Resilience ethics: responsibility and the globally embedded subject

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CRITICAL DEBATE ARTICLE

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Abstract
This article seeks to analyse the rise of 'resilience ethics', in terms of the shift in ethical approaches away from the hierarchical liberal internationalist constructions of the 1990s and towards broader and more inclusive understandings of ethical responsibility for global problems. This shift in ethical attention away from the formal international politics of inter-state relations and towards the unintended consequences of both institutional structures and the informal market choices of individuals has diversified understandings of global ethical responsibilities. It is argued that the recasting of ethical responsibility in the increasingly sociological terms of unintended and indirect consequences of socio-material embeddedness constructs new ethical differentials and hierarchies of responsibility. These framings have facilitated new policy practices, recasting interventionist policy-making in terms of the growing self-awareness and reflexivity of Western actors, reframing ethical foreign policy as starting with the choices of individual citizens, and, at the same time, operating to reify the relations of the market.

Keywords: *resilience; responsibility; complexity; Thomas Pogge; Paul Collier*

It is taken as a truism that today we live in a globalised and complex world, but what has been less analysed are the implications that this has for liberal modernist understandings of ethical responsibility. Particularly problematic today are the distinctions between public ethics and personal ethics (essential to Rawlsian and post-Rawlsian analytic political philosophy: the distinction between a moral assessment of the basic structure of society and moral assessment of individual character and conduct) and between deontological and instrumentalist understandings of ethics. Modernist framings of ethics depended upon the liberal rationalist construction of the subject which has been challenged by new institutionalist understandings in

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economics and the social constructivist frameworks of institutionalist sociology and international relations, which have suggested that rather than having pre-given rationalist 'interests', ideas and understandings are shaped by historical experiences and the social contexts in which actors are embedded.[1] In these increasingly dominant post-rationalist framings, the individual is no longer seen as an isolated actor but rather as a socially, environmentally and materially embedded subject. It is also argued that our social and material embeddedness does not just differentiate, limit and constrain our rationality but that, even more problematically, the consequences of our decisions take on greater importance as our actions are inserted into powerful processes of complex global interaction, extending the impact of our individual actions and choices.[2]

In a globalised world, the most important impacts of our choices and decisions are held to be unintentional: or 'side effects' in the language of Ulrich Beck.[3] In this way, global complexity and interconnectivity are held to pose substantial problems with regard to judging where responsibility lies for the world and for the provision of a satisfactory moral compass for our everyday lives. Global complexity, and the ethical constructions it gives rise to, discursively tends to elide any clear divide between subject and the external world and between the public and the private. For this reason, Weber's binary ethical ontology that: 'all ethically orientated action can be guided by either of two fundamentally different, irredeemably incompatible maxims … an "ethics of conviction" or an "ethics of responsibility"',[4] seems to be much less tenable today. In a world of complexity, ethical responsibility tends to be reformulated to take account of the fact that the consequences of our actions are dependent upon the socio-material processes into which they are inserted. The field of ethical and political responsibility is therefore defined less by our personal or our public choices and more by our embeddedness in emergent chains of causality.[5] In a global relational ontology, our ethical responsibilities stem from the unintended consequences of our relational embeddedness and our ethical duty to become reflexively awareness of this. This very distinct and, I argue, problematic reformulation of ethical responsibility is conceptualised here as 'resilience ethics'.

This article seeks to stake out a series of claims with regard to the rise of the relational ethics of resilience, premised upon our ontological embeddedness in complex chains of global interconnection.[6] First, it is concerned with drawing out how understandings of relational responsibility have become increasingly central to mainstream policy and academic thinking, highlighting the conceptual links between the ontological or 'new materialist' turn in social theory and the rise of post-rationalist or post-Rawlsian thinking more broadly. Second, it highlights how the ethics of global relational embeddedness redistribute ethical responsibility in ways which rather than challenging power inequalities appear to affirm or reify them. Resilience ethics rearticulate 'Western responsibility' for global outcomes on the basis of relational embeddedness, rather than superior liberal values or institutions, and rearticulate the outcomes of market relations in terms of the embedded relational choices of individuals. In essence, relational ontologies may provide a new ethical compass of self-reflexivity for a fluid and complex world, but only do so

at the expense of the ethical separation of the self from the world. Without the separation of the ethical subject from the world it is impossible to engage in transformative political projects based on the critique of structural relations of power and the market. Instead, critique of the world is displaced by reflexive ethico-political work on the self.

The following section considers the rise of these 'ontological', materialist understandings of ethical responsibility as a shift away from the liberal 'top down' constructions of the 1990s, in which the West assumed traditional political responsibilities for the outcomes of intervention, while assuming that 'criminal' elites and individuals bore sole responsibility for war crimes and human rights abuses. 'Top down' global ethics worked on the basis of direct responsibilities, assuming direct political and legal authority over subjects, denied equal rights.[7] The following sections discuss the evolution of 'resilience ethics', which works on the basis of indirect assumptions of responsibility, not the basis of legal, moral or political responsibility but on the basis of our relational embeddedness: the understanding of indirect side-effects caused by our associational connectivity in a complex and globalised world. On the international level, powerful Western states take responsibility for the unintended or indirect outcomes of market forces and their institutional frameworks. However, it is important to stress that this 'responsibility' cannot be properly understood in either political or moral terms. Resilience ethics fit with neither Weber's 'ethics of responsibility' nor his 'ethics of conviction'. Instead, we see the rise of a relational, material or ontological ethic: a sociological recognition of the side-effects of complex global associational interconnections and their emergent properties.

This article seeks to problematise this shift by arguing that at the heart of resilience ethics is the rearticulation of power hierarchies and the reification of market relations and outcomes. The sociological framing of global complexity tends to understand the inequalities and conflicts that exist in the world as products of unintended consequences in a world in which modernist rationalities no longer operate. In other words, they highlight that the outcomes of liberal frameworks of political and legal freedoms and market exchange, in a world of difference and clashing temporalities, can reproduce inequalities and become a barrier to progress. In this perspective, Marxists are therefore right that the market is irrational and can reproduce inequality, where they are wrong is in the assumption that we can somehow stand outside the associational interconnections of a globalised world. The sociologisation of the market, as a self-emerging complex and adaptive process of indirect chains of connection and causation, in which we all embedded at different levels with different consequences, removes the liberal understanding of direct political or ethical responsibility for our choices.

