

# Globaliation and Global Justice: A Thematic Introduction

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## **Globalisation and Global Justice - A Thematic Introduction**

Göran Collste

*Globalisation involves both promising potentials and risks. It has the potential – through the spread of human rights, the migration of people and ideas, and the integration of diverse economies – to improve human wellbeing and enhance the protection of human rights worldwide. But globalisation also incurs risks: global environmental risks (such as global warming), the creation of new centres of power with limited legitimacy, a ‘race to the bottom’ regarding workers’ safety and rights, risky journeys of thousands of migrants and not least growing global inequalities. Globalisation, therefore, is a key factor for today’s discussions of justice.*

*As globalisation connects people, it also raises associated responsibilities between them. Until recently, the interest in justice among political philosophers and social ethicists was mainly focused on the nation state. However, this is no longer feasible. Since economic globalisation affects how wealth and power are distributed globally it has become indispensable to discuss social ethics in a global context and to develop principles of global justice. Global justice, therefore, entails an assessment of the benefits and burdens of the structural relations and institutional arrangements that constitute and govern globalisation*

*The academic discussion of global justice is vibrant and expanding. In my introduction I provide an overview of the discussions on global poverty, justice, cosmopolitanism and statism, migration, the capability approach and different dimensions of global justice.*

In a way, globalisation is nothing new. Great empires have had global ambitions all throughout the history of mankind. The Roman Empire enclosed the whole of the ‘civilised world’, the Moghul Empire extended from East Asia to Europe and the British Empire covered at the beginning of the last century 20 per cent of the world’s area and contained 20 per cent of its inhabitants. In contrast, the present globalisation is not territorial, instead it transcends territories. Indeed, ‘globalisation’ has become a buzzword often used in today’s political and economic rhetoric, but it is also a word that catches something significant that has happened the last, say 30 – 40 years. As Jan Scholte said at the Societas Ethica conference in 2015:

To be sure, global social relations are not new to the present generation. Transplanetary migration, intercontinental trade, long-distance empires, and world religions go back many centuries. However, society today involves far greater amounts, ranges, frequencies, speeds, intensities and impacts of global connectivity. To this extent it is understandable that narratives of 'globalization' have risen since the late twentieth century and not before.

Today's world is therefore suitably characterized as a global world. In other historical contexts the social world has encompassed a locality (e.g. the village world) or a region (e.g. the Mediterranean world). Now the term 'world' for most people conjures up images of the globe and is equated with planet earth<sup>1</sup>

Human practices are increasingly transnational and global in scope and globalisation refers to processes and relations in a range of spheres – including social, economic, political and cultural – that transcend national borders and link distant places and people.

What then are the implications of globalisation for ethics?

- Although globalisation entails many other practices than the economic, economic globalisation is a driving force. Economic globalisation has integrated the world economy through trade, multinational companies and not least through the explosive growth of the global financial market. Economic globalisation has led to economic leaps in China and elsewhere and, as a consequence, raised hundreds of millions from dire poverty to a decent living standard. But it has also implied widening global gaps and commercialisation and privatisation of social services and institutions with some harmful implications. For example, the global intellectual property regime (the TRIPS-agreement within the WTO) has raised the prices of pharmaceuticals in poor countries with the result that many millions diseased people have lost access to life-saving medicines.
- A central facet of globalisation is thus the increasing power of global financial institutions, transnational economic organizations and multinational corporations. What are the implications of this 'supraterritoriality' – to use Scholte's term – for accountability and democracy? Is state power withering away? Is there a need for cosmopolitan political institutions?
- Through media and various social networks we are now better informed about peoples' lives in different parts of the world; about human rights violations, terrorist attacks, natural disasters and wars. When informed, we become involved – but how do we handle this? What are our moral obligations to the distant others? What are their limits?
- Our collective actions have increasingly global reverberations – global warming is perhaps the most obvious and frightening example. Our individual

<sup>1</sup> Jan Aart Scholte, 'Rethinking Social Justices for a Global World', in *Societas Ethica's Annual Conference 2015: Globalisation and Global Justice*, edited by Göran Collste (Linköping: Linköping Electronic Press, 2015), pp. 14-17, at p. 14.

disseminations are neglectable but the collective disseminations of greenhouse gases of the industrialised countries pose a risk to the survival of the planet. What does this imply for our responsibilities as individuals and as members of the human family? Is it feasible – and foreseeable – that those who live in the industrialised part of the globe and who collectively have caused and still causes the damage, also take a collective responsibility to set things right?

