

Why Should We Help the Poor Foreigners? :

Thomas W. Pogge's Responsibility-Based Argument for Transnational Obligation

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· **Keyword:** transnational obligation, communitarianism, cosmopolitanism, Thomas W. Pogge, negative responsibility, negative duty

【ABSTRACT】

The purpose of this paper is to show that we have a moral obligation to help the needy people in poor countries. Confining the scope of morality within the boundary of a national community, many scholars have denied the existence of such a “transnational obligation.” They argue that because each community is responsible for the poverty of its members, the poor countries should solve their poverty problems by themselves. For them, the obligation toward “compatriots” (i.e., toward fellow nationals or fellow citizens who share the membership in the same community) takes priority while the obligation toward foreigners is at best secondary, or does not exist. To criticize such a “parochial” approach, this paper will show, on the basis of Thomas W. Pogge's argument, that we have a moral obligation to help the needy people regardless of their nationality or their relationship to us. Revealing the moral necessity of transnational aid, this paper reminds us that we should do something to relieve global poverty and hunger.

I . Introduction

Despite global economic growth and technological progress, poverty is still prevalent in the world, especially in the developing countries. The World Bank estimates that in 2001, about 1.1 billion human beings were living below the international poverty line, which it defines roughly one dollar a day at 1993 PPP (purchasing power parity). It also estimates that in 2001, about 2.7 billion people (nearly half of humankind) were living on less than two dollars a day (World Bank 2007). Many other poverty-related problems are still prevalent in the world. According to United Nations Development Programme (UNDP 1998: 49; 1999: 22; 2001: 22 and 29), about 14 percent of the world's population (826 million people) are undernourished, 16 percent (968 million people) lack access to safe drinking water, 40 percent (2.4 billion people) lack access to basic sanitation, 15 percent (more than 880 million people) lack access to health services, and 17 percent (approximately one billion people) have no adequate shelter. More miserably millions of people, most of whom are premature children, die each year of starvation or easily curable diseases. According to World Health Organization (WHO 2004: Table 2), the annual death toll from poverty-related causes is around 18 million or one-third of all human deaths.

In the face of these miseries, most people in rich countries seem to agree that it is morally good to donate food and other material needs to the poor in poor countries. As O'Neill (1986: xi) points out, however, such an agreement is "often superficial" and "there is far more disagreement." For example, attributing the poverty in poor countries to their domestic local factors, a number of scholars have argued that we ("we" as the rich in rich countries who can change the lives of the poor in poor countries) have no moral obligation to help the needy people in poor countries. According to them, because each community is responsible for the poverty of its members, the poor countries should solve their poverty problems by themselves. For them, the obligation toward compatriots (i.e., toward fellow nationals or toward fellow citizens who share the membership in the same community) takes priority while the obligation toward foreigners is at best secondary, or does not exist. On their account, the scope of morality is confined within the boundary of a community, in particular, that of a national community (Miller 1988, 1995; Gewirth 1988; Gombert 1994; Mason 1997; Wellman 2000).

To criticize such a "parochial" approach, this paper purposes to show, on the basis of Thomas W. Pogge's argument, that we have a moral obligation to help the needy foreigners. In the next section I will begin with a critical review of the parochial argument focusing on that of communitarianism. In the third section I will examine Pogge's responsibility-

based argument for transitional obligation, and show that we should help the needy people in poor countries because we are responsible for their poverty at least “negatively.” In the forth section I will compare Pogge’s argument with other cosmopolitan arguments, and show that Pogge’s argument can help us avoid various problems of other cosmopolitan arguments. In conclusion I will make a brief summary and discuss some implications of this study.

II . Communitarian Argument

From various perspectives many scholars have denied the existence of transnational obligation. Communitarians are among them. Emphasizing the role of community, they argue that we have no moral obligation to help the needy people in poor countries(e.g. the poor in Tanzania, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Somalia, and Bangladeshi) because we share no bond of community with them beyond the very tenuous one of a common humanity. To be sure, communitarians acknowledge the existence of a moral obligation to help the needy people. On their account, however, such an obligation is often confined in scope within the boundary of a community, in particular, that of a national community. They posit that compatriots have special obligations toward one another because they share the membership in the same community. Borrowing Shue’s phrase(1980: 131–2), their slogan is that “compatriots take priority.” In this section, let us examine their reasoning critically.

