

# **Applying Virtue Ethics to The Challenge of Corruption**

**Charles Garofalo**

**Dean Geuras**

**Thomas D. Lynch**

**Cynthia E. Lynch**

## **Applying Virtue Ethics to the Challenge of Corruption**

**Charles Garofalo, Dean Geuras, Thomas D. Lynch, Cynthia E. Lynch**

### **Introduction**

For all of the evil things that can be said of corruption, it cannot be accused of provincialism. Corruption is fully multicultural. It appears in all societies in innumerable forms and with receptions varying from hostility to tolerance. One might gather from corruption's cultural diversity that no universal antidote can be administered. Nevertheless, we maintain that, as a global ethical and legal problem, corruption can be addressed by global virtue ethics, in conjunction with auditing and monitoring policies and procedures. We disagree with Peter deLeon's (1993) claim that the "morality model" is "naively optimistic and ineffectual" when confronting corruption. Instead, we maintain that a unified ethics that includes an emphasis on character development, can be an effective means to combat corruption. We contend that current anti-corruption approaches, such as the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) initiatives on tax deductibility of bribery payments, auditing, and financial management, are necessary. However, those initiative alone are far from sufficient to reduce corruption. In our view, a unified ethical theory must include OECD initiatives but it must also transcend differences in cross-cultural moral manifestations and identify the fundamental interests and imperatives of global citizenship.

This paper argues for applying a unified ethical theory to practical ethical problems such as corruption. We do this in the first substantive section of this paper by noting that ethical persons can envision virtue ethics as a universal rather than a relativistic ethic. Next, we examine the subject of corruption and reforms related to it. The following section argues that core values do exist across cultures. In the final section, we recommend how we can improve ethics in organizations.

### ***A Universal Ethic***

Two of the authors of this paper have argued for a unified ethical theory that unites several ethical traditions (Garofalo and Geuras, 1999). To make that argument again is beyond the scope of this paper. Instead, we will argue that one aspect of the theory can account for apparently different ethical beliefs of different cultures. As originally proposed, the unified ethical theory combines teleology, deontology, virtue ethics, also known as character theories, and intuitionism. Teleology is the class of ethical theories that deems an act moral or immoral on the basis of its consequences. Utilitarianism, the theory that the good is that which promotes the greatest happiness, is the dominant teleological theory of the last two centuries. Deontology is the class of theories that regard an act as either good or bad in itself, without reference to consequences. Most deontological theories, such as that of Immanuel Kant, maintain that the morality of an act depends upon its fidelity to a principle (Windt, 1989). Intuitionism, as the name suggests, is the belief that there is a moral sense that recognizes or "intuits" the morality of an act as the sense of sight perceives color. Character theories determine whether an act is good or bad on the basis of the character trait that the act exhibits.

Historically, scholars consider the four theory types opposed to each other. In contrast, we argue that they are four different aspects of one complex unified ethical theory. We maintain that a person cannot make a teleological choice for the suitable end of moral action without reference to an ethical principle that specifies the ultimate good. We also argue that a deontological determination of the proper ethical principles depends upon the tacit acknowledgment of ends. We argue that intuitionists' "intuitions" contribute to the other theories by requiring that they satisfy common basic moral judgment but also depend upon them to discover the source of the unexplained intuitions. Finally, we argue that the commonly recognized moral virtues of the character theorist are morally worthy because of their compatibility with the other three theories. In summary, we argue that, rather than opposed, the ethical theories express different aspects of a single ethical theory. This is much like the perceived image of a red cloth, the wave length of the color red, and the atomic structure of the surface of the cloth. Together, they describe the same entity in different but mutually compatible ways.

In this paper, we focus on virtue ethics. We argue that, although moral practices vary widely, there is consistency among societies in their regard for the character traits that people display in their actions. Although we maintain that, ultimately, a thorough understanding of any of the four would produce the same result, we believe that character theories express it most evidently. To demonstrate the unity by means of intuitionism is difficult because intuitions--at least *prima facie* intuitions--are variable and, like tastes, provide little basis for argumentation. The only way to demonstrate an ultimate unity among intuitions is to consider an indefinite number of examples in the hope that, eventually, the intuitions of all observers would coincide.

