require sufficiently efficacious poverty eradication efforts. I begin my argument by showing that the DA is analogous to the natural duty of mutual aid that Rawls introduces in *Theory of Justice* (hereafter *TJ*). Then, I reflect on Rawls’s claim that the duty of mutual aid does not demand significant sacrifices on the part of donors, and I argue that a rapid and radical change to a nation’s way of life constitutes a significant sacrifice. Finally, I suggest that two of the most celebrated means of international economic development – export-led


<sup>8</sup> “Do Rawls’s Two Theories of Justice Fit Together?,” 223.

<sup>9</sup> Among the defenders of Rawls’s DA are Samuel Freeman, *Justice and the Social Contract* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), chs. 8 and 9; David Reidy, “A Just Global Economy: In Defense of Rawls,” *The Journal of Ethics* 11, no. 2 (2007): 193–236; Mathias Risse, “What We Owe to the Global Poor,” *The Journal of Ethics* 9, no. 1 (2005): 81–117; Joseph Heath, “Rawls on Global Distributive Justice: A Defence,” in *Canadian Journal of Philosophy Supplementary Volume*, ed. Daniel Weinstock (Lethbridge: University of Calgary Press, 2007).

<sup>10</sup> “Rawls on International Distributive Economic Justice,” in *Rawls’s Law of Peoples*, ed. Rex Martin and David Reidy (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 226–42, at 238.

76 growth and relaxed immigration restrictions – would likely cause rapid and radical  
77 changes to the ways of life of wealthier societies. For that reason, they cannot be  
78 required by the DA.

## 79 14.2 The Natural Duties

80 In *Law of Peoples*, Rawls discusses the demands of the Duty of Assistance. However,  
81 this discussion focuses only on the goal at which the DA aims, and on the fact that  
82 the DA demands nothing of donor societies after this goal has been met. That is, the  
83 DA requires developed societies to offer assistance up to the point at which all of  
84 the world's societies possess well-ordered institutions. After this goal has been met,  
85 the DA requires nothing more. For example, the DA does not require further actions  
86 aimed at mitigating international inequalities of wealth or income, beyond what is  
87 required to develop and maintain well-ordered institutions. This account of the  
88 demands of the DA is instructive, but it does not tell us about the magnitude of the  
89 sacrifices that the DA may require of donor societies in pursuit of the DA's goal.  
90 Furthermore, it does not follow from the fact that the DA continues to place *some*  
91 demands on wealthier societies, i.e., until all societies have well-ordered institu-  
92 tions, that these demands are onerous, or that the DA will require sacrifices that are   
93 sufficient to alleviate global poverty.

94 Unfortunately, Rawls says almost nothing about the sacrifices that the Duty of  
95 Assistance can require of donor societies. However, we can make some progress on  
96 this front by showing that the DA is analogous to another principle Rawls discusses,  
97 the natural duty of mutual aid, and about whose demands Rawls is more explicit.  
98 For a discussion of this duty, we turn to Rawls's *Theory of Justice*. While the majority  
99 of *TJ* concerns principles for the regulation of the basic institutions of a domestic  
100 society, Rawls also discusses principles that ought to regulate the conduct of indi-  
101 viduals. Among these are the natural duties, which apply “without regard to our  
102 voluntary acts,” and which have “no necessary connection with institutions or social  
103 practices.”<sup>11</sup> Rawls contrasts these duties with principles of social justice, which  
104 regulate the background institutions of social cooperation; and with obligations of  
105 fairness, which oblige a person in virtue of her willing acceptance of the benefits of  
106 participation in just institutions.<sup>12</sup> What makes natural duties distinct is that their  
107 authority does not depend upon institutional entanglements or historical interac-  
108 tions. Rather, the natural duties are a response to the fundamental moral demand to  
109 show proper respect for other moral persons.

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<sup>11</sup> John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, Rev. ed. (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1999), 98.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 96.

One reason to think that the Duty of Assistance is analogous to the natural duties that Rawls discusses in *TJ* is that, like the natural duties, the authority of the DA does not depend upon institutional or historical facts. Rawls is explicit that the DA is not a principle of (background) distributive justice, and that its authority does not depend upon the existence of a global basic structure that is analogous to the set of social and political institutions that shape social cooperation within domestic societies.<sup>13</sup> Among other reasons, this is because the DA aims to bring otherwise isolated societies *into* the Society of Peoples, and it therefore, requires more than the mere regulation of existing forms of institutional interdependence. Instead, the DA requires that wealthier societies help those societies who are not currently benefiting from international cooperation (due to the failure of domestic institutions) to be able to do so.

