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Climate Justice

Global (in)justice is one of the most pressing concerns in today's increasingly interconnected world. Due to its complexity, it is also a concern that can be most fruitfully tackled by bringing together the expertise of scholars working in different fields – such as philosophy, political science, law, and economics – to name only but the most obvious candidates. Motivated by this observation, a group of PhD students and early-career scholars founded The Global Justice Network in 2006 and the journal *Global Justice: Theory Practice Rhetoric (TPR)* in 2008, with the explicit aim of furthering research on global justice in a collaborative and interdisciplinary manner. The idea was to create a peer-reviewed, open-access online journal that publishes original research in international political theory and cognate disciplines, with special emphasis on issues of global justice. The Global Justice Network was meant to offer a background for this endeavor by facilitating intellectual exchange and raising funds to organize workshops and conferences on global-justice-related themes. Right from the start, the editors have been particularly keen on publishing research that bridges the gap between normative and empirical inquiry, and which pays special attention to practices of political communication. Global (in)justice is a multifaceted phenomenon. To better understand it, the journal emphasizes the importance of contributions at three different levels of analysis: normative *theory*, political and economic *practice*, as well as the *rhetorical tools* used by the actors who put forward global-justice claims.

What started out as a small project among friends has grown ever since. Today, we – the editorial team – are very happy to announce that *TPR* is entering a new phase. Thanks to a generous grant from the German Research Foundation (DFG), we have been able to upgrade and expand the activities of the Global Justice Network, as well as of *TPR*. In particular, we have redesigned our website, available at www.theglobaljusticenetwork.org, and are very pleased that Alexandru Marcoci has joined the *TPR* team as our editorial assistant. Most importantly, from now on, *TPR* will appear twice per year in either special-issue or symposium format. This, we believe, will further strengthen the journal's contribution to debates about international political morality, and give it a distinctive identity. While special issues will be entirely devoted to a particular

topic and will often be guest-edited, symposium-based issues will include both a symposium on a specific theme and unsolicited stand-alone articles. In addition, *TPR* will continue with its tradition of delivering high-quality, extended reviews and review articles. It will also maintain its double-blind review process. We will continue to welcome unsolicited articles, but will also welcome expressions of interest in guest-editing special issues and symposia.

As editors of *TPR*, we will continue to welcome interdisciplinary contributions as well as contributions that draw on the insights of different methodological perspectives. Also, we will continue to understand the journal's focus on global justice broadly, as encompassing topics such as world poverty, inequality, health, economic exploitation, democracy, trade, labour, human rights, humanitarian intervention, migration, and climate change among others.

We are delighted to herald this new phase by hosting two relaunch special issues, which aim at setting the tone for the new phase, and which we had the pleasure to edit. To celebrate our new format, we have opted for special issues addressing particularly timely topics: climate justice and global justice and non-domination.

The present, first relaunch special issue deals with anthropogenic climate change, which represents an urgent normative challenge. Carbon emissions that humans produce mainly through their consumption of relatively cheap fossil fuels are causing dangerous climate change, that is, climate change that threatens present and future people's ability to lead decent lives. While the international community has been acknowledging the existence of dangerous climate trends since 1990 (when the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change published its first report), various initiatives designed to launch a coherent international climate policy have systematically been failing until very recently. The UN climate change conference – which concluded its work in Paris in December 2015 – does, however, give us some grounds for hope. The Paris Agreement, published on December 12th 2015, consists in a global commitment to limit the rise in global temperatures to less than 2 degrees Celsius. The pact will become binding once 55 parties who produce over 55% of the world's greenhouse gases ratify it. The Paris Agreement is the first global pact on climate change to enjoy unanimous consensus, yet doubts about its effectiveness and success conditions remain. Furthermore, to determine the shape that our global climate policies should take, persistent normative disagreements need to be settled. These include, crucially, disagreements on how the burdens and costs of climate change mitigation, as envisaged by the Paris Agreement, should be distributed. After all, how to go about addressing dangerous climate change touches upon several disputed normative questions. And this is where this special issue intervenes.

In her contribution, Elizabeth Cripps argues that we cannot avoid making *hard* choices on population policy today if we want to avoid having to make *tragic* choices in the future. We can, however, avoid those tragic choices if we take action now. Cripps introduces a novel way to distinguish morally hard from morally tragic choices with regard to basic global justice and intergenerational justice. She argues that current generations can avoid the tragic choice of either letting future generations fall below the minimal requirements of basic global justice, or adopting population policies that are themselves morally abhorrent – such as extreme interference with the family or violation of basic human rights – by making morally hard policy choices today – such as mild interferences with the family. These hard choices, however, are unavoidable.

In his contribution, Dale Jamieson observes that there are a variety of understandings of responsibility, such as moral, causal and legal responsibility, and that this variety renders it difficult to attribute responsibility for climate change. Jamieson therefore suggests a practical conception of *intervention responsibility*, according to which those who can mitigate undesirable states of affairs without excessive cost are obliged to do so. He concludes by showing that this conception enables determining the responsibilities for climate change of four types of agents: individuals, nations, international organizations, and firms.

Anja Karnein's contribution argues that, surprisingly, some of the most prominent deontological theories of intergenerational justice fail to explain what is unjust about not combatting climate change. In particular, she identifies this shortcoming in accounts of indirect reciprocity, common ownership and human rights. Karnein claims that these theories miss the characteristic wrong involved in perpetuating climate change because they do not adequately capture our relationship with future generations. Through climate change, earlier generations influence the choices of subsequent ones in an unprecedented manner, forcing future generations to direct much of their energies towards avoiding death and destruction caused by extreme weather events.

Darrel Moellendorf's contribution addresses the prospects for avoiding *dangerous* climate change, understood as climate change that 'imposes avoidable costs of poverty prolongation.' Moellendorf discusses the collective-action problems that have hindered robust mitigation efforts at the international level, and concludes by expressing some cautious optimism about the 'pledge-and-review' system. Moellendorf notes that, by letting each state set its own mitigation goals, the system is less prone to manipulation by powerful nations than a *centralized* mechanism allocating mitigation burdens between states. He also points to recent research that suggests that the costs of mitigation do

not exceed its benefits, hence that mitigation is in states' own self-interest. If so, the 'pledge-and-review' system might reveal itself to be more effective than often thought.

Henry Shue's contribution, finally, argues that, whereas uncertainty is often considered to be a reason for inaction, the possibility of dangerous climate change – to borrow Moellendorf's expression – alters this picture. When it comes to climate change, uncertainty is a compelling reason for action. Shue's claim is that this is due to two factors. One is the irreversibility of history, especially when this is looked at from the point of view of the inexorable fundamental dynamics of the earth's climate. Those dynamics are slow to change and slow to change back once they have changed. In other words, the stakes are too high. The other is the asymmetrical relationship between those who live now and whoever will live in future. The first factor, Shue concludes, grounds a case for a *precautionary* approach to climate change even if we do not have reliable information about the probability of some of its effects. The second similarly vindicates a precautionary approach on grounds of fairness.

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