The ethical and political duties emerging from these indirect responsibilities operate on a different register to the traditional liberal framing of law, sovereignty, rights and intervention as, for the sociologically embedded subject, there is no assumption of pre-existing autonomy. Two examples of this framing of indirect responsibility are analyzed in the work of Paul Collier and Thomas Pogge, these

authors are taken as heurist examples to demonstrate the ontological framings, which enable the construction of indirect understandings of responsibility today. Neither author is known as a complexity theorist, both are generally read as liberal-minded policy-reformers. Drawing out the implications of their writings for resilience ethics thereby involves reading their work at a level of ontological structure, which they themselves do not explicitly draw out and would probably normatively dispute. In conclusion, I will suggest that the flatter (but not flat) ontology of indirect responsibility replaces a liberal framing, of responsibility to the self or to the community, with responsibilities externally imposed upon actors through their embeddedness. In our relational embeddedness, we become responsible for the world but capable only of working to change the world indirectly through working on our own ethical self-growth. In this sense, resilience ethics work beyond the public/instrumental and private/deontological divide.

RESILIENCE ETHICS

Under discourses of complexity and social relationality, power relations can easily evaporate into complex processes of indirect interconnection, where responsibility for the actions of governments as much as the actions of individuals, is seen to be shared much more equally. This process of dismantling frameworks of individual and collective responsibility often appears as an enlightened, socially rich, actor-networked perspective.[8] These richer social ontological approaches—highlighted in the rise of assemblage theory, new materialism, and post-humanism—tend to work on the basis of 'flat' or 'bottom-up' ontologies of interconnection.[9] Here, agency is distributed away from the formal centres of political power (the focus of liberal ontologies) and towards the margins or the 'everyday' where the 'tactics' of ordinary people contest and disrupt the strategies and understandings of the powerful.[10] In these more fluid ontologies, governing or personal intentionality is much less important than the complex ontological reality of social interconnectivity. The more broadly the connections are drawn, the more diverse are the actors and agents that need to be drawn in to provide an adequate explanation of concrete policy outcomes.[11] The focus upon the social relational embeddedness that produces concrete realities, rather than upon the abstract or metaphysical constructions of human purpose and intention, also enables agency to be redistributed beyond purely human, or anthropomorphic constructions of intentionality.[12]

However, it is important to note that resilience ethics do not merely problematise the understanding of individual responsibility and bring the contingency of assemblages of interconnection into play, but also articulate a new framing of international hierarchy, which builds upon these ontological understandings of associational embeddedness.[13] This is because resilience ethics work through establishing the ontological power of social relational interconnection but then rearticulate the gap between conscious intention and concrete outcomes in terms of the ethical demand for self-reflexivity. Resilience ethics work back from the

appearance of the world to enable an embedded ethical reflexivity to guide the subject's own self-transformation.[14] In this framing, the problems of the world can be reinterpreted as ethical lessons for self-growth and self-awareness. The indirect ethical responsibility derived from self-reflexivity can thereby be neither understood as instrumental (it is the self-reflexive responses to outcomes which are important rather than the outcomes per se) nor as deontological (ethics are derived from external consequences). In this way, in a more interconnected world, Western agency can be rearticulated in terms of this distinct form of indirect ethical responsibility. Western powers can claim responsibility for the world, but rather than these claims of responsibility generating moral opprobrium or demands for political accountability, they can be used to produce new, reflexive, forms of ethico-political authority.

To explain how this inversion works, it is worth recalling a point emphasised in the work of Hannah Arendt on how agency works in relation to 'guilt'. As Arendt noted, when we claim that 'we are all guilty' we are actually expressing 'solidarity with the wrong-doers' rather than the wronged.[15] This is the mirror-opposite of direct relations of political solidarity with the wronged, which suggests that we support their challenge to power in righting those wrongs. I wish to draw out, in particular, how this inversion works in relation to capitalism or market relations. In modernist framings, political solidarity was often demonstrated in understanding a common cause of struggle against market relations and its enforcement through the coercive political power of capital. In today's understandings of embedded associational responsibility for the unintended consequences of our actions, we are more likely to see our lifestyle or consumption choices as responsible for inequalities, conflict or environmental problems.[16] In an age of political complexity, when it is 'easier to imagine the end of the world than the end of capitalism',[17] in effect, responsibility is recast or internalised; displacing capitalism as the problem through vicariously seeing ourselves as responsible: understanding capitalism as merely a complex emergent process of exchanges in which we are to differing extents embedded and therefore indirectly responsible. In an age where the overthrow of capitalism seems unimaginable, capitalism is transformed as the sociological vehicle of connection, displacing the conscious and direct chains of politics.

It is precisely in this inversion; in this shift of political responsibility, from social structures and political frameworks external to ourselves, to the recognition of our own indirect social or societal responsibility, as complicit through our own choices and actions, that resilience ethics operates. Resilience ethics redistributes responsibility and emphasises the indirect, unintended and relational networks of complex causation because problems are reconceived as not political, economic or moral but as societal or ontological. They are the problems of 'side-effects', of 'second-order' consequences, of a lack of knowledge of the emergent causality at play in the complex interconnections of the global world. The more these interconnections are revealed though the work of self-reflexivity and self-reflection, the more responsibility governments, other actors and individuals, acting in the world, have. We learn and learn again that we are responsible for the world, not because of our conscious

choices or because our actions lacked the right ethical intention, but because the world's complexity is beyond our capacity to know and understand in advance: the unknowability of the outcomes of our action does not remove our ethical responsibility for our actions, it, in fact, heightens our responsibility for these second-order consequences or side-effects. In a complex and interconnected world, few events or problems evade appropriation within this framing, providing an opportunity for recasting responsibility in these ways.