Teleology might provide a more profitable approach, but our experience shows its use also to be problematic. We noticed a tendency of even the most careful scholars to confuse teleology in its best sense, (i.e., the utilitarian theory that one must provide the greatest total happiness among all people influenced by one's actions) with teleology in its worst sense, (i.e., egoism). We found also a tendency to misconstrue the aim of teleology as the acquisition of wealth and power, which are not the aims of the more noteworthy teleologists. Although we might remedy these misunderstandings, our remedy would require extensive discussion which, again, is beyond the confines of this paper. Nevertheless, because no one can reasonably separate teleology from the other moral theories, teleological considerations will work their way into our discussion. Our last point here involves Immanuel Kant, who remains the outstanding proponent of deontology. To discuss his complex theory and the subtleties of its interpretation in abbreviated form is more distracting than edifying. In short, we consider in this paper virtue ethics theories for the sake of simplicity and brevity. However, we recognize a more comprehensive analysis would include all forms of ethics.

### ***Aristotle and Virtue Ethics***

Scholars give Aristotle (384 to 322 B.C.E.) credit for the development of virtue ethics. He wrote two treatises on ethics called Eudemian and Nicomachean named after his first editor and pupil, Eudemus, and his son, Nicomachus. Aristotle, who probably wrote the Nichomachean Ethics when he was in his fifties or sixties, directed his inquiry toward discovering how we can achieve our highest ideal of a fulfilled life. His answer was that

deliberate and free choice, which used his famous Golden Mean, achieves the virtue of the soul (Aristotle: v).

Aristotle said, "the virtue of man also will be the state of character which makes a man good and which makes him do his own work well" (Aristotle: 37). Achieving a high morality is no easy task because it requires a person to live the Golden Mean between excess and deficiency. The aim is to perform the right action, with the right person, to the right extent, at the right time, and in the right way. Although this is the objective, Aristotle considered achieving this goodness as rare, laudable, and noble (Aristotle: 45).

To be moral, you must exercise your morality in your daily life as you exercise to develop your muscles. It is not something that we can easily comprehend and then apply by logic alone. It is something that we must live spontaneously. He believed we can all be moral but most of us fail because we believe that merely knowing about ethics will result in our being good. There is a wide gulf between knowing and being. He argued this self-delusion is much like the physician's patient who listens carefully to the doctor but follows none of the advice. He says, "As the latter will not be made well in body by such course of treatment, the former will not be made well in soul by such a course of philosophy" (Aristotle: 35).

Unlike deontological and teleological theorists, Aristotle saw no predictable clear moral answer that a human can generalize before a situation requires a moral judgment. On the contrary he believed that, "matters concerned with conduct and question of what is good for us have no fixity" (Aristotle: 30). He went on to say, "the account of particular cases is yet more lacking in exactness; for they do not fall under any art or precept, but the agents themselves must in each case consider what is appropriate to the occasion". He continued, "matters of conduct must be given in outline and not precisely" (Aristotle: 130).

To achieve the ability to be moral requires developing the proper character. To develop the proper character requires developing virtues. To develop virtues requires creating and living with moral habits (Aristotle: 29). Aristotle said, "so too is it with the virtues: by abstaining from pleasures we become temperate, and it is when we have become so that we are most able to abstain from them" (Aristotle: 31). What begins as a great effort to give up in time and with effort and practice becomes quite normal and is no effort at all. He also said, "we learn by doing them . . . states of character arise out of like activities. . . It makes no small difference, then, we form habits of one kind or of another from our very youth; it makes a very great difference, or rather all the difference" (Aristotle: 29). If we learn by doing as children and behavior is the result of repeated actions, we are going to form habits anyway. Therefore, they might as well be good ones.