Another reason to think that the Duty of Assistance is analogous to the natural duties is that, in *TJ*, Rawls anticipates that his account of international justice will consist of the application of the natural duties to the relations between societies. He says, “[o]ne aim of the law of nations is to assure the recognition of [natural] duties in the conduct of states.”<sup>14</sup> Of course, this statement predated the publication of Rawls’s *Law of Peoples* (and his earlier article, “Law of Peoples”) by over 20 years.<sup>15</sup> However, Rawls does nothing in his later works to reject the claims he makes about international justice in *TJ*. Therefore, the claims he made about international justice in *TJ* count in favor of the view that the DA is analogous to the natural duties.

I have said, so far, that I think that Duty of Assistance is ‘analogous’ to the natural duties. I mean by this that, like the natural duties (and, specifically, the natural duty of mutual aid), the DA does not depend upon institutional or historical facts, but is a response to the moral personhood of those in need. Others have attempted to give a more determinate account of the way in which the DA relates to the natural duties.<sup>16</sup> However, my argument does not depend upon any specific account of the way in which the DA is like the natural duties. I claim only that, like the natural duties, the DA is neither a principle of redress for historical wrongs, nor a principle of fairness in response to the existence of beneficial interactions, nor a principle for the regulation of background institutions. The DA, like the natural duties, is a principle for regulating the conduct of moral agents, and its demands do not presuppose the existence of any past or present relationships between those agents.

<sup>13</sup> *The Law of Peoples*, chap. 15–6.

<sup>14</sup> *A Theory of Justice*, 99.

<sup>15</sup> Interestingly, the Duty of Assistance does not appear in the first published version of Rawls’s full-length work on international justice (“The Law of Peoples,” *Critical Inquiry* 20, no. 1 (1993): 36–68).

<sup>16</sup> Hugo Seleme argues that the DA expresses the demands of the natural duty of justice for collectively organized individuals. Nancy Kokaz endorses a broader account, and she includes the natural duty of mutual aid among the grounds of the DA. In contrast, Wilfrid Hinsch argues that the DA expresses the demands of a *sui generis* natural duty, one that applies in the first case to societies and not to individual human beings. See H. O. Seleme, “A Rawlsian Dual Duty of Assistance,” *Canadian Journal of Law and Jurisprudence* 23 (2010): 163–255; Kokaz, “Poverty and Global Justice”; Wilfrid Hinsch, “Global Distributive Justice,” in *Global Justice*, ed. Thomas Pogge (Wiley-Blackwell, 2001), 58–78.

142 While Rawls says almost nothing about the sorts of sacrifices that the Duty of  
 143 Assistance can require, he does discuss the demandingness of the natural duties.  
 144 And, inasmuch as the DA is analogous to the natural duties, its demands may be  
 145 analogous, too. Rawls says that the natural duties are not very demanding. He says  
 146 that one must fulfill the natural duties, “provided that one can do so without exces-  
 147 sive risk or loss to oneself.”<sup>17</sup> He says that one must work to realize the aims of the  
 148 natural duties only when doing so is “relatively easy” and that one is “released from  
 149 this duty when the cost to ourselves is considerable.”<sup>18</sup> Of course, there is no obvious  
 150 criteria of ‘easiness’ or ‘excessiveness’, especially since the ease or excess associ-  
 151 ated with acting on the basis of the natural duties depends upon the other duties and  
 152 obligations that an agent may face. And, as Rawls observes, there are “no obvious  
 153 rules” for dealing with questions about the priority of the various duties that one  
 154 may face.<sup>19</sup> However, we can make some progress towards an account of the priority  
 155 of the DA by identifying how it relates to the goals of Rawls’s account of interna-  
 156 tional justice.

### 157 14.3 Mutual Respect Among Societies

158 The goal of international justice that Rawls endorses in *Law of Peoples* is a society  
 159 of peoples, whose members relate to each other on terms of mutual respect. Rawls  
 160 elaborates on the conditions of respectful relationships between free and equal soci-  
 161 eties by reference to what he calls the ‘two fundamental interests’ of societies.  
 162 Specifically, a society of peoples who relate to each other on terms of mutual respect  
 163 (i.e., as ‘free and equal’ participants in international cooperation) is marked by  
 164 mutual concern for societies’ two fundamental interests. According to Rawls, a  
 165 society’s first fundamental interest is to possess and maintain well-ordered political  
 166 institutions that have authority over a defined territory.<sup>20</sup> Therefore, international  
 167 justice demands that societies not needlessly tolerate conditions under which other  
 168 societies are unable to maintain just (or decent) domestic institutions. The DA is an  
 169 expression of this demand. It requires societies with more-or-less well-ordered  
 170 institutions to assist societies which lack functioning institutions.

