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Global Justice: Radical Perspectives

The Global Justice debate is, for the most part, a liberal debate. For decades, theorists have pondered over the exact scope of liberal distributive justice and the precise content of our duties. This special issue aims to take a step back and ask whether the liberal framework is the best one to address the question of injustice at the global level. In particular, it aims to analyse whether the liberal paradigm lacks the conceptual tools fully to understand, critique and remedy global injustices.

Consider the global distribution of wealth. A 2016 OXFAM report revealed that 62 people hold as much wealth as half the world's population.[1] Global wealth distribution is not simply a question of unequal shares across individuals, but also one of *class*. Liberal theory often seeks to redress this state of affairs through global redistribution on an individual basis. But is it enough to call for redistribution of wealth and resources, or must we interrogate the underlying power relations first? What are the preconditions for redistribution? Are capitalist economic relations that create and sustain this system sufficiently exposed or critiqued?

Alternatively, consider how the 'global elite' and the 'global poor' are largely constituted by members of already advantaged and disadvantaged groups. Extreme poverty mainly exists in the countries of sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America and Asia, i.e. people of colour, and former colonized peoples, are more likely to suffer from it. Women and people with disabilities are also more likely to live in poverty. Gender, race, ability and sexuality also affect distributions amongst the world's poorest countries, and amongst those experiencing poverty in rich countries. Moreover, does status inequality matter because it affects distributions of resources or because it is a form of global injustice in and of itself?

This special issue asks whether the liberal framework, which arguably has not sufficiently and/or systematically addressed structural issues of class, power, identity and recognition, actually lacks the conceptual resources to do so. It

1 OXFAM, 'An Economy for the 1%: How Privilege and Power in the Economy Drive Extreme Inequality and How This Can Be Stopped' (2016).

aims to understand whether more radical approaches can help us to cast light on what global injustice is and what we should do about it. Do identity, history, gender, race and power matter to global justice? Can we incorporate these concerns into the existing debates? Or must we reconfigure what constitutes global justice or injustice if we are to make sense of the real-world inequities that motivate critical theorists and social movements?

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This special issue consists of five papers. The contributions explore different issues that we currently face at the global level and whose urgency and complexity seem to be missed by mainstream liberal accounts of global injustice, including the unjust past at the root of the existing international order; global forms of exploitation that particularly affect women of colour and from Third World[2] countries; the injustices suffered by nonhuman animals; and the lack of democratic governance of shared global resources. In order to address these issues, the five contributions draw on a heterogeneous range of theoretical and methodological approaches and, thus, reveal the diversity and potential of radical perspectives on global injustice for enriching and revitalising this tired philosophical debate. In other words, they suggest new possibilities for the normative study of global (in)justice.

The first two papers aim to push mainstream liberal approaches in new and more radical directions. These two contributions reveal that one possible outcome of the encounter between liberal cosmopolitanism and radical perspectives on global justice is not necessarily a rejection of the former but a reinterpretation of its problematic assumptions in light of the concerns raised by the latter. Although both contributions argue that, as it stands, the mainstream liberal approach to global justice and inequality is flawed, they also aim to show that such an approach can be strengthened by incorporating the insights highlighted by its more radical critics. In this sense, the first two papers pose a challenge to the intuitions behind this special issue, namely that re-conceptualizing global injustice entails moving beyond the dominant liberal paradigm.

Angie Pepper's paper, 'Beyond Anthropocentrism: Cosmopolitanism and Nonhuman Animals,' challenges cosmopolitan accounts for resting on unscrutinised and problematic anthropocentric assumptions. According to Pepper, both relational and non-relational cosmopolitans, who argue for the

2 McKeown uses the term 'Third World' following the post/de-colonial scholars Chandra Talpade Mohanty and Rahul Rao, who reclaim the term on the basis that it better captures the hierarchical and politicized power relationship between so-called 'developed' and 'developing' countries.

existence of duties of justice among human animals at the global level, should extend the scope of justice to include many nonhuman animals on the basis of their own arguments. She makes the further claim that anthropocentrism underlies liberal cosmopolitanism at large, by critically examining Martha Nussbaum's 'capabilities approach.' Even though Nussbaum takes the well-being of nonhuman animals into account, Pepper argues that she still falls short of fully considering them as proper units of concern for claims of justice.

Nicolás Brando and Christiaan Boonen's paper, 'Revisiting the Common Ownership of the Earth: A Democratic Critique of Global Distributive Justice Theories,' focuses on liberal theories of global distributive justice that acknowledge that all human beings share the ownership of the Earth. They claim that the radical potential of this claim remains unfulfilled because these theories assume that the inevitable problems arising from the governance of the common ownership of the Earth can be solved through a regime of private and public property, which sets the boundaries of individuals' entitlement to use and occupy the shared goods. They propose the alternative of the 'practice of commoning,' which requires that all human beings participate in decision-making processes regarding the institutional arrangements that regulate the ownership of global common goods, thereby pushing mainstream global distributive justice theorists to fully embrace the radical democratic and universalistic implications inherent to the common ownership of the Earth thesis.

The following three papers take a different approach and reject the liberal paradigm. Instead, they fit in with emerging trends in critical theory. One trend is to reject the focus on global justice, to focus instead on real-world global *in*justice. This move was famously made by Amartya Sen,[3] but it has also occupied critical theorists including Iris Marion Young,[4] Nancy Fraser[5] and Rainer Forst.[6] Critical republican theorists, including Cécile Laborde,[7] have also shifted our attention to domination at the global level, rather than assessing what a just distribution of resources would look like and on what grounds it ought to be pursued.