RESILIENCE ETHICS AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

In the international sphere, the articulation of political and ethical responsibilities has become transformed since the end of the Cold War. In the early 1980s, US President Ronald Reagan controversially described the Soviet Union as the 'Evil Empire', in an attempt to reinvigorate the ideological certainties of the geo-political divide, but no one in the West assumed that Western governments or citizens were in any way responsible for the acts of the Soviet Union. The concept of Western moral or ethical responsibility for the actions of other governments only began to arise in the 1990s, with the articulation of global moral or ethical understandings underpinning the foreign policies of Western governments and giving content to the doctrines of humanitarian intervention and human rights enforcement.

Discussions of humanitarian atrocities from Rwanda to Srebrenica, focused on individuals and elites, held to bear individual moral and political responsibility for war crimes and human rights abuses,[18] but also on the West's responsibility to intervene to prevent these atrocities and to protect basic human rights. While the West was not held to be responsible for the crimes of Stalinism it was now held that there was complicity through non-intervening, which was seen as allowing the crimes of human rights abuse in sub-Saharan Africa or the Balkans. It was argued that the globalised world was increasingly becoming one community with shared norms and values and that foreign policy was not merely about national interests but liberal universal concerns of laws and rights.[19]

In the 1990s, the ethical or political responsibility of the West was generally cast in the direct terms of intervention to prevent human rights abuses by 'others'. The articulation of responsibility in a global world was couched in the universal rationalist terms of liberal discourse. Crimes of war or of human rights abuse were held to constitute an ethical and political 'right' of intervention (even if this right was not formally upheld in international law).[20] So, while the West or the 'international community' had a 'responsibility' to intervene, the understanding of responsibility for the crimes themselves was placed squarely with the 'other' criminal, insane or maleficent elites and individuals, held to be responsible for mass humanitarian abuses in the 'new wars',[21] and therefore liable to military intervention, regime change and to judgment through new international courts and tribunals. The liberal discourse of rights and law pitted intervention against sovereignty, with the top down claim that sovereign rights were lost and replaced by new international sovereign

responsibilities, clearly manifested in the 1990s' protectorate powers over Bosnia, Kosovo and Timor-Leste.

This understanding of responsibility maintained a clear dividing line between qualitatively different types of responsibility. 'We' had the responsibility to intervene, to prevent human rights abuses and war crimes, but our responsibility only arose after the fact, in response to these problems; we had no responsibility in terms of causing these problems. We were not, even indirectly, 'guilty' of the crime itself, merely of passivity in the face of such crimes. The liberal internationalist understanding of political and ethical responsibility was sharply bifurcated: responsibility for war crimes and human rights abuses was restricted to individuals or discrete groups of 'others'; responsibility for the outcomes of intervention was restricted to the international 'saviours' bringing peace, development and democracy.[22] After the 1990s, this linear liberal framing became increasingly hollowed out with responsibility, both for crimes and interventionist outcomes, becoming distributed more equally.

In the sphere of international relations, the sociological logic of indirect responsibility—of resilience ethics—initially emerged in distinction to the rationalist logic of international liberalism, for example, in work in the tradition of the English School. In Robert Jackson's influential study, *Quasi-States: Sovereignty, International Relations and the Third World*, published in 1990, the discursive logic of societal inter-relations is clear. It is the conceptualisation of indirect responsibility that I wish to heuristically focus upon here. Jackson does not argue for the return of colonial paternalism, but for what might be seen as a new type of informal or resilience 'paternalism'[23]: a recognition that the problems of post-colonial states were not merely of their own making but a problem of emergent causality—a 'side-effect' of the attempt to instigate an international constitutional order on the basis of equal sovereignty. This constitutional order stacked the deck against domestic development and democratisation and is argued to have encouraged despotism.

Jackson did not argue that the West should take formal 'moral or legal responsibility' for post-colonial states on the basis of their incapacity.[24] Instead, the new problematic emerging was one of recognising the unintended consequences of institutionalist frameworks, held to be a barrier to development and democracy in these states. The key point about the emergence of what I am calling resilience ethics is that in recognising 'responsibility' for the problems caused by the 'side-effects' of shared institutional frameworks, there is an understanding of a new type of material ethical responsibility. This is neither moral nor political—the institutions were established for the best of reasons (e.g., in the case of the United Nations and the UN Charter's enshrining of non-intervention, the prevention of war)—but an associational, networked, or indirect and unintentional 'ontological' responsibility.

With this new type of 'responsibility' comes an imperative to ethically reconsider these institutions in the knowledge that the institutional framework shapes the possibilities and actions of others (in this case, 'quasi-states'). Once the associational link is established, through the connective framework of effects, then the West has the ethical/political responsibility to reflexively consider a different set of institutional

practices which may more positively affect the outcomes in post-colonial states. Resilience ethics argues that, like it or not, powerful states shape international institutions and therefore bear responsibility for their unintended consequences. The argument then follows that if international institutional frameworks have a deleterious effect on 'quasi-states', others should be considered which could have a positive effect. While not assuming political responsibility for post-colonial states, as in the top down paternalism of colonialism or of 1990s liberal internationalism, the associational responsibility confers upon the West the right to intervene *indirectly*, though the institutional framework, to positively affect the outcomes at the level of the post-colonial state. This is neither the old paternalism of colonialism nor the equal sovereignty of the post-colonial period but the recognition that inequality (the fact that powerful states shape the international institutional framework) gives Western states responsibility because they shape indirectly the outcomes for other weaker states.

In the framework of resilience ethics, there is therefore no such thing as non-intervention. Intervention is no longer understood as the formal undermining of sovereignty, as in colonialism. Intervention is seen to take place indirectly through the institutional frameworks and agreements of the international arena and therefore the West is understood to be always indirectly intervening in the domestic politics of the post-colonial world through the institutional shaping of both economic and political relations. It is on the basis of this understanding that Western states then have the ethical/political responsibility to reconsider this international institutional framework with regard to these outcomes. In passing, it should be noted that there is a similar resilience ethic at play in the argument that states have a duty to reflexively influence the private choices of citizens.[25] Once there is an assumption that in an interconnected world there is no sphere of autonomous choice-making there is then no barrier to the rise of the resilience ethics of intervention through indirect means.