171 A society’s second fundamental interest consists of

172 a people’s proper self-respect of themselves as a people, resting on their common awareness  
 173 of their trials during their history and of their culture with its accomplishments. Altogether  
 174 distinct from their self-interest for their security and the safety of their territory [i.e., the first

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<sup>17</sup> *A Theory of Justice*, 98.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 100.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 298–9.

<sup>20</sup> “Nations have two fundamental interests. First, is their interest to protect their political independence and their free culture with its civil liberties, to guarantee their security, territory, and the well-being of their citizens,” *The Law of Peoples*, 34.

fundamental interest], this interest shows itself in people's insisting on receiving from other peoples a proper respect and recognition of their equality...just peoples are fully prepared to grant the very same proper respect and recognition to other peoples as equals.<sup>21</sup>

According to Rawls, a society is interested not only in protecting its borders and its political institutions (its first fundamental interest). It wants also to receive proper respect for its culture and its sense of itself. International relations of mutual respect, therefore, require that societies receive recognition that their ways of life are valuable, and that their cultures and histories are valued contributions to humanity's experiments in living.

This second fundamental interest provides additional reason for the Duty of Assistance. While the first fundamental interest speaks to each society's rational pursuit of functioning institutions, the second fundamental interest addresses each society's moral need to be recognized as an equal member of the international community. In order to satisfy this second fundamental interest, international cooperation must be governed by principles that ensure that all societies receive equal recognition and respect. Acting in accordance with the DA is one way in which the members of the international community demonstrate respect for each other, and in which they generate conditions under which societies can respect themselves. In *TJ*, Rawls claims that widespread commitment to the natural duty of mutual aid communicates respect for others and cultivates their self-respect. He says, "[t]he public knowledge that others are willing to act on the duty of mutual aid is necessary for us to have a sense of our own self-worth."<sup>22</sup> If the DA is analogous to the natural duties (including the natural duty of mutual aid), then it must be demanding enough to communicate to burdened societies that wealthier societies value them as equals. In this way, international relations of mutual respect require the DA to be demanding enough to communicate that burdened societies are "appreciated and confirmed by others who are likewise esteemed."<sup>23</sup> While societies' two fundamental interests identify reasons to prioritize international assistance, they also identify reasons for restricting the demands of the Duty of Assistance. Recall that the DA cannot require excessive or burdensome sacrifices, inasmuch as its demands are analogous to the demands of the natural duties (including the natural duty of mutual aid). First, given that societies have a fundamental interest in the maintenance of well-ordered institutions, the DA cannot require donor societies to make sacrifices that would jeopardize those institutions. A more restrictive limit for the demands of the DA arises from societies' second fundamental interest. Given that societies have a fundamental interest in their self-respect, and given that national self-respect is based (in part) on international recognition of the value of a nation's way of life, the DA cannot require changes to societies' ways of life that would undermine national self-respect.

<sup>21</sup> *The Law of Peoples*, 34–5.

<sup>22</sup> *A Theory of Justice*, 298.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 386. Especially relevant here is Rawls's claim, in *Law of Peoples*, that efforts to maintain a society's self-respect are of "great importance," and that the global basic structure ought to be regulated so that all societies can realize "a certain proper pride and sense of honor," *The Law of Peoples*, 62.





213 Even though international relations of mutual respect require a demanding duty  
 214 of assistance, they do not require societies to be indifferent to the distinction between  
 215 *their* institutions and ways of life and the institutions and ways of life of societies  
 216 burdened by unfortunate conditions. The mere fact that a donor society could realize  
 217 advantages for burdened societies that exceed the costs to its own does not, by itself,  
 218 generate a reason for offering that assistance.<sup>24</sup> For example, a society that could  
 219 create well-ordered institutions in three other societies need not do so, if such an  
 220 effort would jeopardize the well-orderedness of its own institutions. Similarly, a  
 221 society that could help protect the ways of life of three other societies need not do so,  
 222 if such an effort would come at a morally significant cost to its own way of life.