- Globalisation also implies gaps between – to use Sigmund Bauman’s words – ‘the globals’ and ‘the locals’, in both poor and rich countries. The globals are those who benefit from globalisation; corporative executives, international politicians, academics, media people, etc. The locals are those left behind; peasants in poor countries, unemployed workers in the North. As Baumann writes: ‘Whoever is free to run away from the locality, is free to run away from the consequences.’<sup>2</sup> Many challenges follow from this: how can all sectors of a society benefit from globalisation?
- Another aspect of globalisation are the many people migrating from the South to the North. Many are escaping war and political oppression and others want to leave poverty behind and are enticed by the affluence in the North. Migration challenges established principles of sovereignty and citizenship. Have those who are well off in the receiving countries earned their welfare or is it not rather a result of luck in the natural lottery? How could they then justify keeping the migrants out? What does *Justice Without Borders* – to cite the title of Kok-Chor Tan’s book<sup>3</sup> – imply and how should the growing popular resistance against immigration and multiculturalism in the wealthy part of the globe be met?
- As connections and exchanges over cultural and religious borders intensifies, so does the encounter of values and beliefs. Does globalisation imply dialogue and better understandings of the Other, or does it imply value imperialism and ideological dominance?

Globalisation obviously involves both promising potentials and risks. It has the potential – through the spread of human rights, the migration of people and ideas, and the integration of diverse economies – to improve human wellbeing and enhance the protection of human rights worldwide. But globalisation also incurs risks: global environmental risks (such as global warming), the creation of new centres of power with limited legitimacy, options for tax evasions ruining poor but resource rich countries in the global South, a ‘race to the bottom’ regarding workers’ safety and rights, as exemplified by the tragic Rana Plaza catastrophe in Bangladesh in 2013, risky journeys of thousands of migrants over the Mediterranean and elsewhere as they attempt to reach Europe, North America and Australia, and not least growing global inequalities.

Globalisation, therefore, is a key factor for today’s questions of justice. As a matter of fact; at least for applied ethics and political theory, discussions of justice cannot

<sup>2</sup> Zygmunt Bauman, *Globalization. The Human Consequences* (Oxford: Polity Press, 1998), pp. 8-9.

<sup>3</sup> Kok-Chor Tan, *Justice Without Borders* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

avoid taking globalisation into the picture. With the expanding reach of international economic and political activities and the inclusion of the whole world in one economic global structure, the questions of how to uphold laws, implement human rights and combat poverty and inequality have become acute.

As it stands, the global village is at present a place characterised by deep injustices. Although the UN governed development project the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) has been a success, implying for example that from 1995 to 2015 extreme poverty rates are reduced by half, enrolment in primary education in developing regions reached 91 per cent in 2015 and the global under-five mortality rate declined by more than half, dropping from 90 to 43 deaths per 1000 live births, global poverty is still challenging. One billion people lack clean water, 795 million people are estimated to be undernourished, 896 million people live on less than \$1.90 a day, 19 000 children die per day from avoidable illnesses and still the health budget in Sub-Saharan African countries is on average per capita around \$15-30/year, while around \$2000-4200 in industrial countries. And the global gaps are widening. One per cent of the world's population at the top earn 48 per cent of the total global wealth. Yes, in fact, the top 80 individuals' income equals that of the poorest 3.5 billion people.<sup>4</sup>

Another facet of globalisation is the creation of global networks; including social forums like Facebook and LinkedIn, virtual communities campaigning peace and justice like Avaaz, and global jihadist and terrorist networks. The world is connected – for better and for worse.