THE RESILIENCE ETHICS OF PAUL COLLIER AND THOMAS POGGE

It is important to highlight that the consequences of a more sociological approach, which understands responsibility as a product of associational links, actor networks or assemblages, is that discourses of responsibility are neither political nor moral but ontological. Responsibility is ontologised, spread much more thinly but also in context-specific ways so that responsibility is always a shared but fluid concept. This is very different to modernist understandings of responsibility, which operated to demarcate a sphere of ethical understanding: political responsibility stopped with the sovereign or government, moral responsibility stopped with the private conscience. Ontological responsibility knows no political or private subjects only subjects always and already embedded in fluid and complex networks of association. It is the networks of association that allocate the ontological responsibilities to actors. Responsibility no longer emerges from the decisions of the subject itself—to be legitimised in instrumental or deontological terms. The ethical responsibility is secondary: to reflexively adapt to the unintended outcomes of structures and processes in which actors are embedded.

The sociological, institutionalist sensitivity articulated by Robert Jackson, remained at a fairly abstract level, typical of the English School approach, concerned with drawing a sociological 'third way' between the rationalisms of Realism and Liberalism in international relations theory. The sociological approach is heuristically drawn out in more depth below in an analysis of the conceptual frameworks deployed by two influential theorists: Oxford academic and World Bank policy advisor, Paul Collier, and Thomas Pogge, a moral and political philosopher and director of the Global Justice Program at Yale University.

Paul Collier's work is notable in that it removes the liberal rationalist ethics of responsibility from understandings of state collapse and human rights abuses by posing the problems of conflict and lack of development as matters of formal and informal associational connections; in effect, reducing both politics and economics to sociological understandings of embedded context. Collier argues against the direct responsibility approach of liberal internationalism: that we cannot rescue them by telling them what to do or by throwing aid money at them. Change 'must come predominately from within; we cannot impose it on them'.[26] However, we can help in terms of our own reflexivity about the international institutional frameworks which rich Western countries support and have established. Changing them 'from within' can be done if change also comes, reflexively, 'from within', at the international level; rethinking the unintended consequences of trade regulations or of not having international agreements on extractive industries or the arms trade. This indirect approach of intervention works on the basis of Western states and international institutions reflexively working to address the unintended consequences of their actions rather than directly intervening or claiming the right of intervention in other states.

Collier, together with his Oxford colleagues, developed the 'greed and grievance' model of conflict in the mid-2000s.[27] This model could be seen as a clear step back from the bifurcated framework of responsibility justifying liberal internationalist interventions in the 1990s. The indirect framing of responsibility of Collier has a much richer model of social interaction, developing an understanding of post-colonial or post-conflict societies as shaped by the choice-making context in which actors are embedded. In their critique of theorists who sought to understand conflict in the rational terms of political rights (struggles over grievances), Collier and his team sought to analyse conflict in terms of the institutional constraints upon individual choice-making. In this framing, political causation no longer becomes an explanatory or a legitimating factor, rather, it is the opportunity for rebellion that has explanatory value. Essentially, if finance is easily available (e.g., due to easy access to primary commodity exports) and there is little opportunity cost (i.e. few other avenues to earn income, if access to secondary education is low and the economy is stagnant) then conflict 'entrepreneurs' will arise who do not necessarily have any stake in furthering the interests or needs of their alleged constituents.[28]

Political or ethical responsibility for conflict and war crimes is radically redistributed in the new institutionalist model put forward. For Collier's project: 'where rebellion is feasible, it will occur without any special inducements in terms of motivation'[29]; 'motivation is indeterminate, being supplied by whatever agenda

happens to be adopted by the first social entrepreneur to occupy the viable niche'.[30] Once conflict is understood as the product of the societal context, shaping the choices of individuals, the possibility of reshaping the formal and informal institutional context, and therefore the outcome of decision-making, arises. This approach of indirectly influencing the conduct of communities and of individuals, on the basis of the international influence upon these frameworks, highlights the indirect consequences of associational connections at the expense of the political responsibility of both local actors and international interveners.

The work of Collier and his team has been highly influential on the policy developments of the World Bank, keen to take up new positions of reflexive responsibility, focusing on unintended consequences of institutional structures in a world of political complexity, rather than political or ideological concerns.[31] On an international level, Collier's sociological framing works in a very different register to liberal debates on intervention and sovereignty, where Western responsibility recalls traditional paternalist understandings, formalising inequality and a denial of rights, such as the Liberian government's subordination of financial control to a coterie of international donors[32] or the 'Responsibility to Protect' (R2P) doctrine, a 'full-frontal assault on the concept of national sovereignty.[33] Here, there is no intervention (as legally and politically conceived) merely 'interference': the reflexive understanding of associational interconnection. Such institutional reforms of the international order do not directly undermine sovereignty but seek to 'interfere' in ways that support progressive ends rather than work against them, for example, in contractual relations to deter coups where there is a democratic mandate, support for financial probity or in linking aid with military spending.[34] This sociological framing, Collier argues, takes us beyond the liberal rights framings contra positioning intervention and sovereignty and enables 'a compromise between positions that are currently deadlocked'.[35]

The importance of Collier's work is in the clarity of articulating indirect ethical responsibilities and the practices which flow from these in distinction to the direct interventions of liberal internationalism, for example, as expressed in the politics of conditionality of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, which sought to bend post-colonial states to their will, in terms of particular policy outcomes.[36] Collier argues along similar lines to Jackson that the international institutional framework unfairly makes reform or development difficult: despite the fact that change can only come from within, international states, institutions and private economic actors can assist in ensuring that in their associations with these states they facilitate progress rather than shore up corrupt and failing regimes. In effect, the self-reflexive ethics of resilience politicises all associational connections between external actors and the states viewed as problematic or failing. It does this through the ethic of sociological association: that any contact or connection, no matter how indirect has unintentional affects. These connections, which previously would not have been understood as political but as private contractual relations of trade, are then 'politicised' in terms of where the wealth goes and how it is distributed. From the sociological perspective of embedded relationality, there is no

limit to the ethical injunction to reflect upon how one's assocational connections 'interfere' with others.