223 My claim that a commitment to international relations of mutual respect restricts  
 224 the demands of the DA is bolstered by Rawls's rejection of conceptions of interna-  
 225 tional justice which focus upon (aggregate) well-being. For example, Rawls accuses  
 226 advocates of global distributive justice of prioritizing the well-being of individual  
 227 persons throughout the world, rather than the freedom and equality of societies.<sup>25</sup>  
 228 On Rawls's view, international justice aims at maintaining and expanding the  
 229 Society of Peoples, by preserving the well-orderedness of institutions in developed  
 230 societies, and by encouraging the development of well-ordered institutions in  
 231 burdened societies. It would be counterproductive to achieve increased well-  
 232 being – or institutional well-orderedness – in some burdened societies, if it meant  
 233 sacrificing the institutional well-orderedness or national self-respect of donor soci-  
 234 eties. In *TJ*, Rawls echoes this rejection of a morality of indifference to one's own  
 235 projects or values. He says that justice “does not allow that the sacrifices imposed  
 236 on a few are outweighed by the larger sum of advantages enjoyed by many.”<sup>26</sup> On  
 237 Rawls's view, mutual respect does not require that we treat the projects and pursuits  
 238 of others as valuably as we treat our own. Instead, mutual respect requires only that  
 239 we be “prepared to give reasons for our actions whenever the interests of others are  
 240 materially affected.”<sup>27</sup>

241 Potential donor societies are able to provide burdened societies with good reasons for refus-  
 242 ing to provide assistance, even before they risk causing harms to themselves that are com-  
 243 parable to the harms that their international assistance would have prevented in other  
 244 societies.<sup>28</sup>



<sup>24</sup>Rawls claims that the goal of international justice is the creation and maintenance of just institutions within the world's societies, and not the maximization of the well-being of individuals or of the world's worst off person, *The Law of Peoples*, 119–20. Furthermore, Rawls argues that the ideal of mutual respect between societies rules out classical or utilitarian principles of international justice, *Ibid.*, 40.

<sup>25</sup>*Ibid.*, 119–20.

<sup>26</sup>*A Theory of Justice*, 3.

<sup>27</sup>*Ibid.*, 297.

<sup>28</sup>Here, I follow Richard Miller, who says “In general, in order to respect others, one need not be prepared to do violence to who one is, radically changing one's worthwhile goals in order to be a more productive satisfier of others' urgent needs...I can reasonably reject a rule that requires me to end the continuing presence of my current personality in my own life,” “Beneficence, Duty and Distance,” *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 32, no. 4 (2004): 357–383, at 359.

A society's two fundamental interests provide reasons for these restrictions on the demands of the Duty of Assistance. The first fundamental interest ensures that the DA does not require societies to jeopardize the well-orderedness of their institutions for the sake of global poverty relief. The second fundamental interest restricts the demands of the DA even further. It ensures that the DA does not require societies to undermine their national self-respect for the sake of global poverty relief. Since a society's self-respect can be undermined by sacrifices that radically and rapidly change its way of life (but do not go so far as to undermine the well-orderedness of its institutions), the second fundamental interest places the most restrictive conditions on the demands of the DA. For that reason, I will focus on it (and on the attendant ideas of national self-respect and the national way of life) in the following discussion of the limitations of the DA.

**14.4 National Self-Respect and a National Way of Life**

In order to recognize itself and its activities as valuable, a society needs to see that its way of life is *its* way of life. It needs to be able to connect its current way of being a society to its history and to the values and activities of prior times. Otherwise, such a society would be alienated from itself, and would be uprooted from its own history and from its prior sense of self. Such alienation would undermine a people's respect for itself as a people, since a society's self-respect is based – at least in part – on its ability to recognize its way of life as its own and as something worthy of passing on to future generations. Therefore, international relations of equal respect ought to make room for societies to pursue legitimate projects that are constitutive of their identities. I am not committed to any particular account of what a national way of life consists of, or of the ways in which parts of the national way of life may relate to national self-respect.<sup>29</sup> Instead, in the following section, I explore some examples of ways in which meaningful steps towards the alleviation of global poverty may damage donor societies' ways of life in a manner that may undermine national self-respect. I will conclude that the DA cannot require such sacrifices, even if they may be effective at alleviating global poverty.

[AU3]

Before moving on to a discussion of examples, I want to emphasize that changes to national ways of life, as such, need not undermine national self-respect. Cultural change is inevitable, and efforts to prevent changes to national ways of life would,

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<sup>29</sup>Importantly, I need not be committed to any romanticized nationalistic ideas about the ways of life of individual societies. For example, what I say is entirely consistent with the idea that national ways of life are social constructions of the state. For example, see Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso, 1983); Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983); Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990). The fact that national identities and ways of life may be constructions of the state does not diminish the significance of their role in justifying restrictions upon the activity of the state.