Communitarians argue that we stand in a special relationship to those men, women, and children who share with us the membership in the same community and that this special relationship plays a fundamental role in shaping our moral standing(Wellman 2000: 538). In this context MacIntyre(1981: 220) writes as follows. According to him:

But it is not just that different individuals live in different social circumstance; it is also that we all approach our circumstances as bearers of a particular social identity. I am someone’s son or daughter, someone else’s cousin or uncle; I am a citizen of this or that city, a member of this or that guild or profession; I belong to this tribe, that clan, this nation. Hence what is good for me has to be what is good for one who inhabits these roles. As such, I inherit from the past of my family, my city, my tribe, my nation, a variety of debts, inheritance, rightful expectations and obligations. These constitute the given of life, my moral starting point. This is part of what gives my life its moral particularity.

In other words, as Wellman(2000: 538) has put it, communitarians emphasize “not only that each person’s life is filled with different particulars but that these particulars carry a fundamental moral significance.” David Miller(1995: 50) notes that this view is distinctive insofar as it “holds that relations between persons are part of the basic subject-matter of ethics, so that fundamental principles may be attached directly to these relations. It invokes a different picture of the universe, in which agents are already encumbered with a variety of ties and commitments to particular other agents, or to groups or collectivities, and they begin their ethical reasoning from these commitments.”

Having emphasized the importance of “relational facts,” communitarians posit special obligations among intimates, for example, among friends, siblings, colleagues, compatriots, neighbors, co-nationals, and members of the same religion, race, or team (Wellman 2000: 539). According to them, we ought to give preferential consideration to the interests of some persons as against others, when we have special relationships with them(Gewirth 1988: 283). In this context, Dworkin(1986: 196) writes: “for most people, responsibilities to family and lovers and friends and union or office colleagues are the most important, the most consequential obligations of all.” Walzer(1983: 33) also writes: “People who do share a common life have much stronger duties.”

From this reasoning, communitarians develop a parochial argument that those who share the membership in a group have special obligations toward one another. David Miller(1995: 65) writes: “Because I identify with my family, my college, or my local community, I properly acknowledge obligations to members of these groups are distinct from the obligations I owe to people generally. Seeing myself as a member, I feel a loyalty to the group, and this express itself, among other things, in my giving special weight to the interests of fellow members.” Etzioni(2002: 573) also summarizes this perspective as follows. “If three children go hungry in a community, the members of this community are more distressed than if thousands starve in some far away country. Moreover, people not only care more about members of their own communities, but maintain that they are justified in doing so, that one has a higher level of obligation to one’s ‘own kind’ than to all others.”

Of various groups, communitarians emphasize the role of a national political community, in particular. There are many reasons for this treatment. According to Richard Miller(1998: 203), this is because “people have a better understanding of compatriots’ needs, and can more easily provide aid to the needy within the nation’s borders.” David Miller(1995: 63) raises a similar argument. According to him, “co-nationals are better informed about one another than they are about outsiders, and

therefore better placed to say, for example, when their fellows are in need, or are deprived of their rights.” Meanwhile, Dagger(1985: 443) emphasizes the fact that members of a political community participate together as equals in a cooperative enterprises for mutual advantage. That is, according to him, members of a political community are obligated to take their fair share of the burdens of the cooperation as well as its fruits. When compatriots fail to take their fare share of the burdens, they violate the rights of other citizens to autonomy because, in Kant’s terms, they thereby treat them simply as a means to their own ends. Finally, Etzioni(2002: 578) focuses on the “constitutive role” of community. According to him, we have special obligations toward “compatriots” because “membership and participation in community are at once fundamental to human functioning and essential for the development of identity and character and human flourishing.”

Anyway, emphasizing the role of a national community, communitarians argue that the differential treatment on the basis of nationality is morally permissible. David Miller writes, “The principle of nationality requires us to respect others’ claim to national self-determination, but … it does not require us to treat foreigners and compatriots equally in all respect”(1995: 190–1). In this context, Miller declares that “national boundaries” are “ethically significant.” According to him, “the duties we owe to our compatriots may be more extensive than the duties we owe to strangers, simply because they are compatriots. … [A]lmost all of us … behave as though it were self-evidently true”(1988: 647).