Collier's problematic of responsibility insists that 'they' in the failing or post-colonial states are not entirely to blame for conflicts and underdevelopment but neither are 'we' in the rich West.[37] However, he goes on to argue: 'I am now going to pin some blame on citizens of the rich world, who must take responsibility for their own ignorance about trade policy and its consequences'.[38] The blame upon the West is one of a lack of self-reflection upon unintended consequences. Addressing these unintended consequences means, for example, becoming aware of the impact of tariff protections, which prevent less developed countries from diversifying their production[39] and of the refusal to strengthen institutional frameworks, which could diversify state monopolies over wealth and resources or guarantee intervention if a democratic regime is overthrown. From Collier's perspective, the struggle of the poorest bottom billion, 'is not a contest between an evil rich world and a noble poor world. It is within the societies of the bottom billion, and to date we have largely been bystanders'.[40] The intimation is that we in the rich West have an indirect responsibility for the outcomes, that our actions and choices at the moment favour the side of corrupt elites, conflict and poverty, and that we could make other choices which would favour the side of progress and development.

Thomas Pogge goes further than Collier in the sociological or ontological understanding of responsibility through associational connection. For this reason, his work has been used to challenge Collier's view that 'citizens of the rich world are not to blame for most of the problems of the bottom billion'.[41] The irony, of course, is that Pogge's work on the international regimes of property and resource rights, which the international sovereignty regime enforces (and therefore citizens in the West are complicit with), uses a very similar framework to Collier's sociological understanding of indirect causality as the basis for the extension of ethical responsibility, through market relations. What is interesting about Pogge's work is that he is concerned to point out how global institutional frameworks—both formal and informal—institutionalise global inequalities.

Pogge argues that it is ethically desirable that there should be the spread of democracy and human rights in the international sphere. Reflexively understanding the 'side-effects' of both personal and institutional choices could thereby achieve a transformation of international norms, rules and regulations, which at present create a problematic framework of environmental choices for the less developed world. His work is possibly the clearest example of how resilience ethics have developed. This is perhaps most usefully articulated in his 2011 comment article, 'Are We Violating the Human Rights of the World's Poor?'.[42] Pogge goes beyond liberal rationalist or contractual understandings of rights and duties by asserting the importance of the indirect consequences of our actions and inactions. Key, is not the rationalist 'interactional' liberal framing, of government duties to protect rights nor our own duties to respect these rights, but the relational understanding of how the indirect consequences of our actions may 'facilitate' the promotion or violation of rights.[43] In his 2002 book, *World Poverty and Human Rights*, Pogge argued that we

should reject the liberal interactionalist understanding entirely,[44] but in the second edition of 2008 this has been amended to an understanding that there are two varieties of human rights violation.[45] However, the concern is with the distinction between the two and the importance of highlighting the understanding of indirect relational responsibility:

> There is the interactional variety, where individual or collective human agents do things that, as they intend, foresee, or should foresee, will avoidably deprive human beings of secure access to the objects of their human rights. And there is the institutional variety, where human agents design and impose institutional arrangements that, as they intend, foresee, or should foresee, will avoidably deprive human beings of secure access to their human rights.[46]

Once we lose the understanding of the autonomous liberal subject and instead understand the morality of the world on the basis of formal and informal institutional structures, which we are all complicit in the everyday reproduction of, then it is clear that responsibility for human rights infringements has a much broader, flatter or democratic ontological basis. We are all then to differing extents responsible for what might appear—not as the commissions or remissions of others (the concern of Arendt)[47]—but as indirect market outcomes, outside any individual's direct responsibility:

> Duties to facilitate constitute then a crucial addition which highlights the vital importance that the design of institutional arrangements has for the fulfilment of human rights… The purely interactional analysis of human rights deficits must then be complemented by an institutional analysis which traces such deficits back not to wrongful conduct of individual and collective human agents, but to injustice in the design of social institutions: in the rules and procedures, roles and agencies that structure and organize societies and other social systems.[48]

Once we understand that indirect responsibility lies in the framing of social institutions and social systems—societal interrelations, with their unending chains of complex causal connection—the responsibility for human rights abuses is inevitably transformed, minimising the importance of the liberal or modernist understanding of political or ethical responsibility. Consider for example, the undermining of rights to gender equality or education and welfare of impoverished communities: for Pogge, it is clear that impoverished communities 'cannot reasonably be said to be morally required to undertake political action towards realising their own and each other's human rights when such action would be excessively risky and costly for them'.[49] Or, to take another example of Pogge's, if you were blackmailed for the ransom of your child by a kidnapper, your moral responsibility would not be merely to ensure that you maximise the prospects of the safe return of your child by giving in to extravagant demands: this would clearly encourage further kidnap attempts on your children but more importantly would also affect the kidnap risk to which other children other than your own are exposed as it 'may attract more people to a career in the kidnapping business'.[50] There is a clear indirect impact as individual choices and decisions

constitute the choice-shaping institutional framework in which others decide whether or not the kidnapping business constitutes a viable career alternative. What is particularly important to note is that we are not all equally embedded in these interactive processes, clearly the more power, wealth and influence we wield, and the more that this influence is extended by the technological and socio-material context in which we act, the more indirect responsibility we bear and the more reflexive we need to become.

We may be pursuing what appear to be entirely rational and morally correct choices but be producing irrational and potentially immoral outcomes. The more power we wield within these socio-material contexts the more responsible we are for these outcomes. The irrationality of the world or of the market system is thereby a product of our lack of reflectivity upon the unintended consequences of our embeddedness in these relations of interconnection, but this responsibility is unequally distributed. Here, responsibility for poverty and welfare problems cannot reasonably be seen to be that of those people living in these benighted states and seemingly lacking the capacities to resist, nor, necessarily, with their cash strapped and dependent governments: it lies elsewhere, with the extent to which we are embedded in the complex international system which we are all in part responsible for. If the market, and its institutional framing, is to blame, through indirect links of causation, so therefore are we. The reason for this is that we make the market, we reproduce it and in so doing have the capacity to shape it: to expand or contract the profitability of the kidnapping business, for example.