277 themselves, introduce changes to our ways of life.<sup>30</sup> (Consider the sorts of cultural  
 278 changes that might occur in a society that transitioned from a policy of laissez-faire  
 279 multiculturalism to xenophobic cultural conformity.) Furthermore, there is no reason  
 280 to think that more-or-less organic changes to a nation's way of life undermine a  
 281 society's self-respect for itself as a people. For that reason, cultural change, as such,  
 282 does not undermine a society's self-respect, and the DA can demand that societies  
 283 make sacrifices that would have the effect of changing their ways of life.<sup>31</sup> However,  
 284 the DA cannot demand radical and rapid transformations that would have the effect  
 285 of undermining a society's self-recognition and self-esteem.<sup>32</sup> It cannot force a society  
 286 to immediately abandon those projects and activities with which it most closely  
 287 identifies, even while it may require a society to make (or permit) gradual changes  
 288 to its way of life, as part of its efforts to alleviate global poverty.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> For an argument about the inevitability of cultural change and the disastrous results of resistance to such change, see Samuel Scheffler, "Immigration and the Significance of Culture," *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 35, no. 2 (2007): 93–125.

<sup>31</sup> This picture is complicated by what we might call 'second-order' ways of life, i.e., facts about a nation's way of life are part of its way of life. For example, a society may be committed to the idea that it should never sacrifice any part of its way of life, or that its way of life should always be progressing. Such complications may introduce serious worries for my view, but a few comments may be helpful. First, a nation is not entitled to an unjust way of life, and this includes the injustice of being unwilling to make any sacrifices for the sake of global poverty relief. Simply, it cannot be part of a society's proper self-respect that it be so indifferent to the cause of global poverty that it is unwilling to do anything meaningful to address this problem. Second, a nation's way of life may improve (or progress) even if it becomes less expensive. For example, returning to the standard of living of a previous generation (for the sake of global poverty relief) may not be inconsistent with improvements to the national way of life. Specifically, were the United States to adopt a way of life with less per capita residential living space, fewer automobiles, and a greater reliance on mass transit, this might constitute an improvement (e.g., with regard to public health, the environment, social engagement, the autonomy of adolescents).

<sup>32</sup> It is not change, itself, that is morally problematic, but the way in which cultural change forces one to detach from goals with which one identifies. As Richard Miller says, a duty of beneficence does not oblige a person to detach himself from a "worthwhile goal with which he is intelligently identified and from which he could not readily detach," "Beneficence, Duty and Distance," 360. Miller's account of the demandingness of an individual's duty of beneficence is instructive here: "One's underlying disposition to respond to neediness as such ought to be sufficiently demanding that giving which would express greater underlying concern would impose a significant risk of worsening one's life, if one fulfilled all further responsibilities; and it need not be any more demanding than this," *Ibid.*, 359.

<sup>33</sup> A disanalogy between the ways of life of societies and individual human persons may be instructive. While an individual might have developed a commitment to less expensive projects had she made different choices earlier in life, it is not so easy for adults to re-make themselves in dramatic ways. After a certain age, you are who you are. In contrast, societies can dramatically change their ways of life without serious harm. Given enough time – and enough intermediate steps – the wealthiest societies in the world may be able to develop ways of life that are much less expensive, without doing violence to their self-respect as a people. This is because the lifetimes of most societies extend beyond the lifetimes of individual persons. While the tastes of individuals are relatively static, there are often significant differences between the tastes of members of different generations.



## 14.5 Forms of International Development Assistance

289

There may seem to be reason to be optimistic about the ability of the Duty of Assistance to demand the sorts of sacrifices that could alleviate global poverty. Specifically, empirical work on development economics indicates that developed societies need only contribute moderate amounts of monetary assistance to combat global poverty. This is for two reasons. First, a (relatively) small amount of money may be very effective. For example, Jeffrey Sachs argues that we can meet the basic needs of persons in impoverished societies – while also building the institutions that will meet their needs in the future – for as little as \$100–200 billion annually for the next decades.<sup>34</sup> The UN Millennium Goals (which, admittedly, aim at a lower target than the DA aims at), require contribution of 0.7% of GDP. Of course, in absolute terms, these are large sums of money. However, if the burden of meeting this goal were spread among the developed societies, each society would be responsible for a relatively small amount. For example, consider that the United States contributed almost \$29 billion in official development assistance in 2009.<sup>35</sup> Even if the United States were responsible for a 20% share of Sachs's amount (i.e., \$20–40 billion annually), the increase over current contribution levels would be minimal or nonexistent.<sup>36</sup> Likewise, meeting the demands of the Millennium Goals would be only slightly more burdensome, since it would represent an increase of about \$70 billion in annual contributions.