We must develop virtue within us. Intellectual virtue comes from being taught. Moral virtue results from developing proper habits. Neither arises without our active intervention and participation over nature. Aristotle said, "we first acquire the potentiality and later exhibit the activity" (Aristotle: 28). We develop virtues by practicing them much like we learn the arts and music. We learn by doing them repeatedly and forming the correct habits then by exercising them like a young musician learning a new instrument. To Aristotle, the soul is where virtue exists. The body is what moves us astray from virtue (Aristotle: 26).

Aristotle maintained that happiness was not a state of feeling, enjoyment or pleasure but rather it was the definition of that which is the most desirable and satisfying of life. Aristotle did not believe that God provided us with such a life but rather we had to earn it as a result of our good actions. Our good actions were the result of our acquired virtues we developed through learning, training, and cultivation of proper habits. If we did this, he believed we acquired the most god-like blessed prize that we could achieve in the world. To Aristotle, virtue, which was the greatest and most noble accomplishment of all, must be won by study and care rather than acquired by chance (Aristotle: 18).

While Aristotle recognized that societies vary in their ethical practices, he nevertheless maintained that the disposition to choose the mean is a universal moral good, although in different societies and situations, different actions may constitute the mean. While we do not, in this paper, defend Aristotle's Golden Mean as the ultimate standard, we agree that there is a nearly universal recognition of the same moral virtues in all societies, despite their apparently different moral practices.

A few examples should suffice to illustrate our point that virtue ethics is universal. Some societies in Southeast Asia consider pointing one's toes at the person to whom one is speaking as a discourteous act. In the United States, no one notices or cares about the alignment of the speaker's feet. While the custom is different, both societies recognize the virtue of courtesy, however they might go about defining it. Similarly, in most western societies, shaking hands among men is considered a sign of friendship and respect, but the practice is by no means universal in the world. In some Asian societies, bowing has a similar meaning as hand-shaking. Despite the superficial difference, both actions express a polite welcome. One should not suppose that differences in overt behavior express different moral systems because the different behaviors may express the same intent.

There is ample evidence that there are at least some universal ethical virtues. For example, nearly every society considers qualities such as honesty, courage, responsibility, and altruism as moral virtues; while those same societies consider duplicity, cowardice, sloth, and egoism as vices. Philippa Foot (1959) notes that all societies consider certain characteristics as moral virtues. For example, honesty is a moral virtue, but the ability to wiggle one's ears is not. This suggests that people set apart moral virtues conceptually from other characteristics.

If a universal ethics exists, then why are there so many varied ethical practices throughout the world? Behavior considered immoral in one society is acceptable in another. There is no single explanation for all of these differences, but an examination of several will reveal that the apparent differences may be only superficial and mask essential similarities. The same ethical virtues may be evidenced differently in different circumstances. For example, one society in which the number of men and women are roughly equal may favor monogamy, but another society with a great disproportion of men to women might morally embrace polygamy. Both societies may value fidelity, loyalty, responsibility, and affection within a family context, but they define families differently because of different circumstances.

A lack of information in some societies may also account for different practices. Societies which are unaware of the genetic problems caused by in-breeding may find marriage among

close relatives acceptable. The practice simply indicates ignorance in a society rather than a lack of concern for the health of its members. The proper information may discourage or even cause a society to abandon such practices. This example also suggests that the persistence of customs could be another reason for different practices among societies. A society that in the past was unaware of the harmful effects of some of its practices may be reluctant to change them because of the power of ancient habits. Furthermore, the structure of societies is often so complex that the alteration of one practice may have unforeseen consequences for others. Consequently, a society might hold on to practices long after others abandoned them, but not because they have a basic moral difference with those other societies.