It is these indirect outcomes which constitute our unequal personal contributions to ethical or moral problems either by our commission or omission. For Pogge, the extension of ethical responsibility to indirect and institutional frameworks of social relations provides an avenue for linking personal citizen and consumption choices in the West with the morally problematic role of transnational regulatory institutions. Once the 'interactive' link between individuals or collective actors and rights violations is broken then it is the institutional context which increasingly bears the responsibility, as the framework of incentivisation, or of environmental choice-shaping. This approach clearly challenges liberal understandings of both individual and collective responsibility. In Pogge's work, the international level is the centre of attention and it is the institutional frameworks shaping market exchanges, in an era of globalisation, which are alleged to bear an increasing responsibility for the level of democracy, development and human rights in the non-Western world. Even where there is development, such as in India and China, this is highly unequal and Western enforced global regimes such as the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the 1994 Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) Agreement reinforce these inequalities.[51]

Pogge's work does not merely focus on the impact of global market relations as framed by international agreements on trade and property rights but also on the formal regimes of international law, in particular the principle of sovereign equality—the

bulwark of international law—seen to make it more difficult for non-Western states to achieve democratic and developmental stability, the reason for this is that:

> . . . the developed countries are the chief upholders of the might-is-right principle. It is they who insist that the mere fact that someone holds effective power over us – regardless of how he came to power, of how he exercises power, and of the extent to which he is opposed by the people he rules—gives him the right to incur legally binding international obligations on our behalf.[52]

The international sovereignty regime of international law is seen to constitute an international institutional framework which makes democracy and human rights much more difficult for non-Western states, leaving them at risk of military coups or violent sectional conflict. Although Pogge shares with Collier the view of the indirect responsibilities of Western states and international actors through institutional frameworks of choice-making, he extends the links of association much more deeply, down to the level of the Western citizen as an individual actor or agent.

Pogge's work, as a moral philosopher, rather than an economist or an international relations theorist, is probably the best articulation of what could be called resilience ethics and marks the clearest distinction from the liberal ethics of cosmopolitan internationalism of the 1990s. In this framework, global complexity means that responsibility is shared but that it is always indirect and it is always unequal. It is the ontology of associative connection, which constitutes the ethical need for self-reflexivity of Western states and citizens who are encouraged to become more ethical in their choice-making. Having established the 'collaboration' or complicity of Western citizens in ethically unfair regimes supported by their governments, he suggests that there is a moral duty to reflect upon the indirect consequences of our embeddedness in Western societies and in global markets. The solution, in terms of resilience thinking, is not necessarily that of joining a political party to change policies or offer solidarity with the resistance of the poor and oppressed but to consider how we as individuals might 'compensate for our fair share of the avoidable human rights deficit'.[53] One such way is through charitable giving: 'Citizens can compensate for a share of the harm for which their country is responsible by, for example, supporting effective international agencies or non-governmental organisations'.[54]

The new ethics of indirect responsibility for market consequences can be seen clearly in the idea of environmental taxation, both state-enforced through interventions in the market and as taken up by both firms and individuals. The idea that we should pay a carbon tax on air travel is a leading example of this, in terms of governmental intervention, passing the burden of such problems on 'unethical' consumers who are not reflexive enough to consider the impact of package holidays on the environment. At a broader level, the personalised ethico-political understanding that individuals should be responsible for and measure their own 'carbon footprint' shifts the emphasis from an understanding of broader inter-relations between modernity, the market and the environment to a much narrower

understanding of personal indirect responsibility, linking all aspects of everyday decision-making to the problems of global warming.[55]

Unlike the liberal internationalists of the 1990s, Pogge's concern is not directly with the agency of leading Western states and institutions, nor with the ostensible 'victims' in poor or underdeveloped countries. The concern of resilience ethics is not even with the responsibilities of the 'poor or poorly educated citizens' at home in the West. As Pogge states:

> I can suspend judgement about such cases because what matters is the judgement each of us reaches about ourselves. I believe that I share responsibility for what my country is doing in the name of its citizens, and I explain what human rights deficits I hold myself co-responsible for, and why. You must judge for yourself whether you find these reasons compelling or whether, on reflection, you find yourself sufficiently immature, uneducated, or impoverished to be exempt from the ordinary responsibilities of citizenship.[56]

In the age of resilience and the politics of complexity, responsible citizenship, for Pogge, does not involve political or public campaigning as much as individual reflexivity about the unintended consequences of our social embeddedness: 'Each of us should ... do enough toward protecting poor people to be confident that one is fully compensating for one's fair share of the human rights deficit that we together cause'.[57] Pogge makes a similar statement in an internet magazine interview, when asked how his view of ethical responsibility worked, in terms of a rejection of existing structures or an attempt to change them from within. The answer was very clarifying: 'There is a third way. I call it the "Oskar Schindler solution": You remain within the system and try to compensate for the human rights deficits that are caused by the system because of your contribution to it. If you simply retreat from the system, nobody benefits'.[58]

It is interesting to note the secular trend involved in the extension of the ethical world through the logic of association. It seems that the more responsibility is spread the less interest there is in the specific problem itself and the more attention there is to the ethical self. In the bifurcated liberal ethics of responsibility in the 1990s, the attention was squarely on the problem of human rights abuse and war crimes, problems which non-Western 'others' were morally and politically responsible for and therefore lost their rights to political and legal equality in the instantiation of paternalist regimes of intervention and the abnegation of sovereign rights. In the work of Collier, political responsibility is eroded through being sociologised: they are less responsible for the contexts in which choices are made and external interveners share less responsibility as direct intervention shifts to indirect 'interference' which does not undermine formal legal and political rights. However, the problems of the world, for example, of the 'bottom billion' are still at the forefront of political and ethical concern. With the radical social relationality of Pogge the outlines of a fully resilient understanding of global complexity emerge, where, in effect, populations in the West (particularly the more wealthy and educated) become increasingly 'responsible' for the crimes and abuses of the world and there is no real need to distinguish specific problems or specific agents of responsibility.