Globalisation poses challenges to both theoretical and applied ethics: it raises the question of universalism and particularism in ethics anew, as well as the role of ecumenism and inter-religious dialogue; is it possible to achieve common understandings and shared ethical values and principles across cultural borders, or does globalisation imply value conflicts and a 'clash of civilizations'?

### **Ethics and Global Justice**

As globalisation connects people, it also raises associated responsibilities between them. Until recently, the interests in justice among political philosophers and social ethicists was mainly focused on the nation state. However, this is no longer feasible. Since economic globalisation affects how wealth and power are distributed globally – and the gaps between the global rich and the global poor widens – it has become indispensable to discuss social ethics in a global context and to develop principles of global justice. Global justice, therefore, entails an assessment of the benefits and burdens of the structural relations and institutional arrangements that constitute and govern globalisation. Let me in what follows give an overview of some of the more influential contributions to the ethical discussion on global ethics and justice.

<sup>4</sup> Data retrieved from World Bank, *Poverty* (2013), available online at [www.worldbank.org/en/topic/poverty](http://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/poverty) (accessed 2016-03-21); UNICEF, 'The Millennium Development Goals', available online at [http://www.unicef.org/mdg/index\\_childmortality.htm](http://www.unicef.org/mdg/index_childmortality.htm) (accessed 2016-03-21); United Nations, *We can end poverty* (2005), available online at <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/> (accessed 2016-03-21); Oxfam, *Wealth: Having It All and Wanting More* (2005), available online at [https://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/file\\_attachments/ib-wealth-having-all-wanting-more-190115-en.pdf](https://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/file_attachments/ib-wealth-having-all-wanting-more-190115-en.pdf) (accessed 2016-03-21).

### *Global Poverty*

Broadly speaking, global poverty entered the discussions in theology in the 1960s with the advent of Liberation theology. However, if we limit our scope to the discipline of ethics, the discussions started in the 1970s. One of the first philosophical contributions to the debate was Peter Singer's essay 'Famine, Affluence, and Morality'.<sup>5</sup> Here Singer wants to direct attention to our irrational and hypocritical moral intuitions by telling the story of a child in the pond: Assume that you pass by a pond and see a child playing there. The child suddenly falls in the pond and you are able to save it but your boots will get wet. Still you have a moral obligation to intervene, Singer argues. Your minimal sacrifice is not a tenable excuse for not trying to save the child. Similarly, we know that we can save the lives of children in poverty stricken nations by contributing to aid organisations. In this case we will use our money to aid the poor instead of buying something for ourselves. Also in this analogous case, we are obliged to aid the children even at some costs, Singer argues. He then goes on and discusses how much we reasonable ought to sacrifice to help children in poor countries to escape from poverty. A great contribution of Singer's thought experiment is the way it illustrates that our moral responsibilities are global in range. Neither the value of a child nor our moral obligations to aid are dependent on nearness or distance.

However, Singer's analogy has also been a target of criticism. Scott Wiser argues that it degrades people in developing countries to represent them as vulnerable receivers of aid, it fails to put global poverty in a historical context and it misdirects our attention to the individual level instead of seeing poverty as a structural and institutional problem. The result is then a focus on aid rather than on justice.<sup>6</sup>

### *Justice*

Justice became the main topic for discussions in social ethics and political philosophy in the 1970s mainly due to the publication of John Rawls's *A Theory of Justice*.<sup>7</sup> How did Rawls's contribution to political philosophy influence the discussion on global justice? In fact Rawls's theory was a theory for nations and he did only *au passant* mention a law of nations, i.e. international morality.<sup>8</sup> However, in *Political Theory and International Relations*,<sup>9</sup> Charles Beitz made an effort to apply Rawls theory of justice, including the so-called difference principle stating that '[...] social and economic inequalities are to be arranged so that they are [...] to the greatest benefit of the least advantaged [...]'<sup>10</sup> Beitz argues that similar to the arbitrary distributions of talents, which for Rawls is a ground for redistribution, so is also the international natural distribution of resources arbitrary. Furthermore, Beitz also argues in relation to Rawls's institutional approach to justice that there are global institutions that influence the global distribution of income and wealth and he sees no reason why not also the global basic structure should be the subject of justice. Beitz writes: '[...] an international difference principle applies to persons in the

<sup>5</sup> Peter Singer, 'Famine, Affluence, and Morality', *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 1:3 (1972), pp. 229-243.

