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Introduction

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INTRODUCTION

Discussions of global justice in contemporary political philosophy tend to take place within a distributive frame, asking which inequalities between people living in the global North and those living in the global South are unacceptable and require redress. The distributive – or, more accurately, redistributive – paradigm thus steers us towards solutions to injustice that center on a more equitable sharing of the earth's resources and opportunities. Such redistribution is of course essential from the standpoint of a normative commitment to greater global justice. The distributive approach has been useful in fostering discussion among academics and policy makers alike about how to design more just transnational economic and political arrangements, as well as about the duties that citizens of affluent countries should assume. Important as this work has been, however, the distributive framework has certain limits which the papers collected here aim to challenge and ultimately move beyond. Contributors initially presented their work at a workshop on 'Critical Perspectives on Global Justice: Thinking Beyond Distribution' at the Centre for Ethics at the University of Toronto in 2012, at which they were invited to explore and debate alternative ways of framing problems of global justice. Instead of the usual focus on North-South redistribution of resources, the papers presented at that workshop critically engaged problems of power, agency, and authority in the context of North-South inequality and injustice. By including feminist, post-colonial, and neo-Marxist perspectives, this collection aims to nurture a more capacious engagement with global justice, expanding and reforming the very questions normative theorists pose, while bringing fresh perspectives on how to address injustice.

Towards this goal, the present collection is creative and critical, theoretical and practical. Creatively, it broadens the scope of issues deemed relevant to global justice, considering the salience of historical injustice, capitalism, interdependence, discourse, land, labor, power and knowledge. Critically, it questions assumptions which are in play in mainstream discussions of global justice, such as the understanding that Western and European countries ought to serve as the sole agents of a more just world order, and the belief that justice is wholly reducible to material redistribution. Contributors utilize a diverse array of tools and concepts from political philosophy, sociology, feminist ethics, and development studies.

In moving towards a reconceptualization of global justice, the very concept of justice becomes disaggregated. As the papers in this issue demonstrate, global justice is itself an 'essentially contested concept', in the sense identified by W.B. Gallie ("Essentially Contested Concepts", *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, Vol. 56 [1956], pp. 167–198). Moreover, it comprises a variety of subprojects, each of which in turn poses its own questions. Following Nancy Fraser (Nancy Fraser, "Reframing Justice in a Globalizing World," *New Left Review*, Vol. 36 [2005] pp. 69–88), we can track the patterns of the new forms of justice that emerge in a global context by allowing the very idea of justice to be parsed according to three distinct questions. First, we face ideas about the 'how' of justice, which sketch out the means – systems, institutions, and orientations – through which a more just world might be brought about. Challenging the justice of conventional economic arrangements and schemes for redistribution, some contributions – notably, papers by Alison Jaggar and Fiona Robinson – direct our attention to gendered systems and relationships that contribute to serious injustice and inequality. Other

papers, notably those by Christine Koggel, Joseph Heath, and Mira Bachvarova, demonstrate the ways in which the matter of global justice is not merely about the distribution of material benefits and burdens, but also, centrally, about recognition, power, and domination.

Second, we confront a varied set of possibilities concerning the ‘*who*’ of justice, or who should we understand as the agents – normatively and practically – of global justice. Many mainstream perspectives – Utilitarian, virtue-ethical, and neo-Kantian alike – consider the agent of global justice to be individuals and governments of the global North. Some of the alternative approaches presented in this issue question the binary thinking that associates the global North with agency and power and the global South with recipients and powerlessness. Papers by Margaret Kohn and Fuyuki Kurasawa in particular challenge us to consider the way that some forms of Western humanitarianism and paradigms of global justice presuppose particular neo-colonial relationships of power and powerlessness as well as racialized subjectivities.

Third, the papers collected here invite us to rethink the ‘*what*’ of global justice – to theorize anew about the nature and scope of global injustices. In their paper, Heather Widdows and Peter West-Oram argue that global justice theorists have tended to neglect the importance of securing collective, public goods as a bulwark against poverty, inequality and other pressing problems. This is in part because they build upon ‘domestic’ theories of justice and continue those theories’ focus on individuals rather than groups. Pushing beyond the limits of those same domestic theories of justice, Margaret Moore and Alison Jaggar, in their papers, contend that neglected goods like territory (Moore) and time (Jaggar) are critical to an adequate understanding of global injustice. Jaggar, Robinson and Koggel further suggest that a feminist care ethics can enrich our understanding of the different gendered dimensions of injustice both within the global South and between the global North and South.

The papers gathered here, while each offering a novel approach to global justice, collectively express an important normative shift within the field away from a purely distributive paradigm or framework. Issues that concern non-divisible resources, varying evaluative schemas of goods and resources, power, and cultural uniqueness, require, minimally, more refined articulations of distributive justice. But as many of the contributors here argue, these problems will also require that we expand the toolkit of concepts we employ for thinking about global justice and step outside familiar but tired dichotomies and debates. If previous generations of global justice theorists worked through the tensions between globalism on the one hand, and statism on the other, a new set of concerns find voice in these papers. The global-statist debate – pre-occupied with the question of whether states or cosmopolitan political arrangements should prevail – is long over. Most now concede that the nation state, while not necessarily the proper setting of our moral being, is nonetheless an inevitable player in the political project of global justice. But equally, the contributors to this issue largely agree on the importance of transnational institutions for solving certain urgent problems (like global poverty) that transcend state borders.