In a similar vein, Dagger(1985: 436) says that the relationship we have with “those men, women, and children who share with us membership in a political community” is special because “it requires us to attend to the needs and interests of our compatriots before we attend to the needs and interests of foreigners.” According to him, “we may have some responsibility to others … but our first responsibility is to the poor, the hungry, and the homeless citizens of our own country.”

Communitarians then conclude that helping the needy people in poor countries with whom we share no bond of community is permissible, but the obligation toward “compatriots”(i.e. toward fellow nationals or toward fellow citizens who share the membership in the same national or political community) takes priority. On their account, the obligation toward foreigners is at best secondary, or does not exist, especially when poverty and other miseries in poor countries are caused by the political and economic institutions of the poor countries themselves and the corruption and incompetence of their ruling elites.

David Miller posits that “each state is held responsible for protecting the rights and serving the welfare of its own citizens.” For him, it makes sense to “assign responsibility

for the rights and welfare of Swedes to other Swedes and the rights and welfares of Somalians to other Somalians”(1995: 63). Miller also writes, “Much more often, nations cannot protect the basic rights of their members because of other decisions they have taken: famines may result from misguided economic decisions made in the past, and they may be perpetuated by the institutional rules that continue to be applied. Or again, the cause may simply be the unwillingness of better off people in the society in question to make the changes that would secure the rights of the worst off, for instance to introduce publicly funded welfare schemes”(1995: 76). Rawls(1993: 64), even though he is not a communitarian, adopts a similar position. According to him:

The great social evils in poorer societies are likely to be oppressive government and corrupt elites and the subjection of women abetted by unreasonable religion, all with the resulting overpopulation relative to what the economy of the society can decently sustain. Perhaps there is no society anywhere in the world that, were its people reasonably and rationally governed and their numbers sensibly adjusted to their economy and resources, could not have a decent and worthwhile life.

Seen from this communitarian perspective, poverty and hunger in poor countries are due to their domestic local factors, and the obligation to help the starving people in these countries falls in the first place on their co-nationals. Our obligation is at best secondary, or does not exist. Miller(1995: 79) emphasizes that “if we take nationality seriously, then we must also accept that positive obligations to protect basic rights(e.g. to relieve hunger) fall in the first place on co-nationals.” We can help the poor foreigners through voluntary charity, but the obligation to help the needy people is applicable primarily to compatriots because each community is responsible for the welfare of its members.

As Goodin(1988) points out, it is perfectly true that there is a variety of goods that we may or must provide to compatriots but at the same time legitimately deny to foreigners. No one can deny that we can and should give special attention to our own families and to our own ties of religions and national belonging(Nussbaum 1996). I also admit that it is permissible and often desirable to give special attention to our fellow nationals or to our fellow citizens.

I think, however, this argument fails to justify why the obligation toward compatriots take priority. We may well have less reason to benefit foreigners than to confer equivalent benefits on our compatriots, but this cannot justify the preferential treatment of our compatriots in “all” cases. There is no moral reason to give a priority to

compatriots in all cases. The question of which obligation should take priority must be determined within a specific context. As Richard Miller(1998: 203) has put it, “The neediness of people in countries such as Bangladesh is desperate enough, their local resources meager enough, their numbers great enough, and current transportation, information, and transnational institutions are effective enough, to put responsibility for the needy of per-capita poor countries on a par with responsibility for needy compatriots in per-capita rich ones.” Seen from a moral perspective, as Singer(1972: 231–2) rightly points out, “it makes no moral difference whether the person I can help is a neighbor’s child ten yards from me or a Bengali whose name I shall never know, ten thousand miles away.” Proximity and distance does not matter in morality consideration.