Unfortunately, experience shows that many societies will fail to do their share to eradicate global poverty, or even to meet the lower standard of providing for persons' subsistence needs. Aside from the broad institutional failures of the U.N. Millennium Goals (where only a handful of societies meet the 0.7% GDP threshold), we can look to the failures to respond adequately to humanitarian catastrophes. For example, the international response to the flooding in Pakistan in the late summer of 2010 was woefully inadequate, even though potential donors knew that aid was needed and had resources available to offer assistance. Therefore, effective efforts at poverty alleviation are likely to require donor societies to give more than their share, and to make up for the fact that others were shirking their responsibilities.<sup>37</sup> As the dollar amounts

<sup>34</sup> *The End of Poverty* (New York: Penguin Press, 2005), especially ch. 15.

<sup>35</sup> OECD, *Development Aid Rose in 2009 and Most Donors Will Meet 2010 aid Targets*, April 14, 2010, [http://www.oecd.org/document/11/0,3343,en\\_2649\\_34447\\_44981579\\_1\\_1\\_1\\_1,00.html](http://www.oecd.org/document/11/0,3343,en_2649_34447_44981579_1_1_1_1,00.html). Of course, in addition to increases in the amount of aid, an effective response to global poverty would modify current aid programs which concentrate development funds in areas that are of the greatest politico-strategic interest to the United States.

<sup>36</sup> There are, of course, a variety of methods for determining fair shares. One method divides responsibility by share of global GDP. The United States has 20% of global GDP and, therefore, might be responsible for 20% of global poverty assistance.

<sup>37</sup> Here, I need not take a side on the issue of whether beneficence ever requires one to do more than her fair share. Instead, the relevant issue is whether the DA would be effective at requiring global poverty relief under real world conditions. For more about the relationship between beneficence and doing one's fair share, see Liam Murphy's *Moral Demands in Nonideal Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

318 of a greater-than-fair-share increase, so, too, do the odds that such contribution levels  
319 will require sacrifices to parts of donor societies' ways of life that are significant to  
320 national self-respect.

321 Empirical work in development economics reveals a second reason to think that  
322 effective global poverty relief need not demand burdensome levels of monetary  
323 assistance. This is because anything more than modest amounts of monetary assis-  
324 tance tends to be ineffective or counterproductive. For example, Paul Collier argues  
325 that large influxes of financial assistance can undermine the establishment of well-  
326 ordered institutions.<sup>38</sup> One reason for the diminished returns of foreign aid (even at  
327 moderate levels) is that infusions of monetary aid tend to interfere with the potential  
328 for transformative domestic governance, since domestic leaders and institutions  
329 have to expend large amounts of time and energy managing and maintaining the  
330 relationships and responsibilities that are attendant on international monetary assis-  
331 tance. So, even if the levels of aid that Sachs advocates or that UN Millennium  
332 Goals require were insufficient to end to global poverty, higher levels of monetary  
333 assistance might not be any more effective.

334 Unfortunately, the fact that monetary assistance experiences diminishing  
335 (and negative) returns after relatively low levels does not mean that attempts at  
336 effective poverty relief have been exhausted when those low levels of aid have been  
337 met. Non-monetary forms of international assistance may also be effective. The  
338 empirical evidence does not show merely that monetary assistance is no longer  
339 effective after relatively low levels of aid, but that monetary assistance suffers from  
340 diminished returns long before suitable levels of economic prosperity have been  
341 reached. And, since some forms of non-monetary assistance may be effective, opti-  
342 mal strategies of global poverty eradication will include non-monetary forms of  
343 assistance. Unfortunately, it seems that some of the most effective forms of non-  
344 monetary assistance create morally significant risks for the ways of life of donor  
345 societies. In the remainder of this section, I explore the social costs to donor societ-  
346 ies of two of the most effective forms of non-monetary development assistance:  
347 facilitation of export-led growth and relaxed immigration restrictions.

348 One of the primary means by which developed societies could facilitate export-led  
349 growth within developing societies would be to make it easier for developing societies  
350 to export their agricultural products. However, the domestic agricultural industries  
351 of developed countries are liable to be destroyed (or seriously curtailed) by the  
352 introduction of these cheap imports. And, since the domestic agricultural industries  
353 of developed societies are often cherished parts of the ways of life of these societies  
354 (and, thereby, linked to national self-recognition and national self-respect), the DA  
355 may not require developed societies to open their markets to inexpensive agricul-  
356 tural imports from developing societies.