This special issue of *The Journal of Global Ethics* also challenges a central assumption of much mainstream theorizing about global justice, namely, that relations of justice chiefly concern individuals, and should aim to ensure fairness or equity between essentially separate individuals. The idea that the individual is the proper or only unit of justice is challenged here as either false (Robinson, Koggel) or incomplete (Bachvarova). A key point made in the issue is that human beings are fundamentally relational and any effort to think about justice must include, and indeed as Robinson argues, must begin, from an understanding of this feature of the human condition. Offering a compelling twist on this position, Moore conceptualizes this fundamental relationality as transcending relations between people and encompassing relations between people and the places in which they live. She argues that understanding the

moral salience of such relationships in turn requires that we appreciate how attachments to land – and the resources found in and on the land – are deeply intertwined with human values and projects. These relationships to land and resources are constitutive of who we are and for this reason have a moral significance not captured by distributive approaches that see them only as things to be divvied up. Echoing Moore's emphasis on the significance of land to identity and values, Widdows and West-Oram, as noted above, argue for the critical importance of collective or public goods to questions of global justice.

The papers in this collection employ a range of theoretical strategies, some placing more emphasis on a critical project, and others reaching for new normative approaches to global justice. Kohn and Kurasawa occupy the more critical end of this spectrum: problematizing the basic discursive mechanisms of global distributive justice theory, these authors suggest that an attentiveness to the language, metaphors and images that it employs reveals how tacit assumptions regarding agency and power actually challenge or undermine the more explicit goals of such theory. Also working in a critical mode, Widdows and West-Oram show how theorizing about problems of transnational justice goes astray when the individual is the prime focus and the urgency of securing public goods is neglected. On the more normative side, Robinson and Heath, albeit in very different ways, argue that the distributive justice is misguided (Robinson) and/or confused (Heath), and from this offer new strategies and frameworks for theorizing questions of global justice. Robinson's insistence that we begin our analysis with an understanding of the relationality of persons helps us see more clearly the intersecting forces of injustice and the multi-scalar nature of injustice. Heath, taking a very different approach, makes the meta-theoretical point that there are different levels of analysis within our discussions of global justice and distributive justice: in order to properly understand the very questions of global justice, Heath argues that we first need to get clear which level of analysis we are working at. Criticizing global capitalism, for example, only makes sense at a relatively high level of idealization. Once we find ourselves thinking at a more practical level, however – in what Heath calls a 'third-best framework', where concerns about motivation and efficiency kick in – global capitalism gains normative traction.

Whether primarily critical and pointedly normative, all of the papers in this collection reflect their authors' conviction that an awareness of the machinations of power is an essential component in the work of global justice: without a recognition of how power operates locally, nationally, and globally, our theorizations of justice will give a woefully incomplete account of how injustices are created, reaffirmed, and potentially dismantled. For example, Jaggar argues that in lieu of a distributive approach to global justice, we should incorporate a global gender exploitation framework, one which addresses not only distributive outcomes but the processes by which we arrive at a given distribution. Taking distributions in leisure time as example, she explains that it is not enough to consider who works *when*, but also to examine the ways into which the decisions to work or not work are made; only in paying attention to these decision making processes will we be able to discern how coercive forces play a part in determining distributive outcomes. In a similar vein, Koggel, arguing for a relational approach to justice, shows that certain historically entrenched relationships of injustice cannot be remedied via redistribution of goods. Koggel offers the recent Canadian inquiry into residential schools for aboriginal children as an example, arguing that reparations by the Canadian government will be incomplete without a deeper recognition of the inequalities of power that have existed and continue to exist in the relationship between the government and First Nations peoples. Echoing Koggel, Bachvarova argues that conceptualizing political legitimacy in terms of non-domination – such that a legitimate structure of governance would be understood as one that aims to foster relations without domination or gross imbalances of power – offers an essential supplement to distributive justice theories. The critical point made by Jaggar, Koggel and Bachvarova is

that injustices cannot be fully tackled within a distributive frame, but must also probe the power hierarchies that allow for such injustices in the first place.

The sub-title of this special issue, 'At the Frontier', evokes much of what defines this collection. The term 'frontier' expresses the idea that there is pioneering work yet to be done within the field of global justice and the belief that there is fecund territory still uncharted. The term also has epistemological connotations, however, announcing that a central goal of our theoretical efforts must be an expansion of our understanding – and framing – of problems of global justice. Finally, considered more politically, the term also draws our attention to the ways in which contemporary global injustice, and hence the normative and political framing of that injustice, is very much a legacy of the intellectual and material aspects of western and European colonialism. A truly critical approach to issues of global inequality and injustice must be conscious of this legacy, at the same time as it endeavors to imagine and reconceive justice using new perspectives, and asking different questions.

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