Secondly, the growth of international “interdependence” renders the communitarian argument problematic by blurring the distinction between “inside” and “outside.” In this context, Beitz(1975: 373–6) writes:

[I]nternational economic cooperation creates a new basis for international morality. ... Capital surpluses are no longer confined to reinvestment in the societies where they are produced, but instead are reinvested wherever conditions promise the highest yield without unacceptable risks. It is well known, for example, that large American corporations have systematically transferred significant portions of their capitalization to European, Latin American, and East Asian societies where labor costs are lower, markets are better, and profits are higher. A related development is the rise of an international division of labor whereby products are manufactured in areas having cheap, unorganized labor and are marketed in more affluent areas. Because multinational businesses, rather than the producing countries themselves, play the leading role in setting prices and wages, the international division of labor results in a system of world trade in which value created in one society(usually poor) is used to benefit members of other societies(usually rich). ... The system of interdependence imposes burdens on poor and economically weak countries. ... These facts ... describe a world in which national boundaries can no longer be regarded as the outer limits of social cooperation. ... Since [national] boundaries are not coextensive with the scope of social cooperation, they do not mark the limits of social obligations.

In particular, by increasing global interconnectedness dramatically, recent globalization makes the communitarian argument less plausible(Devetak and Higgott 1999; Mandle 2000). In a globalized world, communitarians cannot answer why we should think of

justice only within the boundary of a national community (Beitz 1999). Morality requires us to extend the scope of justice beyond borders. The communitarian argument, however, limits the scope of our moral concern. Whatever their reasoning may be, communitarians just claim that we should leave starving people in danger of death because they are not members of our community, but common sense morality cannot accept their argument easily.

Finally, the communitarian argument fails to take into account the role of international or global factors in causing the poverty in poor countries (Beitz 1999: 524–7). As a matter of fact, the present poverty in poor countries cannot be fully explained without considering the role of such international factors as international trade and financial systems, international division of labor, etc. We cannot attribute the poverty in poor countries only to their domestic local factors. As Pogge points out, we are at least negatively responsible for the poverty in poor countries. In the next section, then, let us focus on Pogge's argument.

III. Pogge's Cosmopolitan Argument

Pogge argues that we have a moral obligation to help the needy people in poor countries because we are, at least negatively, responsible for the persistence of their poverty. In that it treats moral obligation as a "transnational" matter which exists beyond the borders of a national community, his argument has a cosmopolitan characteristic. In this section, let us examine his reasoning briefly.

According to Pogge (2001a: 60), the current global poverty exemplifies "radical inequality" in that it meets the following five conditions. First, the worse-off are very badly off in absolute terms. The global poor who are living below the international poverty line (the World Bank estimates that about 2.7 billion people are living below the generous international poverty line of \$2 per day) cannot enjoy the "right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of oneself and one's family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care" (2001b: 7–8). Moreover, about 18 million people die each year from starvation and other poverty-related diseases, which accounts for roughly one-third of all human death (Pogge 2001a: 60).

Second, the worse-off are very badly off in relative terms. According to Pogge, the global poor living below the \$2 per day international poverty line (about 2.7 billion) consume only 1.3 percent of the global product, while the high-income countries with about 955 million citizens consume about 81 percent (World Bank 2003: 235; Pogge

2005a: 1). Moreover, the inequality between the global poor and the global rich has been increasing. According to Pogge, such a trend has been persisting for quite a long time, reaching far back into the colonial era. The income gap between the fifth of the world's people living in the richest countries and the fifth in the poorest countries was 74 to 1 in 1997, up from 60 to 1 in 1990 and 30 to 1 in 1960. Earlier estimates are 11 to 1 for 1913, 7 to 1 in 1870, and 3 to 1 for 1820(UNDP 1999: 3; Pogge 2001: 13). Pogge also emphasizes that the assets of the top three billionaires are more than the combined GNP of all least developed countries and their 600 million people(UNDP 1999: 3; Pogge 2001: 14).

Third, the inequality is impervious: it is difficult or impossible for the worse-off substantially to improve their lot; and most of the better-off never experience life at the bottom for even a few months and have no vivid idea of what it is like to live in that way (Pogge 2005c: 37).

Fourth, the inequality is pervasive: it concerns not merely some aspects of life, such as the climate or access to natural beauty or high culture, but most aspects or all. As a matter of fact, the inequality between the global poor and the global rich is found in almost all aspects of life, including food, clothing, housing, basic living standards, nutrition, education, sanitation, health care, and so on(Pogge 2005c: 37).