357 Agricultural industries are often closely associated with the national character. For  
358 example, the Swiss people identify with an agrarian lifestyle, one marked by care for

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<sup>38</sup> *The Bottom Billion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

livestock and the production of alpine farm products, including cheeses and meats.<sup>39</sup> 359  
 The French also identify with their agricultural industries, which produce large 360  
 quantities of cereals, wines, and animal products.<sup>40</sup> Wealthy societies – like Switzerland 361  
 and France – demonstrate their commitment to agricultural industries through a variety 362  
 of institutional means. In addition to direct subsidies, wealthy societies protect other- 363  
 wise vulnerable industries by making imports uncompetitive through the imposition 364  
 of high tariffs or by preventing imports altogether. However, the industries that wealthy 365  
 societies protect against competition from imports are the same industries that devel- 366  
 oping societies are relying upon for export-led growth. While this relationship between 367  
 wealthier societies’ import tariffs and poorer societies’ exports may be obvious, its 368  
 significance for global poverty relief is often overlooked. If export-led growth is a key 369  
 component of successful economic development, and if export-led growth depends 370  
 upon (relatively) open markets in the developed world for the developing world’s 371  
 exports, then wealthier societies will have to open their markets to the developing 372  
 world’s exports if they want to take advantage of one of the most successful methods 373  
 by which developing societies may escape poverty.<sup>41</sup> 374

[AU4]

It seems unlikely that the Duty of Assistance requires wealthier societies to facil- 375  
 itate the export-led growth of developing societies. In many cases, freer trade would 376  
 risk the destruction or marginalization of industries that may be closely connected 377  
 to national identity and, thereby, to national self-respect. The worry here is not that 378  
 developed societies will experience a net financial loss upon opening their markets 379  
 to imports from developing societies. Indeed, the introduction of inexpensive 380  
 agricultural imports into developed societies is likely to have aggregate benefits for 381  
 both developing and developed societies. Rather, the worry is that industries that are 382  
 connected to developed societies’ national identities may be destroyed or marginal- 383  
 ized as a result of developed societies’ decisions to open their markets to the devel- 384  
 oping world’s trade goods. I have argued (above) that the DA cannot require societies 385  
 to cause rapid and radical changes to their ways of life, at least when such changes 386  
 may undermine national self-respect. In the case of Switzerland and France, it seems 387  
 likely that the rapid and radical destruction of their domestic agricultural industries 388  
 may have such a result. If this were the case, the DA would not require such a 389  
 sacrifice. The demands of the DA need not override a society’s commitment to those 390  
 parts of its way of life on which its national self-respect depends. The mere fact that 391  
 other societies are in need may be insufficient to morally compel developed societies 392  
 to sacrifice industries that express the national character. 393

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<sup>39</sup> For an evocative illustration of the role of dairy farming in the Swiss cultural imagination, see (or listen) to Kathleen Schalch, “Farm Subsidies Debated in Global Trade Talks” (National Public Radio, October 11, 2005), <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=4953604>.

<sup>40</sup> For example, recent debates within the European Union about reforms to the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), which might result in reduced subsidies for some sectors within France’s agricultural industry, have risen the ire of French citizens and politicians. See “Sarkozy Vows to Defend Agriculture from any EU Move,” *Reuters*, March 24, 2010, <http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSPAB00825420100324>.

<sup>41</sup> For advocacy of these (and similar) proposals, see J. E. Stiglitz and A. Charlton, *Fair Trade for All* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).



394 Greater cross-border labor mobility is also likely to be a boon to the world's  
395 poor.<sup>42</sup> First, increased immigration may directly lead to employment and economic  
396 benefits for those who immigrate. Immigrants experience higher levels of employ-  
397 ment and enjoy a greater quality of life than those they leave behind. Second, relaxed  
398 immigration standards create indirect benefits, including remittances and higher  
399 wages for those who remain in the home country. Therefore, developed societies  
400 may be able to alleviate global poverty by promoting international labor mobility  
401 (e.g., by relaxing restrictions on immigration).<sup>43</sup>

402 While relaxed immigration restrictions may help the world's poor, it is not clear  
403 that the DA can require developed societies to undertake these efforts, even they  
404 were among the most effective forms of global poverty relief. This is because  
405 increased levels of immigration may rapidly and radically change the ways of life of  
406 developed societies in morally significant ways. First, immigrant labor may displace  
407 domestic labor and may drive down wages. The worry here is not so much the  
408 monetary loss to domestic workers, but the loss of the collective way of life that the  
409 higher wages made possible. For example, there is reason to think that the introduc-  
410 tion of large numbers of unskilled immigrant laborers into the US economy in latter  
411 part of the twentieth century contributed to increases in income inequality and  
412 helped to undermine the social power of organized labor.<sup>44</sup> Certainly, some of these  
413 results may be resisted because they undermine domestic justice (e.g., increased  
414 income inequality). However, some results may be better characterized as changes  
415 to the national way of life (e.g., the demise of social capital in the U.S. in the late  
416 twentieth century). If relaxed immigration restrictions lead to changes to the national  
417 way of life that undermine national self-respect, they may not be required by the  
418 DA. Second, higher levels of immigration have a tendency to undermine social trust  
419 and to erode support for social institutions.<sup>45</sup> This is another reason to think that the  
420 DA may not require developed societies to relax restrictions on immigration.