This is not to say that all societies, beneath the surface, are morally identical. Genuine moral differences may exist among societies as there are differences among individuals. Societies differ, as do individuals, on such issues as capital punishment, abortion, and rights to privacy. Nevertheless, those genuine disagreements may not be disagreements concerning fundamental moral values. For example, two societies or two individuals may disagree about whether execution is an appropriate punishment for murder. Nevertheless, both disputants may generally agree that murder is wrong, that society should punish murder severely, and that society should avoid execution unless "necessary." Therefore, the dispute over the appropriate punishment hides a common set of moral assumptions.

Two of this paper's authors (Lynch and Lynch, 1999) argued previously that although not all people may agree on a universal ethical theory, the validity of such a theory does not depend upon universal acceptance of the theory. They argued that religious leaders, scholars and others can identify a common core spiritual wisdom literature that lies at the heart of at least the five major religious traditions in the world today (Hindu, Jewish, Buddhist, Christian, and Islamic). They did this by identifying a common message (Lynch and Lynch, 1998) using more than 900 quotes from those five religious traditions. They argue this common wisdom literature can serve as the paradigm to logically deduce a practical and universal virtue ethics theory.

There is another factor to consider when examining the apparent contrasts among the ethical practices of different societies. The existence of a practice in a society does not necessarily entail approval of the practice. Much as individuals engage in behavior that they recognize as evidence of a character flaw, societies often live reluctantly or otherwise with their own imperfections. For example, some societies tolerate the rampant practice of bribery as unavoidable but they do not regard it as a moral virtue. To conclude that a society in which a practice occurs has a fundamentally different moral perspective from a society relatively free of the practice requires a leap in logic that we cannot endorse. There are many societies that practice bribery but few, if any, are proud of it.

We, therefore, suggest that superficial differences among societies do not imply fundamentally different concepts of morality. The linguist, Noam Chomsky (1975), argued that, despite the variety of languages and grammars in the world, there is a single underlying deep structure. We argue, similarly, that there is a single underlying moral structure that reflects a universal respect for a common core of moral virtues. If we are correct, that common core of moral virtues can become the basis for common understanding. Ultimately, common ethical standards, as necessitated by the increasingly international character of modern economies, can guide all of us.

## **Corruption**

In this section, we review some of the recent corruption literature in order to set the boundaries and content of the corruption phenomenon. We cite a number of scholarly definitions of corruption; describe the scope and types of corruption, and the principal recommendations for reform. Our ultimate goal, in the next section, is to demonstrate how our version of global virtue ethics applies to this major global issue.

Gerald and Naomi Caiden (1977) suggest three definitions of corruption: public interest, public duty, and market-centered. Public interest corruption refers to bribery or other rewards leading a functionary to favor those who offer bribes and to damage the public interest in the process. Public duty corruption refers to behavior that deviates from the formal duties of a public role because of so-called private-regarding pecuniary or status gains. Market-centered corruption refers to attempts by individuals or groups to influence the bureaucracy. The Caidens comment on the weaknesses of each definition, such as the imprecision of the public interest concept, the ambiguity of "undue influence," "misuse of authority," and "public irresponsibility," and the difficulty of dealing with divergent social norms for the conduct of public office.

Nevertheless, these three definitions of corruption do capture the central features of the phenomenon. Corruption, as several scholars suggest, can involve bribery, bureaucratic discretion, or abuse of public roles or resources. Peter deLeon (1993), in discussing political corruption in the United States, defines it as "a cooperative form of unsanctioned, usually condemned, policy influence for some type of significant personal gain, in which the currency could be economic, social, political, or ideological remuneration" (p. 25). Clearly, he goes beyond bribery, which is the focus of some other scholars' definitions of corruption.