Fifth, the inequality is avoidable: the better-off can improve the circumstances of the worse-off without becoming badly-off themselves. Pogge argues that the reforms which would double or even triple the income of the poorest countries have no serious impact on high-income countries' GNP. According to Pogge, for the first time in human history it is quite feasible, economically to wipe out hunger and preventable diseases worldwide without real inconvenience to anyone. In 1820, severe poverty was quite hard to avoid because even the average purchasing power of incomes worldwide barely reached the World Bank's higher poverty line. Today, by contrast, the average purchasing power of incomes worldwide is well over 10 times that level, and severe poverty is entirely avoidable(Pogge 2005c: 32). Pogge also cites the estimation of United Nations Development Programme, according to which "the additional cost of achieving and maintaining universal access to basic education for all, basic health care for all, reproductive health care for all women, adequate food for all and safe water and sanitation for all is ... less than 4 % of the combined wealth of the 225 richest people in the world"(UNDP 1998: 30; Pogge 2001b: 14).

After defining the global poverty as radical inequality, Pogge emphasizes that there is a shared institutional order that is shaped by the better-off and imposed on the worse-off. According to him, "the global poor live within a worldwide states system based on

internationally recognized territorial domains, interconnected through a global network of market trade and diplomacy. The presence and relevance of shared institutions is shown how dramatically we affect the circumstances of the global poor through investment, loans, trade, bribes, military aid, sex tourism, culture exports, and much else. Their very survival often crucially depends on our consumption choices, which may determine the price of their foodstuffs and their opportunities to find work” (Pogge 2001a: 61–2).

Pogge then argues that the current global institutional system, connected and regulated by a shared institutional order, is unjust because it helps such a radical inequality persist (2001a: 70). According to him, there is a causal link between the current global institutional order and the poverty in poor countries. Global economic institutions play a significant role in causing poverty and hunger in poor countries (2002a: 140–4).

Disregarding the role of global factors, however, economists often lead us to believe that severe poverty and its persistence are due exclusively to local causes such as bad domestic policies and institutions of the poor countries (Pogge 2005a: 1). They argue that severe poverty persists in many poor countries because they govern themselves so poorly. On their account, “those who remain hungry have only their own institutions and governments (and hence themselves and their own compatriots) to blame” (Pogge 2002: 73).

It is quite true, of course, that local economic institutions, and local factors more generally, play an important role in the reproduction of extreme poverty in the developing countries. Pogge, however, emphasizes that the above approach, what he calls “explanatory nationalism,” disregards the fact that global institutions have a profound impact on the indigenous institutional schemes of developing countries. According to him, in the context of a different global order, the same local factors (institutions, officials, policies, culture, climate, natural environment, and level of technical and economic development) would have quite different effects (2001a: 62). To reveal the role of global factors, Pogge indicates the following two points.

First, Pogge emphasizes that the current global order we uphold shapes the national culture and policies of the poorer and weaker countries. According to him, regardless of whether the rulers of the resource-rich countries are democratically elected or not, the current global order provides these rulers with the following privileges to “sell us the resources of ‘his’ country and to borrow, undertake treaty commitments, and buy arms in its name” and “the money and arms they need to stay in power.” “But these privileges have devastating effects on the global poor by enabling corrupt rulers to oppress them,

to exclude them from the benefits of their countries' natural resources, and to saddle them with huge debts and onerous treaty obligations. By substantially augmenting the perks of governmental power, these same privileges also greatly strengthening the incentives to attempt to take power by force, thereby fostering coups, civil wars, and interstate wars in the poor countries and regions" (2005a: 7).