421 The DA may be unable to require developed societies to undertake two of the most  
422 celebrated forms of non-monetary development assistance. Of course, the DA may  
423 require other forms of non-monetary development assistance, though I lack the space  
424 to discuss them here. For now, though, it should be clear that the 'consensus view'

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<sup>42</sup>For claims about the social and economic benefits to the poor that may result from their emigration to wealthier societies, see J. Carens, "Migration and Morality: A Liberal Egalitarian Perspective," in *Free Movement*, ed. Barry and Goodin (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 1992), 25–47; Bruce Ackerman, *Social Justice in the Liberal State* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981).

<sup>43</sup>This example is less effective if it is true, as Thomas Pogge argues, that immigration can do little to assist the world's poor. See his "Migration and Poverty," in *Contemporary Political Philosophy: An Anthology*, 2nd ed., ed. Goodin and Pettit (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2005), 710–20.

<sup>44</sup>G. J. Borjas, *Friends or Strangers: The Impact of Immigrants on the US Economy* (New York: Basic Books, 1990). Of course, my argument does not hinge upon the truth of particular claims about the potential harms associated with various levels of immigration.

<sup>45</sup>Stephen Macedo, "The Moral Dilemma of US Immigration Policy," in *Debating Immigration*, ed. Carol Swain (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 63–81.

about the DA is far from obvious (and is likely to be false). Critics and advocates of Rawls's account of international justice are not entitled to claim that the DA demands great sacrifices on the part of developed societies, merely on the basis of the ambitious goal at which the DA aims. Relatedly, the DA does not, by itself, provide reason to think that developed societies ought to be acting in ways that would make substantial short- or medium-term progress toward the eradication of global poverty.

## 14.6 An Alternative Foundation for International Assistance 431

The Duty of Assistance has a noble goal: All peoples ought to possess well-ordered institutions for domestic social cooperation and international relations. However, there are good reasons to doubt that, under current conditions, the DA will require the amounts or kinds of assistance that will be sufficient to make significant progress towards this goal. Those who are in search of duties to aid the global poor that require significant sacrifices on the part of donor societies would do well to look beyond Rawls's Duty of Assistance.

One place to begin to look for more demanding duties of aid is at the facts of past and present international relations. Wealthy societies are responsible for histories of colonialism, exploitative trading relations, imperial destruction, imposed courses of development, anti-democratic global institutional governance, and an unfair distribution of the benefits and burdens of greenhouse gas emissions.<sup>46</sup> Of course, different societies are responsible for more or less of these injustices. However, most developed societies are implicated in these injustices to a significant degree.<sup>47</sup> As a consequence, most (all) developed societies face (at the very least) backward-looking duties to repair these harms.

Importantly, a duty of repair may more require rapid and radical changes to a nation's way of life than can be required by the DA. Since peoples are not entitled to goods they gain from acts of injustice (e.g., colonialism, exploitative trade), it is morally unproblematic to demand societies to sacrifice their ill-gotten gains as compensation to those societies they have harmed. Furthermore, since the ways of life that developed societies currently enjoy may have been made possible by (and may still presuppose) harms that the developed world has imposed on developing societies, it may not be morally problematic for developed societies to sacrifice their current ways of life. Additionally, the rapid and radical transformations that reparations may cause to developed societies' ways of life are unlikely to undermine developed

<sup>46</sup> Here I follow Richard Miller's approach in *Globalizing Justice: The Ethics of Poverty and Power* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

<sup>47</sup> Especially instructive is Richard Miller's attempt, in *Globalizing Justice* to show that transnational responsibilities that emerge from the existence of special relationships can extend to cover "virtually the whole developing world," and that these responsibilities place exacting demands upon (almost) all of the world's wealthier societies, *Ibid.*, 217–218.





458 societies' national self-respect. This is because proper self-respect is inconsistent  
459 with the enjoyment of ill-gotten gains. Proper self-respect presupposes relationships  
460 of respect with others, and one fails to show respect for others if one's success is  
461 based on harms that one has caused to others. Therefore, rather than undermine  
462 national self-respect, a demanding duty of international reparations may cultivate a  
463 proper national self-respect among developed societies. While it will likely be painful  
464 for wealthier societies to adjust to (potentially radical) changes to their ways of life,  
465 such transitions may provide moments of needed national introspection and recom-  
466 mitment to the goals of international justice.

Uncorrected Proof

# Author Queries

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AU2	Please check whether the insertion of publisher locations for the publications given in footnote 5.	
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