CONCLUSION

The resilience ethics of both Collier and Pogge emerge clearly in their desire to 'interfere' more reflexively through the indirect mechanisms of international institutions. They both reject the paternalism of direct responsibility as well as the idea that the West does not have the responsibility to intervene. In both these frameworks, Western wealth and power—the fact that Western states and institutions set the international agenda and shape the possibilities for the progress and development of non-Western states—is used to argue that there is an indirect responsibility for the outcomes in these states. However, it is important to stress that the unequal distribution of responsibility in discourses of global and complex connectivity does not stop with the calls for reflexive 'interference' with the domestic workings of non-Western states. Implicit in the ontological understanding of associational responsibility is also a licence to 'interfere' or to 'enlighten' the private choice-making of Western citizens, often seen to lack the required reflexivity in their lack of understanding of their own complicity in, and responsibility for, these problems.

While Pogge's flatter ontology of spreading 'responsibility', to Western citizens—or at least those enlightened and capable of reflecting on their lifestyle choices and actions—seems to be much more noble and radical than Collier's focus on international institutions and Western states, Pogge is, in fact, more 'interfering' and more paternalist. In extending the argument that political responsibility should be further democratised, he shifts the basis much more to the sociological links of the market than merely to the formal agreements of inter-state bargaining. Pogge suggests that the key aspect is not so much the impact of individual actions on international institutional frameworks—he is surprisingly downbeat about the possibilities of governments and powerful business interests voluntarily changing these structures—but in terms of the development of the self-reflexivity of citizens in the West. He argues that campaigns to change international institutional frameworks are of benefit because they:

> ... help change the attitudes of citizens in the more affluent countries toward the plight of the poorer populations. The now prevalent attitude of condescending pity for peoples somehow unable to get their act together, allowing themselves to be ruled by autocrats who ruin their economies, may give way to a realization that the rich democracies have a causal and moral responsibility for the great difficulty poorer countries have in establishing and maintaining stable democratic regimes. As more persons in the affluent societies recognize their involvement and responsibility, they may change their behaviour as consumers, reducing their use of products that incorporate resources purchased from authoritarian governments.[59]

What starts as a critique of global inequalities, of powerful states and capitalist relations ends up—as all sociological understandings of resilience and complexity must—as a problem of the need for ethical work on the Western self (both at the level of institutions and individuals). Once there is no separation between capitalism as a structure of social relations and the individual choice-making of consumers,

the critique of capitalism operates essentially at the level of self-reflexivity and lifestyle choices. It is thereby through the ethical reflexivity of citizens as consumers and as individual choice-makers in their everyday lives that change can happen, not merely in terms of putting economic pressure on regimes but also making it politically difficult for Western governments and firms to collude with repressive regimes. In this way, Pogge argues that democracy in the West is also developed as citizens become more reflexively aware and self-empowered. Developing democracy then becomes a matter of developing self-awareness—rather than of deliberation or formal decision-making—and, essentially, a process of educating and enlightening the masses in their life-style choices, rather than in holding government to account.

This framing also explains how 'anti-capitalist' sentiments sit quite happily with political quiescence. In fact, today, 'markets' can easily be blamed for the problems of the world and take responsibility for the choices made by governments and international institutions. This is the beauty of the logic of resilience and associational responsibility in a global complex world. Capitalism or the market then become a problem not because of the production relations of exploitation and profitability but because of the individual consumption choices of individual consumers who are not ethically aware or politically reflexive enough to make more enlightened choices. If it is global capitalism that bears the final responsibility and if the dynamic driving the emergent causality of the complex social outcomes is individual decision-making, then there is little that governments can directly do.

Capitalism then becomes a complex system of associative relations which we are all to different extents responsible for because we are all unequally embedded in the global market system which forms a network of interconnectivity stretching from our smallest private choices to the largest global political problems. Rather than understanding capitalism as a social system that can be opposed or struggled against, resilience ethics suggest that we see ourselves as in part responsible for the market and its outcomes. In fact, as Pogge argues, even attempts to exclude ourselves from the embeddedness of the market make no ethical sense as our power to influence the world through our own ethical reflexivity depends precisely upon this embeddedness. Power relations are thus inversed and resilience ethics suggest that enlightened governments may even need to 'interfere' in our own private consumption choices to enable us to recognise our responsibilities. The more we inculcate these ethical reflexivities, called upon by resilience approaches of relational and associational embeddedness, the less we can separate ourselves as subjects capable of acting politically or ethically in the world.

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NOTES

1. Exemplified in the rise of new institutionalist understandings, for example, Douglass C. North, *Institutions, Institutional Change and Economic Performance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); B. Guy Peters, *Institutional Theory in Political Science: The New Institutionalism*, 2nd ed. (London: Continuum, 2005); James Mahoney and Kathleen Thelen, eds., *Explaining Institutional Change: Ambiguity, Agency, and Power* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

2. Ulrich Beck, *World at Risk* (Cambridge: Polity, 2009); Anthony Giddens, *Runaway World: How Globalisation is Reshaping Our Lives*, 2nd ed. (London: Profile, 2002); John Dewey, *The Public and its Problems* (New York: Swallow Press, 1927); Bruno Latour, *Politics of Nature: How to Bring the Sciences into Democracy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004).

3. Ulrich Beck, *The Reinvention of Politics: Rethinking Modernity in the Global Social Order* (Cambridge: Polity, 1997).

4. Max Weber, 'Politics as a Vocation', in *The Vocation Lectures* (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing, 2004), 32–94.

5. William Connolly, 'Method, Problem, Faith', in *Problems and Methods in the Study of Politics,* eds. Ian Shapiro, Rogers M. Smith and Tarek E. Masoud (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 332–9; Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* (London: Duke University Press, 2010); Erika Cudworth and Stephen Hobden, *Posthuman International Relations: Complexity, Ecologism and Global Politics* (London: Zed Books, 2011).

6. As I make clear elsewhere, my problem with 'new materialist' social ontologies lies less with the ontological assertions of complex social embeddedness and attention to the contingent nature of our social world, than with the normative philosophical, political and ethical conclusions derived from these understandings. See further, David Chandler, 'The World of Attachment? The Post-Humanist Challenge to Freedom and Necessity', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 41, no. 3 (2013): 516–534.

7. See, for example, William Bain, *Between Anarchy and Society: Trusteeship and the Obligations of Power* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

8. See, for example, Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

9. Manuel DeLanda, *A New Philosophy of Society: Assemblage Theory and Social Complexity* (London: Continuum, 2006), 28, 32.

10. See, for example, Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (London: University of California Press, 1988).