Second, the national institutional schemes of developed countries can have a profound influence on the national institutional schemes of developing countries. According to Pogge, "an obvious example is that, until quite recently, most developed countries have allowed their firms to pay bribes to officials of developing countries and even to deduct such bribes from their taxable revenues. Such authorization and moral support for bribery have greatly contributed to the now deeply entrenched culture of corruption in many developing countries" (2002b: 74). Pogge thus writes as follows (2001a: 62):

[Explanatory nationalism] conceals how profoundly local factors and their effects are influenced by the existing global order. Yes, a culture of corruption pervades the political system and the economy of many developing countries. But is this culture unrelated to the fact that most affluent countries have, until quite recently, allowed their firms to bribe foreign officials and even made such bribes tax-deductible? – Yes, developing countries have shown themselves prone to oppressive government and to horrific wars and civil wars. But is the frequency of such brutality unrelated to the international arms trade, and unrelated to international rules that entitle anyone holding effective power in such a country to borrow in its name and to sell ownership rights in its natural resources?

For Pogge, those supporting explanatory nationalism fail to take into account these facts and wrongly attribute the poverty in poor countries to local factors.

After criticizing explanatory nationalism, Pogge emphasizes we should realize that, by supporting an unjust global order intentionally or unintentionally, we are all "negatively" responsible for the poverty in poor countries and other harms it produces. According to him, we take part in a single global institutional framework which deprives the poor in poor countries of what they need, and are imposing – whether intentionally or not – such an institutional framework upon them "rather than some feasible institutional alternative that would not generate such severe and widespread poverty" (2002: 142). In doing so, Pogge emphasizes, we "are *harming* the global poor" (2005a: 5). Pogge thus writes as follows. According to him (2002b: 74),

If the social institutions of the developed countries and the global institutional order these countries uphold contribute substantially to the reproduction of poverty, then it is hard to deny that we citizens of developed countries are therefore materially involved in it as well. It is true of course that these institutions are shaped by our politicians. But we live in reasonably democratic states where we can choose politicians and political programs from a wide range of alternatives, where we can participate in shaping political programs and debates, and where politicians and political parties must cater to the popular will if they are to be elected and reelected. If we really wanted our domestic and international institutions to be shaped so as to avoid reproducing extreme poverty, politicians committed to that goal would emerge and be successful. But the vast majority of citizens of the developed countries want national and global institutions to be shaped in the service of their own interests and therefore support politicians willing so to shape them. At least the citizens in this large majority can then be said to be materially involved in the reproduction of poverty and the associated health deficits.”

To be sure, according to Pogge, “we do not intend these harms” and “may not even have foreseen these harms.” Nevertheless, by supporting an unjust global order intentionally or unintentionally, Pogge says, we are responsible for the poverty in poor countries and other harms it produces. Pogge thus argues that “our failure to make a serious effort toward poverty reduction may constitute not merely a lack of beneficence, but our active impoverishing, starving, and killing of millions of innocent people by economic means” (2001b: 15). According to him (2001b: 15):

[O]ur moral situation is more akin to that of Mao Tse-Tung in 1959. Mao did not foresee that his Great Leap Forward, begun in 1958, would acutely aggravate poverty in China. But when the catastrophic effects of these policies became evident in the great famine of 1959–62, he continued his policies and declined foreign help. Twenty to thirty million Chinese perished as a direct consequence of this moral failure. Continuing our current global economic structures and policies unmodified would manifest a similar moral failure. Perhaps we had reason to believe our own persistent pronouncements that the new global economic architecture would cease the reproduction of poverty. So perhaps we just made an innocent and blameless mistake. But it is our mistake nonetheless, and we must not allow it to kill yet further tens of millions in the developing world.

On the basis of the above reasoning, Pogge concludes that we are obligated to help the poor in poor countries and to reform the unjust institutional scheme. On his account, the poverty and many other poverty-related problems in the developing countries is “not a homegrown problem, but one we greatly contribute to through the policies we pursue and the international order we impose.” With regard to global poverty, therefore, we have “not merely a positive responsibility” to help the poor “but a negative responsibility to stop imposing the existing global order and to prevent and mitigate the harms it continually causes for the world’s poorest populations,” that is, “not to uphold injustice, not to contribute to or profit from the unjust improvement of others.” “Because our responsibility is negative and because so much harm can be prevented at so little cost to ourselves,” Pogge emphasizes, “the reduction of severe global poverty should be our foremost moral priority”(2001b: 22).