These other scholars, however, do notice that the meaning attached to a particular act, such as bribery, varies from culture to culture. One culture calls offering an item of economic worth to a public official a bribe, but another culture says it is a gift from our heart to you, and refusing it constitutes a rejection of our goodwill. The essential point, as Susan Rose-Ackerman (1999) says, is that "societies differ in the way they channel self-interest. Endemic corruption suggests a pervasive failure to tap self-interest for productive purposes" (p. 2). Later, we will show that our unified ethics, with an emphasis on character, can be an important ingredient in efforts to channel self-interest as part of comprehensive anti-corruption campaigns. In any event, as Rose-Ackerman's definition -- "Corruption is the misuse of public power for private gain" (p. 91) -- implies, corruption is relational. It "occurs at the interface of the public and private sectors" (Rose-Ackerman, 1997, p. 31). In the same vein, Kimberly Ann Elliott (1997) argues that the most common definition of corruption is abuse of public office for private gain, although she distinguishes between petty corruption and grand corruption. Petty corruption tends to involve lower-level administrators and their interaction with private actors concerning such matters as taxes, regulations, licensing requirements, and allocation of government benefits. Grand corruption, in contrast, involves high-level political participation in such matters as procurement of so-called big-ticket items like military equipment, civilian aircraft, and infrastructure, or policy decisions about allocation of credit or industrial subsidies.

However defined, corruption is ubiquitous. Elliott (1997) notes, "It occurs in democracies and military dictatorships, and at all levels of development and in all types of economic systems, from open capitalist economies such as that of the United States to centrally planned economies

such as the former Soviet Union's" (p. 1). Although corruption varies across the world, it is unquestionably a global phenomenon. Just in the 1990s, alone, we have witnessed, in the words of Patrick Glynn, Stephen J. Kobrin, and Moises Naim (1997) a "corruption eruption" (p. 8). They ascribe it to a number of causes, not the least of which is the globalization of the economy. Global economic integration, the increasing permeability of national borders, and "the emergence of an electronically networked international financial system" collectively contribute to the opportunities for corruption (p. 12).

When considering the opportunities for corruption, recall the existence of relational views and that corruption exists at the nexus of the public and private sectors. As Rose-Ackerman (1997) suggests, "corruption depends upon the magnitude of the benefits and costs under the control of public officials" (p. 31). Since governments buy and sell goods and services, distribute subsidies, and participate in privatization, there are many incentives for corruption among private citizens and public officials. For example, Elliott (1997) maintains that democratization and market reforms in developing countries and the transitional economies in eastern Europe may, in the short run, "introduce new forms of corruption or allow more virulent forms to take hold" (p. 176). In advanced economies, she points to the campaign finance scandals in the United States, the political dissatisfaction and turmoil in western Europe, and similar difficulties in Japan as evidence that corruption is by no means limited to developing nations. To put it simply, opportunities for various types of corruption are everywhere.

In recent years, anti-corruption reform has been on the agenda of a number of international, national, state, and local organizations. Reforms include both "values-based" management as well as rules-based management, ethics codes, ethics training, increased transparency in decision making, and greater overall attention to ethical conduct and accountability. One reform, in particular, that received much attention is the December 1997 initiative of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) to outlaw bribery of foreign officials. According to Rose-Ackerman (1999), this convention's purpose is "to extend the principles of the United States Foreign Corrupt Practices Act to the international business community" (p. 185). The convention, which became effective February 15, 1999, "makes it a crime to offer, promise or give a bribe to a foreign public official in order to obtain or retain international business deals." In addition, it "effectively puts an end to the practice of according tax deductibility for bribe payments made to foreign officials" ([www.oecd.org/daf/nocorruption/index.htm](http://www.oecd.org/daf/nocorruption/index.htm)).

Other reform proposals include changing the civil service, as well as budget and financial management systems, simplification of regulatory and tax systems, improved tax collection capacity, modifying the judiciary, changing the campaign finance laws, and strengthening the institutions of civil society such as the media, NGOs, and other grassroots groups. In the end, however, as Rose-Ackerman (1999) notes, "reform will not occur unless powerful groups and individuals inside and outside government support it" (p. 199). Furthermore, "reform is much easier if the domestic and international business communities believe that they will benefit from a reduction in corruption and patronage and if ordinary citizens see gains as well" (p. 222).