11. See, Latour, *Reassembling the Social*.

12. For example, William Connolly, *A World of Becoming* (London: Duke University Press, 2011); Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*.

13. This challenges the presumption of some new materialist or actor-network theorists that the more interconnectivity can be established, the greater the contingency of outcomes and the more even the distribution of agency. Resilience ethics understand connectivity as giving rise to the ethics of self-reflexivity precisely because agency remains unevenly distributed; see, for example, Noortje Marres, *Material Participation: Technology, the Environment and Everyday Politics* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 33; David Chandler, 'The World of Attachment?'

14. See William Connolly, *A World of Becoming*, 145–6; see also David Chandler, 'Resilience and the Autotelic Subject: Towards a Critique of the Societalization of Security', *International Political Sociology* 7, no. 2 (2013): 210–226; 221–2.

15. Hannah Arendt, *Responsibility and Judgement* (New York: Schocken Books, 2003), 148.

16. See, for example, Andrew Dobson, *Citizenship and the Environment* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); Pheng Cheah and Bruce Robbins, eds., *Cosmopolitics – Thinking and Feeling beyond the Nation* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1998).

17. Fredric Jameson, 'Future City', *New Left Review* 21 (2003): 65–79; Slavoj Zizek, 'Slavoj Žižek speaks at Occupy Wall Street: Transcript', *Impose Magazine*, October 10, 2011, http://www.imposemagazine.com/bytes/slavoj-zizek-at-occupy-wall-street-transcript (accessed June 29, 2013).

18. See further, Kirsten Ainley, 'Individual Agency and Responsibility for Atrocity', in *Confronting Evil in International Relations: Ethical Responses to Problems of Moral Agency*, ed. Renee Jeffery (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2008), 37–60.

19. See, for example, Andrew Linklater, *The Transformation of Political Community* (Cambridge: Polity, 1998); David Held, *Democracy and the Global Order* (Cambridge: Polity, 1995); Richard A. Falk, *On Humane Governance: Toward a New Global Politics* (Cambridge: Polity, 1995).

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22. Anne Orford, *Reading Humanitarian Intervention: Human Rights and the Use of Force in International Law* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Mahmood Mamdani, *Saviours and Survivors: Darfur, Politics and the War on Terror* (London: Verso, 2009).

23. Robert H. Jackson, *Quasi-States: Sovereignty, International Relations and the Third World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 187.

24. Robert Jackson, *Quasi-States*, 187.

25. Richard H. Thaler and Cass R. Sunstein, *Nudge: Improving Decisions about Health, Wealth and Happiness* (London: Penguin, 2009); see also Peter John et al., *Nudge, Nudge, Think, Think: Experimenting with Ways to Change Civic Behaviour* (London: Bloomsbury, 2011).

26. Paul Collier, *The Bottom Billion: Why the Poorest Countries are Failing and What Can be Done About it* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), xi.

27. Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler, 'Greed and Grievance in Civil War', *Oxford Economic Papers* 56 (2004): 563–95; Paul Collier et al., 'Beyond Greed and Grievance: Feasibility and Civil War' (CSAE Working Paper Series 2006–10, Centre for the Study of African Economies, University of Oxford, Oxford, 2006).

28. Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler, 'Greed and Grievance in Civil War'.

29. Paul Collier et al., 'Beyond Greed and Grievance', 19.

30. Paul Collier et al., 'Beyond Greed and Grievance', 20.

31. Tomonori De Herdt and Sverin Abega, 'Capability Deprivations and Political Complexities: The Political Economy of Onions in the Mandara Mountains, Cameroon', *Journal of Human Development* 8, no. 2 (2007): 303–23; Verena Fritz et al., *Problem-Driven Governance and Political Economy Analysis: Good Practice Framework* (Washington, DC: International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/World Bank, 2009); *The Political Economy of Policy Reform: Issues and Implications for Policy Dialogue and Development Operations*, Report No. 44288-GLB (Washington, DC: International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/World Bank, 2008).

32. Paul Collier, *Wars, Guns and Votes: Democracy in Dangerous Places* (London: Vintage Books, 2010), 216.

33. Ibid., 218.

34. Ibid., 202–227.

35. Ibid., 226.

36. Paul Collier, *The Bottom Billion*, 67.

37. Ibid., 157.

38. Ibid.

39. Ibid., 160.

40. Ibid., 192.

41. Paul Segal, 'Review of Paul Collier's The Bottom Billion', *Renewal* 16, no. 2 (2008), 152.
42. Thomas Pogge, 'Are We Violating the Human Rights of the World's Poor', *Yale Human Rights and Development Law Journal* 14, no. 2 (2011): 1–33.
43. Ibid., 12.
44. Thomas Pogge, *World Poverty and Human Rights: Cosmopolitan Responsibilities and Reforms* (Cambridge: Polity, 2002), 65.
45. Thomas Pogge, *World Poverty and Human Rights*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Polity, 2008).
46. Thomas Pogge, 'Are We Violating the Human Rights of the World's Poor', 18.
47. Hannah Arendt, Responsibility and Judgement, 147.
48. Thomas Pogge, 'Are We Violating the Human Rights of the World's Poor', 13.
49. Ibid., 17.
50. Thomas Pogge, 'Achieving Democracy', *Ethics & International Affairs* 21, S1 (2007): 249–73, 253.
51. Thomas Pogge, 'Are We Violating the Human Rights of the World's Poor', 26; 'Responses to the Critics', in *Thomas Pogge and his Critics,* ed. Alison M. Jaggar (Cambridge: Polity, 2010), 175–250, 177.
52. Thomas Pogge, 'Achieving Democracy', 266.
53. Thomas Pogge, 'Are We Violating the Human Rights of the World's Poor', 32.
54. Ibid.
55. See, for example, Noortje Marres, *Material Participation*.
56. Ibid., 3.
57. Ibid., 33.
58. Thomas Pogge, 'We Must Be Opportunistic in the Pursuit of Justice', *The European*, December 14, 2011, http://www.theeuropean-magazine.com/thomas-pogge—2/374-global-justice (accessed June 29, 2013).
59. Pogge, 'Achieving Democracy', 270.