IV. Cosmopolitanism and Transnational Obligation

When compared with other cosmopolitan arguments, Pogge’s argument has many merits. In this section, by comparing with consequentialist argument, compensation argument, human rights argument, and Kantian argument, I will show that Pogge’s argument can help us avoid various problems of other cosmopolitan arguments and thereby provide relatively a more adequate ground for transnational obligation.

First, Pogge’s argument can help us avoid the calculation problem of the consequentialist argument. Consequentialists hold that morally right acts are those that maximize overall human happiness or well-being. For them, when helping the poor foreigners produces more benefits than costs, it has a moral value. Singer thus argues that we should help the starving people in the developing countries, when we can save their lives with insignificant cost, for example, with \$ 0.10 a day. According to him, “if it is in our power to prevent something very bad from happening, without thereby sacrificing anything morally significant, we ought, morally, to do it(Singer 1972: 231). In a similar context, utilitarians argue that if the gain in utility in the poor exceeds the loss in utility in the rich, the rich in rich countries ought to help the poor in poor countries. Though persuasively demonstrating that there is a good moral reason to help the poor foreigners, the difficulty in calculating the benefits and costs of the assistance renders this argument problematic(Ruttan 1989: 417–9).

The consequentialist argument holds that we should help the poor foreigners when it produces more benefits than costs, but how can we measure the benefits and costs?

How much we ought to help to increase the overall human welfare? How much percentage of our Gross National Product ought to be used for foreign aid? One percent? Ten percent? Or fifty percent? The consequentialist argument does not, and cannot, answer these questions adequately. Utilitarians argue that we ought to help the poor until the point is reached at which, by helping more, the loss in our utility would exceed the gain in utility in the poor. In most cases, however, it is very difficult to precisely calculate the benefits and costs of the assistance. Moreover, there is a possibility that conflicts may occur between short-term and long-term benefits or costs, which makes the calculation more difficult. On Pogge's argument, however, there is no need to calculate the benefits and costs of the assistance in order to prove the morality of transnational aid, because the obligation is unconditional which is derived from the fact that we are responsible for their poverty.

Second, Pogge's argument can help us avoid the problems of the compensation argument. Emphasizing the importance of compensation, a number of scholars have argued that we should help the poor in poor countries to compensate for the past injustices we or our ancestors committed long time ago. According to them, the rich in rich countries should help the poor in poor countries because they should compensate for the past injustices (e.g., colonial exploitation, domination, slave trading, etc.) conducted by the companies and individuals of their countries (O'Neill 1991: 291).

While correct in principle, this argument poses a number of difficulties. First, it is difficult to determine the proper temporal scope of the compensation (Sher 1981: 3). We may award compensation for the injustices done ten or twenty years ago; but what of wrongs done a hundred years ago? Or five hundred or a thousand years ago? Are there any temporal limits? Second, there arises a problem of determining who should be the appropriate beneficiaries and agents of the compensation. In most cases, the individuals whose rights were violated in the colonial past, and those who violated them, may be long dead. Then, we cannot determine where the supposed responsibilities to compensate for past injustices are now located, nor who has inherited rights to be compensated (O'Neill 1991: 291-2).

By focusing on the present injustices, Pogge's approach helps us avoid the above difficulties. On Pogge's account, we should help the poor in poor countries not as compensation for the past injustices our ancestors committed long ago but as compensation for the present injustices we commit now intentionally or unintentionally. This approach can also help us specify the appropriate beneficiaries and agents of the compensation. Here the appropriate beneficiaries should be those who are harmed by the current global order; and the appropriate agents should be those who benefit from

the current global order. Though it is very difficult practically to pinpoint who are harmed and who benefit, Pogge's approach helps us specify logically the appropriate beneficiaries and agents of the compensation.

Third, by specifying the bearers of obligation, Pogge's approach helps us solve the problem of the human rights argument. Those supporting the idea of human rights argue that we should help the poor in poor countries because every person has universal human rights to be fed or to receive basic shelter or health care (Shue 1980). The United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 adopts a similar position (United Nations 1948). Article 25 (1) and Article 28 of the Declaration write:

Article 25 (1):

Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing, medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.

Article 28:

Everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration can be fully realized.