3 Amartya Sen, 'Global Justice,' in Sebastiano Maffettone and Aakash Singh Rathore (eds.), *Global Justice: Critical Perspectives* (London: Routledge, 2012), 123-143.

4 Iris Marion Young, 'Responsibility and Global Labor Justice,' *The Journal of Political Philosophy* 12/4 (2004), 365-388; Iris Marion Young, 'Responsibility and Global Justice: A Social Connection Model,' *Social Philosophy and Policy* 23/1 (2006), 102-130; Iris Marion Young, *Responsibility for Justice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

5 Nancy Fraser, *Scales of Justice: Reimagining Political Space in a Globalizing World* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2010).

6 Rainer Forst, 'Towards a Critical Theory of Transnational Justice,' *Metaphilosophy* 32/1 (2001), 160-179; Rainer Forst, 'Transnational Justice and Democracy: Overcoming Three Dogmas of Political Theory,' in Eva Erman and Sofia Nasstrom (eds.), *Political Equality in Transnational Democracy* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2013), 41-61.

7 Cécile Laborde, 'Republicanism and Global Justice: A Sketch,' *European Journal of Political Theory* 9/1 (2010), 48-69.

Maeve McKeown's paper, 'Global Structural Exploitation: Towards an Intersectional Definition,' fits this emerging trend, by drawing our attention towards *exploitation* on a global scale. McKeown argues that existing theories of exploitation cannot help us understand contemporary forms of global exploitation, like sweatshop labour or the global migration for domestic and care work, which predominantly affect Third World and racialized women workers. She criticizes contemporary 'transactional' theories of exploitation for focusing on the relation between two individuals, which draws our attention away from the bigger picture of *structural* exploitation on a global scale and how it affects socially disadvantaged *groups*. She criticizes the classical Marxist definition of exploitation, however, as it is premised on the outdated and gendered concept of 'productive labour,' and also does not account for why certain social groups fill certain occupations. Drawing on Iris Marion Young's work she defines structural exploitation intersectionally, as the forced transfer of productive powers from socially disadvantaged to socially advantaged groups. McKeown's paper highlights an inexcusably underexplored topic in the (mainstream) global justice literature and provides us with a way of understanding how global forms of exploitation are fundamentally gendered and racialized.

The final two papers also reflect the trend towards theorizing *in*justice, but focus on 'corrective justice' in particular. As Charles Mills has argued, a discussion of global justice is not possible without considering the need for corrective justice, considering that many contemporary injustices have emerged out of a brutal history of racist slavery and colonialism.[8] Magali Bessone's paper, 'From Reparations for Slavery to International Racial Justice: A Critical Republican Perspective,' takes up this insight in the French context. Bessone looks at contemporary reparations claims in France and argues that only a critical republican perspective can take these claims seriously. The 'official' republican perspective denounces reparations claims as a divisive form of identity politics, which serve to tear apart the unity of the *demos*. Liberal egalitarian perspectives cannot accommodate French reparationists' claims because they do not take history seriously in formulating theories of justice, focusing instead on present disadvantage. Only a critical republican perspective, which grants epistemic authority to reparations activists and conceives of justice as 'discursive non-domination' can recognize and accommodate their demands for an inclusive conversation about France's colonial and slave-owning history; mainstreaming this recognition of past wrongdoing in education, law and general public discourse. Moreover, once this history of wrongdoing is recognized, it becomes apparent that it is a fundamentally international history

8 Charles W. Mills, 'Race and Global Justice,' in Barbara Buckinx, Jonathan Trejo-Mathys, and Timothy Waligore (eds.), *Domination and Global Political Justice* (London: Routledge 2015), 181-206.

and thus situates discussions about French national identity in an international frame. Bessone's paper invites us to consider the claims being made by global justice social movements and how supposedly domestic claims about justice, such as reparations, always have an international dimension.

Finally, Nora Wittmann's paper, 'Reparations – Legally Justified and *Sine Qua Non* for Global Justice, Peace and Security,' moves away from contemporary analytic political philosophy. She draws instead on pan-African theory, African history and critical legal theory, to offer a different perspective to the other papers in this special issue. She argues that the 'Maangamizi' – a Swahili term for the ongoing subjugation of African people, starting with the forced abduction and transportation of Africans into slavery, carrying on into colonialism and continuing today in the form of neo-colonialism – is something that ought to be repaired *by law*. According to international law, reparations demand the restoration of the *status quo ante*. Achieving this would require overturning the contemporary international political system, restoring sovereignty to pre-Maangamizi African political entities. Reparations would also require overturning the capitalist economic system as it is fundamentally based on racial Apartheid. Not only are reparations required by law, Wittmann argues, but they are also indispensable for the preservation of the planet for future generations; this is because Wittmann considers capitalism to be at the root of environmental degradation and political insecurity. Wittmann's paper brings together disparate aspects in existing global justice debates and threads them together to create a fascinating broader narrative that challenges our pre-conceived ideas of what global justice theory can and should look like.

We hope that this special issue will spark off a much needed dialogue on global (in)justice amongst radical theorists and between mainstream liberal approaches and radical perspectives. Unfortunately, we have not been able to include many other perspectives stemming from radical traditions (e.g., queer theories, disabilities studies and recognition theories), whose contribution is crucial to understanding how our theorizations of global (in)justice could be shaped to address the challenges we face at the global level. Our hope is that this special issue can start a conversation many others will be willing to enter in the near future.

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