<sup>6</sup> Scott Wiser, 'Against Shallow Ponds: An Argument against Singer's Approach to Global Poverty', *Journal of Global Ethics* 7:1 (2011), pp. 19-32.

<sup>7</sup> John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971).

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 378.

<sup>9</sup> Charles Beitz, *Political Theory and International Relations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979).

<sup>10</sup> Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, p. 303.

sense that it is the globally least advantaged representative person [...] whose position should be maximized.<sup>11</sup> As we will see, Beitz' contribution was then followed by other ethicists who tried to apply Rawls's principle of justice on a global level.

Thomas Pogge, the philosopher who perhaps has had the greatest impact on the philosophical discussion on global justice, also made an effort to apply Rawls's principles globally. In *Realizing Rawls*, published in 1989, Pogge applies Rawls's idea of choosing principles of justice under a 'veil of ignorance'. According to Pogge the integration of the global economy makes it necessary to assess the social institutions from a 'global point of view' and an institutional scheme ' [...] would be developed through a single unified original position global in scope.'<sup>12</sup> In agreement with Beitz, Pogge also includes both Rawls's principles of justice, the political and the economic, in his theory of global justice. He writes: 'The worst position that the existing global institutional scheme tends to produce affords a appropriate vantage point for assessing the justice of this order as a whole.'<sup>13</sup>

It took another ten years before Rawls himself intervened in the discussion of global justice. In *A Law of Peoples* (1999) Rawls sketches the contours of a peaceful world order, a 'Society of Peoples', based on a 'Law of Peoples'.<sup>14</sup> To emphasise the moral nature of nations he uses the term 'people' as alternative. Representatives of peoples will under a veil of ignorance construct a law of peoples. Rawls still takes the nation states ('peoples') as his point of departure and he does not seem to have noticed that the world has changed as a consequence of globalisation. Furthermore, Rawls explains the different standards of living in different parts of the globe as caused by peoples' own decisions. He writes 'The first decides to industrialise [...] while the second does not. Being content with things as they are, and preferring a more pastoral and leisurely society, the second reaffirms its social values.'<sup>15</sup> To apply a global difference principle would under these circumstances according to Rawls be unacceptable and unjust while the peoples have chosen their path of development themselves. As an alternative to Beitz' and Pogge's suggestions of a global difference principle, Rawls argues for a Duty of Assistance as the eight principle of a Law of Peoples.

Rawls's view rests on at least two problematic assumptions. First, that the poverty in developing nations is not at least partly caused by their previous historical experiences of suppression, exploitation and other circumstances beyond their control but by their own choices, and second, that peoples can be considered as agents making choices that they have to live with. Alternatively, if a people is seen as divided in social groups or classes with conflicting interests, it's less obvious that a people should have to cope with previous 'choices', i.e. in reality with choices made by a power elite which other social groups have had no opportunity to influence. There is also a huge difference between principles of global justice which question the given institutional structure and a duty of assistance which accepts the present condition and even makes the poor dependent on the good will of the wealthy.

<sup>11</sup> Beitz, *Political Theory*, p. 152.

<sup>12</sup> Thomas Pogge, *Realizing Rawls* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1989), p. 256.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 274.

<sup>14</sup> John Rawls, *The Law of Peoples* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999).

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 117.

In contrast to Rawls, Thomas Pogge has developed an institutional global theory of justice. The huge gap between the global rich and the global poor is, according to Pogge, linked to what he calls a 'global institutional order'. This order is sustained by an alliance of powerful governments in the North, authoritarian rulers in developing countries and global business interests. The 'international resource privilege' makes it possible for corrupt and authoritarian leaders in developing nations to control and sell out their countries' resources to unscrupulous multinational corporations. In this way the global rich get access to crucial minerals and other resources without any benefits for the poor.

