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Abstract. The December 12, 1997 Issue of IBPP provides an analysis supporting the trading and purchasing of pollution- emissions rights as means to responsibly confront the threat of global warming. The present article maintains this stance in critiquing a December 15, 1997 article in The New York Times by Michael J. Sandel, a professor of government at Harvard University.

Professor Sandel posits that it is immoral to trade and purchase pollution-emissions rights for three reasons.

Reason 1. He states that it creates loopholes that could enable wealthy countries to evade their obligations. For example, the United States (US) could buy excess credits from Russia--created not through energy efficiencies but through economic decline--and count them toward meeting US treaty obligations.

Countering Reason 1. As previously described in IBPP, 3(19), this is no loophole. Buying excess credits is merely one of a number of options to meet existing obligations. Moreover, why should it matter if Russia has excess credits through energy efficiencies, economic decline, or some other causal factor? If Russia's economic decline ends, so, too, would the opportunity to buy Russian excess credits. Does Sandel mean to imply that the US might have a significant motive to keep Russia down economically in order to maintain the opportunity to buy Russian excess credits? This implication would be belied by US foreign policy objectives and programs supporting the creation and maintaining of Russian free markets; privatization; and various monetary, fiscal, and other economic initiatives.

Also, even if there were loopholes in the proposals discussed at the recent Kyoto conference, they would not be intrinsic to the purchasing and trading of emissions rights. Similar programs have been successfully implemented among refineries to phase leaded gasoline out of markets and among electrical utilities to reduce emissions of sulfur dioxide.

Reason 2. He states that it removes the moral stigma associated with pollution. He supports this argument by stating that buying and selling emissions credits effectively creates a fee for pollution that is just the cost of doing business, not a fine conveying that the polluter has done something wrong.

Countering Reason 2. Whether through fine, fee, or nothing at all, pollution can retain a moral stigma. Certainly there are many behaviors in a society that retain a moral stigma--or never possess one--regardless of the presence or absence of governmental sanction. Is an individual's morality so dependent on the presence or absence of governmental sanction? If so, what are we to make of the roles of religion, ideology, and the psychology of moral judgment? Are these latter moral fonts equally dependent on governmental sanction?

Moreover, shouldn't the morality of an act relate to all its consequences? Pollution is associated with harming the environment and the health of people, but frequently it also is associated with the benefits

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of economic development such as preferred life styles, intragroup cohesion, and freedom to self actualize. Why shouldn't fines, fees, or nothing at all be appropriate for pollution, depending on the totality of circumstances? Pollution would not lose its moral stigma, but the social response to it would be different, depending on the circumstances. Isn't this why most approximations of representative democracies usually are characterized by a rule of law that features myriad social sanctions potentially applicable to a specific criminal behavior?

Also, one cannot choose to pollute or not pollute through manufacturing as one may choose to throw beer cans into the Grand Canyon--the latter an example of Sandel. The choice is the what, when, and how of pollution that renders a black or white approach to morality more problematic.

Finally, so what if a moral stigma is dissipated? The psychology of shame and guilt often associated with moral transgression does not necessarily induce moral behavior. As well, empathy-induced altruism can induce immoral behavior, while the tolerance/intolerance dimension of morality is exhibits significant cross-cultural differences.

Reason 3. He states that it may undermine the sense of shared responsibility that increased global cooperation requires. Resentment will build towards those who can buy excess credits from those who cannot.

Countering Reason 3. Why should the sense of shared responsibility be undermined? Everyone still has a responsibility, but there will be different combinations of options to meet the responsibility for different entities. Will there be resentment about this? Perhaps among some people. But isn't there often resentment of some "have-nots" to some "haves" regardless of the material, mental, or spiritual Issue? Does shared responsibility lead to no resentment? Perhaps Sandel must develop and support a new human psychology--one that would not predict resentment even among people in the most perfect of all socialisms or communisms.

Ultimately, Sandel intrinsically reinforces a "we" versus "they" dichotomy when what is required in the present era of globalization is the recognition of each unique "I" in the "we." (See Batson, C.D., Klein, T.R., Highberger, L., & Shaw, L.L. (1995). Immorality from empathy-induced altruism: when compassion and justice conflict. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 68, 1042-1054; Lee, Y-T, Pepitone, A., & Albright, L. (1997). Descriptive and prescriptive beliefs about justice: A Sino-U.S. comparison. *Cross-Cultural Research: The Journal of Comparative Social Science*, 31, 101-120; Sandel, M.J. (December 15, 1997). It's immoral to buy the right to pollute. *The New York Times*, <http://www.nytimes.com>; The Kyoto Protocol: Emission on Trading or Purchasing Emission Rights. *IBPP*, 3(19).) (Keywords: Environment, Moral.)