We conclude this section by citing the comments of Kai Dramer of the Norwegian Ministry of National Planning and Coordination. Dramer (1997) argues in favor of an institutional responsibility for developing the capacity of personnel for moral reasoning. He



maintains, moreover, that a two part ethics program is necessary to create the needed moral conditions in our public organizations. He advocates, more specifically, "a character development part aimed at developing dispositions, attitudes, habits--or 'virtues'--such as honesty, loyalty, fairness, benevolence, conscientiousness and more, and a reasoning ability part aimed at (1) sensitizing public servants to moral problems, (2) improving their analytical skills, and (3) developing their ethical imaginativeness" (<http://www.oecd.fr/puma/gvrnance/ethics/symposium/dramer.htm>). Although the reduction or control of corruption clearly requires multiple approaches and strategies, we contend in the concluding section that our unified ethics model, emphasizing character, encompasses both parts of Dramer's ethics training program and, thus, represents a significant and practical component in any comprehensive anti-corruption effort.

### ***Core Virtues***

Our central argument is that underlying the varieties of cultural practices found across the globe is a set of core virtues. These cultural practices are expressions or manifestations of these core virtues. We also argue that our unified ethics, with an emphasis on character, can be an important ingredient in anti-corruption programs. We define corruption broadly to include intra-private, intra-public, and public-private behavior. In our view, corruption encompasses bribery, extortion, nepotism, favoritism, and other discriminatory practices. Our position is that, although there are degrees of corruption, it fundamentally consists of any behavior or practice that is unjustifiably exclusionary or obstructionist. It is behavior that imposes unjustifiable limits on human dignity and integrity or opportunities for the fulfillment of human potential. Thus, we maintain that maximum inclusiveness or universality in the context of our unified ethics is the key element in any anti-corruption effort.

Beneath the surface of cultures are fundamental human needs, characteristics, and qualities that humankind can morally satisfy only with universal virtues. An illustration is trust, which is cross-cultural in nature despite differences in scope or expression. For example, a business dinner between a Thai and an American meeting for the first time went awry because the American arrived at the meeting with his attorney. This act offended the Thai, who interpreted the attorney's presence as a statement that the American lacked trust in the Thai businessman. This example is not a matter of different values. Instead, it is a matter of different manifestations of the same virtues. Both the Thai and the American want and need to trust each other to do business with each other. However, their expression of that desire and need differs. The American guarantees trust with a contract. In contrast, the Thai, at least at the initial encounter, establishes the start of trust with a handshake. In both societies, trust is a virtue but in each society trust is expressed differently. The difference in expression, not in the importance placed upon trust, accounts for the confusion. We suggest, then, that universal core virtues constitute what Carroll and Gannon (1997) refer to as "hypernorms," and are fundamental principles of human existence. They serve as the basis for evaluating lower-level norms, which are often in conflict in various cultures and even within cultures such as between men and women.

With regard to corruption, cultural conditions and practices are sometimes accommodations to the perceptions and realities of injustice, rather than the products of fundamental human traits. Carroll and Gannon (1997) contend that nepotism and other in-group behaviors may constitute a functional response to an uncertain world, a feeling that the

administration of law is unjust and that society treats some groups fairly while others are not. Thus, a natural response might be to encourage trust within an in-group by using nepotism to solidify that trust. They cite Robert Putnam's (1993) discussion of the rise of the Mafia in southern Italy as a response to the autocratic rule of the 11th-century monarch, King Federico. As a mediating institution, the Mafia initially provided justice and the normalization of life in the face of royal tyranny. Eventually, however, it, too, became corrupt and oppressive. The essential point is that this experience, as well as others in Italian history, led to such contemporary practices as what some non-Italians call tax fraud, but what Italians consider as reasonable measures against a corrupt and oppressive bureaucracy. Italians do not reject trust as a virtue, but their historical experience erodes their capacity to trust, at least in terms of government. Trust remains a virtue but is considered an ideal that is difficult to attain under their circumstances.