Pogge connects the global structural injustices to the moral responsibility of the global rich. In his book *World Poverty and Human Rights* (2002) he starts from a moral premise of each person's negative duty not to inflict suffering on others for his or her lesser benefit.<sup>16</sup> This is a more basic and uncontroversial duty than a positive moral duty to help persons in distress. He then argues that we are integrated in the global economic order '[...] that is shaped by the better-off and imposed on the worst-off.'<sup>17</sup> The global rich benefits from this order and the global poor are the losers. He further argues that we can easily imagine an alternative global economic order that would be better for the worst off. Hence, the global rich contribute to the global poor's suffering for a lesser benefit, i.e. they violate a very basic negative duty. In light of the millions of deaths due to poverty and curable diseases each year Pogge – somewhat provocative – writes:

My main claim is then that, by shaping and enforcing the social conditions that foreseeably and avoidably cause the monumental suffering of global poverty, we are *harming* the global poor- or to put it more descriptively, we are active participants in the largest, though not the gravest, crime against humanity ever committed.<sup>18</sup>

#### *Cosmopolitanism vs Statism*

But is it really feasible to apply the same principles of justice globally as to a nation? This is as we saw questioned by Rawls himself but also by other philosophers, both liberal and communitarian. One divide in the global justice discussion is between cosmopolitans like Beitz and Pogge and so called statists, like Thomas Nagel. Nagel argues that justice is closely linked to collective practices and institutions that can only exist under a sovereign government. What he calls 'associative obligations' are those following from common citizenship. He writes:

Justice, on the political conception, requires a collectively imposed social framework, enacted in the name of all those governed by it, and aspiring to command their acceptance of its authority even when they disagree with the substance of the decisions.<sup>19</sup>

Rawls's idea of the contract as ground for justice is one example of such a political conception.

<sup>16</sup> Thomas Pogge, *World Poverty and Human Rights* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2002).

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 199.

<sup>18</sup> Thomas Pogge, 'Real World Justice', *The Journal of Ethics* 9 (2005), pp. 29-53, at p. 33.

<sup>19</sup> Thomas Nagel, 'The Problem of Global Justice', *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 33:2 (2005), pp. 113-147, at p. 140.

While Nagel argues that global justice is not feasible because justice is conceptually linked to associative institutions, another statist, David Miller, argues that it is not desirable.<sup>20</sup> Global justice would imply an unwanted dissolution of national sovereignty. National self-determination means that people who inhabit a territory are entitled to collective autonomy and is according to Miller 'intrinsically valuable' because it is a mean for collective autonomy. The value of collective autonomy is similar to the value of individual autonomy, according to Miller. We, that is the nation we belong to, have the power to decide on issues that are of utmost importance for us. But – one may object – is not individual autonomy limited by the common good? And could then not also – similarly – national autonomy be limited by claims of global justice? No, not according to Miller because there are different national conceptions of justice; the concept of justice is embedded in specific cultural context, which makes the idea of global justice an oxymoron. Further, Miller also argues that shared nationality, like family relations, generates moral relationships which entail both special duties and special entitlements. In this sense, citizenship and nationality makes a difference and thus it is not feasible to apply national principles of justice globally.<sup>21</sup>

Cosmopolitans on the other hand take the individual as the basic unit of moral concern. In its egalitarian and liberal version its basic assumption is that every human person has equal claims on the requirements for a decent life. Nationality, culture, race and sex should not influence the possibility to live a good life. This conception of cosmopolitanism is moral cosmopolitanism with political implications, not political cosmopolitanism implying a world state.

But how does cosmopolitans respond to the statist argument that justice is bound to associative institutions? First they argue that in fact, as a consequence of globalisation, a global basic structure that influences peoples' lives worldwide has appeared, although in an embryonic form. Alan Buchanan writes:

There is a global basic structure [...] Among the elements of the global basic structure are the following: regional and international economic agreements [...] international financial regimes [...] an increasingly global system of property rights, including intellectual property rights [...]<sup>22</sup>

Further, they argue that there is a need to reform the present global institutions like the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organisations to make them 'more responsive to the goals of global justice'.<sup>23</sup>

But does the cosmopolitan view take affiliations and associations as basis for institutional justice seriously? Cosmopolitans counter this objection with a question: On what argumentative ground can statist and communitarians depart from the basic moral

<sup>20</sup> David Miller, *Citizenship and National Identity* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000).