Though the human rights argument is widely endorsed, it also has a number of problems. Among others, it fails to specify who should take the obligation. This argument holds that the poor in poor countries have universal human rights to be fed or to receive basic shelter or health care, but says nothing about who should take the obligation to provide them with food and other basic goods and services. It does not answer against whom the rights claims may be lodged (O'Neill 1991: 295–6). By making it clear that the people in rich countries are responsible for the poverty in poor countries, however, Pogge's approach helps us avoid this problem. On Pogge's account, the obligation to help the poor in poor countries is placed upon the people in rich countries who are responsible for the poverty in poor countries and other harms it produces.

Finally, by deriving the morality of transnational aid from our responsibility, Pogge's approach can help us avoid the dilemma of the Kantian argument. From a Kantian perspective O'Neill (1986: 144–6) argues that we have a moral obligation to help the poor in poor countries. She derives this obligation from the Kantian principles of "noncoercion"

and “nondeception” which she suggests as the two most fundamental principles of justice. According to her, morality requires us to act in accord with the maxims of noncoercion and nondeception and, furthermore, to transform unjust economic and social structures. On her account, therefore, we should make efforts to eliminate world hunger and poverty that leave the poor vulnerable to forms of coercion and deception.

To be sure, O’Neil’s approach persuasively shows that there is a moral reason why the rich should help the distant poor. However, as Aiken rightly points out, “if economic and social structures that generate hunger are rooted in traditional religious beliefs and the only way to alter the economic structures is to challenge the religious beliefs,” this approach comes to face a dilemma. In this case the attempt to implement changes may have a danger of “cultural imperialism.” Or if a rich nation attempts to enact a policy of land reform in a poor country, this attempt may have a danger of “benevolent imperialism” and would inevitably involve a certain level coercion (Aiken 1988: 87). In both cases the attempts to help the poor foreigners may cause a severe conflict with the principle of noncoercion. By contrast, the adherence to the principle of noncoercion may make *laissez faire* the only solution. O’Neill’s argument cannot easily solve such a dilemma. Pogge’s approach, however, can help us avoid this dilemma because it does not presuppose noncoercion as a condition of justice. Instead, it requires us to reform the unjust institutional schemes.

To summarize, Pogge’s argument provides a more adequate moral ground for transnational obligation in the following ways. First, by specifying transnational aid as our unconditional obligation, this approach helps us avoid the calculation problem of the consequentialist argument. Second, by focusing on the present injustices we commit now, this approach helps us avoid the problems of determining the temporal scope and the appropriate beneficiaries and agents of the compensation. Third, by specifying the people in rich countries as the obligation bearers, this approach helps us solve the problem of the human rights argument. Fourth, by deriving the morality of transnational aid from our responsibility, this approach helps us avoid the dilemma of the Kantian argument.

V. Conclusion

Confining the scope of morality within the boundary of a national community, communitarians have denied the existence of a transnational obligation to help the poor foreigners who are not members of our community. They argue that because each

community is responsible for the poverty of its members, the poor countries should solve their poverty problems by themselves. On their account, the obligation toward compatriots takes priority while the obligation toward foreigners is at best secondary, or does not exist. To criticize such a parochial approach, this paper has shown, on the basis of Pogge's argument, that we have a moral obligation to help the poor foreigners.

To be sure, the fact that we are responsible for global poverty and have a moral obligation to stop poverty and other miseries it produces does not mean that global poverty will gradually disappear. They are quite different issues. To solve the problem of global poverty, we need a feasible solution and, moreover, the practical means to put this solution into practice. As a first step, in this paper, I have focused on theoretical issues and tried to examine what kind of argument is more adequate logically to provide a solution to the problem of global poverty. The scope of this paper is thus limited to theoretical issues. There is no discussion on policy issues.

Nevertheless, revealing the morality of transnational aid, this study reminds us that we should do something to change the current global order and to minimize global poverty. The fact that we are negatively responsible for the persistence of global poverty makes us obligated to make a serious effort toward poverty reduction and to reform the unjust global institutional orders. This means that we should pay more attention to ensure that the poor have secure access to food and shelter, vaccines, safe water, basic health services and sanitation, primary education, and many other basic requirements. That is, we should do something to relieve global poverty and hunger.

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