Regardless, however, of specific historical experiences or particular cultural practices as possible explanations of attitudes toward corruption, we are still faced with contemporary cross-cultural ethical conflict and the responsibility to try to constrain or resolve it. John Kohls and Paul Buller (1994), in fact, argue that such conflict will grow as the global economy grows. According to Kohls and Buller, most serious students of ethics reject relativism, supporting, instead, the universality of ethical standards and the position that "cultural behavior which does not meet those standards should be identified as unethical" (p. 31). For example, "support of governments which oppress their people, ways of doing business which do not respect human life, and those which depend on deception are all unacceptable, no matter what the culture" (pp. 31-32). In Kohls and Buller's view, "(c)ultures may make ethical mistakes just like individuals, and those which condone slavery or torture, for example, need to be enlightened, not tolerated" (p. 32).

To Kohls and Buller, neither notions of ethical relativism nor ethical universality are satisfactory alone. Instead, they propose that the appropriate response to ethical conflicts "depends on the centrality of values at stake, the degree of social consensus regarding the ethical issue, the decision-maker's ability to influence the outcome, and the level of urgency surrounding the situation" (p. 32). Finally, after discussing several strategies for resolving ethical conflict, including education, negotiation, and collaboration, Kohls and Buller move to different types of ethical conflict and an analysis of three cases. One of their key points is that a manager, in making an ethical decision, "must be careful that core values are not sacrificed to preserve more peripheral values" (p. 33).

We believe that Kohls and Buller are correct in their contention that managers working in cross-cultural settings must take into consideration the relational positions of the parties toward the ethical conflicts that will inevitably arise. Considerations of specific strategies must occur in the context of the situation at hand. But such strategic considerations do not imply relativism or situation ethics. Rather, they imply a sophisticated understanding of cross-cultural ethical interaction and a developed commitment to the core virtues underlying all cultures and all moral systems. Neither falling on one's sword nor capitulating to "when in Rome" thinking is adequate to meet the ethical challenges inherent in increasing global interdependence.

Finally, with respect to the challenge of innovation in public management, we maintain that the concept of innovation should be broadened to include efforts to build ethical organizations. In our view, public managers and, indeed, the public administration enterprise as a

whole will benefit if innovation is understood in normative as well as technical terms. For example, as a number of scholars have observed in regard to global reform initiatives, the New Public Management's emphasis on performance-based organizations and market principles raises a host of ethical issues for public managers. Annie Hondeghem (1998), for instance, argues that a customer orientation, deregulation, and reinvention, in general, require not only adaptive ability and an awareness of risk but consciousness of the role and responsibility of citizens as well as public confidence in government. Performance management, alone, will not solve what has been called the crisis of legitimacy in contemporary global governance. What is needed, first, is an acknowledgment of the new moral problems raised by the new public management, and second, a willingness to confront those problems from both a moral and innovative perspective. Only in this way can we move public organizations across the planet toward increased trust, transparency, and responsibility.

## **Conclusion**

We conclude, then, with the question: How should we meet the challenge of corruption? First, as noted earlier, we believe that cross-cultural ethical challenges, including the reduction or control of corruption, require multiple approaches and strategies. Along with legal, financial, and administrative reforms, we argue for ethics training that emphasizes character and moral reasoning. In particular, assuming the requisite political and organizational support, we propose a two-part ethics training regimen: first, a focus on the core virtues underlying cultural variety, and second, a focus on justification. After bringing the core virtues to participants' consciousness and making them explicit, the trainers should then ask participants to justify particular practices such as bribery, fraud, lying, and racial, ethnic, and gender bias, -- indeed, any exclusionary or discriminatory practice -- in terms of their core virtues. The trainer's goal is to begin the process of reconfiguring cross-cultural moral assumptions and behaviors in order to assist trainees in envisioning a reconfigured moral culture. To arrive at the long-term, of course, requires that we move through the short-term, meaning that timing, patience, and flexibility are essential in any sustained reform effort.