<sup>21</sup> David Miller, 'Immigration: The Case for Limits', in *Contemporary Debates in Applied Ethics*, edited by Andrew I. Cohen and Christopher Heath Wellman (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), pp. 193-206.

<sup>22</sup> Allen Buchanan, 'Rawls's Law of Peoples: Rules for a Vanished Westphalian World', *Ethics* 110 (2000), pp. 697-721.

<sup>23</sup> Gillian Brock, *Global Justice, A Cosmopolitan Account* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 332.

premise that each human person is worthy the same respect and have equal claims to global resources? In order to accommodate to the objection that we have special duties, for example to our compatriots, cosmopolitans argue that special duties can only be legitimate if the basic needs of everyone is satisfied. Kok-Chor Tan writes:

Rather than ruling out the ideal of patriotism, impartial cosmopolitan justice serves to define and secure the global background conditions under which individuals may legitimately favour the demands of their compatriots as well as pursue other nationalist and partial projects.<sup>24</sup>

Thus, from a moral point of view patriotic preferences are only justified if sufficient resources are distributed to those in dire need.

### *Migration*

The conflict between cosmopolitans and statist leads to conflicting views on various practical issues. For example, cosmopolitans and statist have opposing views on international migration. Statist and communitarians tend to argue for restricted migration policies on behalf of the receiving nations in the North. The arguments are, first, that nations as political associations have a right to decide on who can enter their borders, or as Michael Walzer writes: 'like clubs, countries have admission committees'.<sup>25</sup> Second, as David Miller argues, there are cultural reasons for restrictions. Immigration can pose a threat to things people value and nations are entitled to close their borders to immigrants in order to protect their culture.<sup>26</sup>

Cosmopolitans tend to favour generous immigration rules. Joseph Carens for example, makes an analogy between birth rights in the wealthy countries in Europe and the US and the birth rights of the nobility in the Middle Ages. These rights are not earned by merit but just a matter of coincidence; a result of the natural lottery. Why should these inherited rights justify the privilege to live in wealthy countries and to keep the refugees and migrants from poor countries out? So in principle, Carens argues, limitations of open borders cannot be justified from a moral point of view, but only for practical reasons.<sup>27</sup>

Seila Benhabib argues for generous migration policies on the ground that each human being has a right to 'membership' which is more general and fundamental than specific political or citizen's rights. The right to membership needs to be anchored in global institutions with a strong mandate. The disaggregation of citizenship is 'an inescapable aspect of contemporary globalization', according to Benhabib (Benhabib 2004:173).

<sup>24</sup> Tan, *Justice Without Borders*, p. 158.

<sup>25</sup> Michael Walzer, *Spheres of Justice, A Defense of Pluralism and Equality* (New York: Basic Books, 1983), p. 40.

<sup>26</sup> Miller, 'Immigration'.

<sup>27</sup> Joseph H. Carens, *The Ethics of Immigration* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

### *Capabilities*

One influential approach in the discussion on global justice focuses less on institutions and structures but on the ways humans live their lives. In neo-classical economic theory, the established measures to compare development has been GDP/capita and preference satisfaction, in some respects equivalent to the utility approach in utilitarian ethical theory. Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum have in various publications developed an alternative approach, arguing for a thicker theory of human welfare named the capabilities approach.<sup>28</sup>

What characterises a good human life? Sen's and Nussbaum's answer is that a person lives a good life when she can have her capabilities realised. For Sen, capabilities means functioning and freedom; that is to have resources to realise what is good in life. Exactly what this means is a matter of public reasoning and the answers may differ in different cultures. Martha Nussbaum argues for a more substantial approach and proposes a list of capabilities like health, bodily integrity, feelings, practical reason, and community that – Nussbaum argues – provide a basis for universal human rights.

As we noticed above, at present hundreds of millions of people lack the most basic resources for living a decent life. Poverty makes them dependent and force them to take jobs in unsafe garment industries, to sell their body parts, to become surrogate mothers or to become prostitutes just to take some examples of desperate choices in despair. From a capability point of view, global injustice decreases when less people are doomed to be exploited and instead have freedom to realise their capabilities.

### *Dimensions of Global Justice*

The academic discussions on global justice have for good reasons been focused on global *distributive* justice; that is, how benefits and burdens should be distributed between peoples and nations. As we saw, the present world order is characterised by huge gaps between rich and poor and one challenge for ethicists engaging in the discussions of global justice is to find criteria for fair - or at least fairer - sharing of resources.<sup>29</sup>

But justice has as already Aristotle showed also other dimensions. For example in discussions on climate ethics, the history behind the present unequal disseminations that threatens the planet is of ethical relevance. Is it not reasonable to claim that the 'polluter should pay', that is that the nations that for centuries have disseminated greenhouse gases to a point when the future of humanity is at stake, also should rectify for the harm they have caused, and in particular for harming the poor and vulnerable nations in the South that have not contributed to the climate change but today are the primary victims?<sup>30</sup> This argument then introduces the idea of rectificatory justice to the discussion of global justice. In a broader sense, the discussion could also include questions of how the colonial powers shaped the present global order and the implications of injustices in the past for the present discussion on global justice.

<sup>28</sup> (Nussbaum 2000, Sen 2009), Martha. C. Nussbaum, *Women and Human Development: The Capabilities Approach* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Amartya Sen, *The Idea of Justice* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2009).

<sup>29</sup> Chris Armstrong, *Global Distributive Justice. An Introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

<sup>30</sup> Peter Singer, *One World. The Ethics of Globalization*, 2 ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004).

The present global economic and political order is characterised by inequality: poverty in some parts and affluence in other parts, and unequal power relations visible not least in the structures of global institutions like the IMF, the World Bank and the WTO. This order is to a large extent the result of colonialism, and most of the former colonies are still, many decades after their independence, suppliers of raw materials or of basic industrial products for markets dominated by the global elite. Injustices in the past have reverberations in the present. As an example of claims for rectificatory justice, the governments of the Caribbean Community issued in 2013 a declaration demanding reparations for the genocide of indigenous populations at colonisation and for the slavery and slave trade in its aftermath.<sup>31</sup>

### Concluding Remarks

The academic discussion on global justice is vibrant and expanding. There are numerous conferences devoted to issues of global justice, and global justice is discussed in the major ethics journals as well as specialised journals, like *Journal of Global Ethics*, *Ethics and Global Politics*, *Global Policy* and *Global Justice: Theory Practice Rhetoric*. Although the discussion involves more and more philosophers, political theorists, theologians and applied ethicists, it also in an unfortunate way suffers from the same disease it aims to cure; almost all of the academic contributions come from the global north and very few from the global south. As Aakash Singh writes:

[...] as the global justice debate amplifies unreflexively this increasingly discredited tendency of the wider social sciences to favour the epistemology and centrality of Anglo-American political theory/theorists, generally excluding non-western voices from participation. Here, the term 'global' seems to signify outward expansion from the center; *our* attempt to extend *our* conception/demands of justice to *them*. Many non-western scholars, therefore, see the global justice debate as a recapitulation of the characteristic practices and attitudes of colonial liberalism.<sup>32</sup>

Hopefully this unbalance will change and voices from Latin America, Africa and Asia will be increasingly heard in the discussion.

How then will the discussion on global justice develop in the future? Persistent global poverty and increasing inequalities will certainly imply that the discussion on global justice endures. One can perhaps foresee that also questions of global warming and global sustainability will be in focus as these questions are intimately linked to questions of global justice. The so far positive results of the United Nations project the Millennium Development Goals and the new ambitious agenda of the Sustainable Development Goals give reasons for hope for the future. Another world is, after all, perhaps possible.

<sup>31</sup> Göran Collste, *Global Rectificatory Justice* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2015).

<sup>32</sup> Aakash Singh, 'Deparochializing the Global Justice Debate, Starting with Indian Political Theory', *Global Policy* 4:4 (2013), pp 418-419, at p. 418, emphasis in original.

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