Our concern in this paper is corruption. The leaders and certainly the people in the organization must decide what kind of corruption problems exist in their organization. Second, based on their revised awareness of core virtues, which now includes an intolerance for corruption, they must decide what are the current positive behavioral habits that exist that promote the desired moral climate within their organization. This may include a moral audit of the organization's policies, practices, and use of resources. Third, they must decide on what negative habits exist. Fourth, they must decide on the additional positive habits. Fifth, they should develop a transformation plan that includes identifying desired positive habits and what habits they need to abandon. This plan should include how to re-enforce their decisions by updating their administrative policies and procedures. The plan should also identify training programs to achieve their goals. In addition to the plan, there should be a set of recommended changes in laws, regulations, and procedures that higher authorities can implement to assist the organization in their transition. Finally, the members of the organization must live their new habits with constant practice and devotion while acknowledging their mistakes and always trying to achieve their ethical goals.

### About the Authors:

**Charles Garofalo.** Department of Political Science Southwest Texas State University

**Dean Geuras.** Department of Philosophy Southwest Texas State University

**Thomas D. Lynch.** Public Administration Institute Louisiana State University

**Cynthia E. Lynch.** Southern University

### References

Aristotle. 1925. Trans., D. Ross. *The Nicomachean Ethics*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Caiden, G. E. and N. J. Caiden. 1977. Administrative Corruption, *Public Administrative Review*. 37:3 May/June, 301-309.

Chomsky, N. 1975. *The Logical Structure of Linguistic Theory* Plenum Press.

deLeon, P. 1993. *Thinking About Political Corruption*. Armonk, NY, M.E. Sharpe.

Dramer, Kai . 1997. "Moral Reasoning in the Public Service." Geneva: OECD.  
<http://www.oecd.org//puma/ethics/symposium/dramer.htm>

Elliott K. A., 1997. Introduction. In Elliott, K. A. ed. *Corruption and the Global Economy*, Washington, D. C., Institute for International Economics, pp. 1-5

Elliott, K. A., ed.1997. *Corruption and the Global Economy*, Washington, D. C., Institute for International Economics.

Foot, P. 1959. Moral Beliefs. *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*. Vol. 59.,

Gannon, M. and S. Carroll. 1997. *Ethical Dimensions in International Management*. Thousand Oaks, Sage.

Garofalo, C. and D. Geuras 1999. *Ethics in the Public Service: The Moral Mind at Work*. Washington, D. C.: Georgetown University Press.

Glynn, P., S. J. Kobrin, and M. Naim. 1997. The Globalization of Corruption. In Elliott, K. A. *Corruption and the Global Economy*, Washington, D. C., Institute for International Economics, pp. 7-27.

Hondeghem, A. 1998. *Ethics and Accountability in a Context of Governance and New Public Management*. Amsterdam: IOS Press.

Kohls. J. and P. Buller.1994. Resolving Cross-Cultural Ethical Conflict: Exploring Alternative Strategies, *Journal of Business Ethics*, 13: pp. 31-3.

Kung, H. 1996. *Global Responsibility: In Search of a New World Ethic*. New York, Continuum.

Kung, H. 1998. *A Global Ethic for Global Politic and Economics*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Lynch, T. D. and C. E. Lynch. 1998. *The Word of the Light*. Seattle, WA: Hara Publishing.

Lynch, T. D. and C. E. Lynch. 1999. Is a Global Ethics Possible? International Ethics Seminar, at Florida International University, North Miami, Florida, April.

Rose-Ackerman, S.1999. *Corruption and Government: Causes, Consequences, and Reform*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Rose-Ackerman, S. 1997. The Political Economy of Corruption, In Elliott, K. A. ed. *Corruption and the Global Economy*, Washington, D. C., Institute for International Economics, pp. 31-60.

Windt, P. V., P. C. Appleby, M. P. Battin, L. P. Francis, and B. M. Landesman. 1989. *Ethical Issues in the Professions*. Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice Hall.