



Fifty Years of Global Justice: Five Theses

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Abstract

The subject of “global justice” did not exist in the literature of transatlantic political philosophy 50 years ago. Today, it is a focus of vigorous philosophical discussion. The paper offers five theses about the linkage between the origins of the literature in the political and philosophical ferment of the late 1960s and the state of the philosophical literature today.

Keywords Global justice · Cosmopolitanism · Statism · Rawls · Walzer

The subject of “global justice” did not exist in the literature of transatlantic political philosophy 50 years ago. Today it is a focus of vigorous philosophical discussion. Many universities offer courses about it. International conferences like this one are devoted to it. In the US/EU world, it is fair to say that no graduate student interested in contemporary political philosophy can afford not to be exposed to this subject.

The literature today is large. It would be foolish to try to summarize even the main features in a single presentation.¹ Instead, in our brief time, I shall offer some unsystematic observations about the emergence and development of the subject in the transatlantic political philosophy of the last 50 years.

I begin with two cautions. First: Confining myself to the transatlantic literature—indeed, to the literature either written in English or translated into English—may seem to be parochial. It *is* parochial. I have no excuse other than my own linguistic

¹ For summaries of the literature see the entries on “Global Justice,” “International Distributive Justice,” and “Global Democracy” in the online Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Brock 2017; Blake and Smith 2015; Kuyper 2016). For book-length surveys see Risse (2012a) and Tan (2017).

This paper is based on an opening talk at the workshop, “Reconciling Two Agendas: Global Justice and National Interests,” sponsored by the Fudan University Institute for Advanced Study in the Social Sciences in Shanghai in May 2018. I have added references but retained the style of a talk. The references do not pretend to be comprehensive. Thanks to members of the workshop for comments, in particular, Mathias Risse, Darrel Moellendorf, and Kok-Chor Tan.

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limitations and ignorance of philosophical thought about global justice beyond the transatlantic and English-speaking academic worlds. Among other things, this means that I forego comment about what we would today consider global justice in the anti-colonial thought of the 1950s and 1960s, which anticipated some of the most important problems to emerge in the transatlantic literature of the following decades (see, e.g., Getachew 2019, forthcoming).

Second: Although 50 years may seem to set an arbitrary boundary, there is a rationale. In 1968 the USA was engaged in a disastrous war in Indochina that produced widespread political dissent in the USA. Simultaneously, there was vigorous public dispute about nuclear deterrence. Both the SALT I treaty and the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty were concluded in that year. Public debate about Vietnam and nuclear deterrence stimulated the first wave of serious philosophical attention to global justice since the end of World War II.² The 1968 was also the year of the second UNCTAD conference, from which the Group of 77 emerged to represent the political voice of the developing countries. Its advocacy produced the UN General Assembly's "Declaration on the Establishment of a New International Economic Order" (NIEO) in 1974, demanding a series of reforms in the global political economy (United Nations 1974) and helping to place the subject of global economic justice on the agenda of political philosophy.

In the larger perspective of advancing globalization, it was inevitable that a philosophical subject of global justice would emerge in the academic community. But the subject need not have developed as it actually did. It is not difficult to imagine different and possibly more productive directions that philosophical thought about global justice might have pursued. My main goal in this paper is to advance some suggestions about how the origins of the subject influenced the way it took shape in political philosophy. I shall frame these suggestions as these about the steps that connected the philosophical response to the political challenges of the late 1960s with the way philosophers engage with the subject today.

1. Philosophers discovered the subject of global justice after 1968 but they did not invent it. They took possession of it from scholars of international law and international relations. I said earlier that transatlantic political philosophers did not pay much attention to global justice before about 1968, but this is not accurate. There were exceptions. Some philosophers wrote influentially about natural and human rights in the 1950s and a few wrote about the morality of war. Stanley Benn and Richard Peters attached an appendix on international relations to their important textbook in political philosophy (Benn and Peters 1959) and H.L.A. Hart included a chapter on international law in his seminal work on the philosophy of law (Hart 1961). These interventions were influential, but they were exceptions. Most political

² See, e.g., Wasserstrom (1970). This book was intended for use in university courses. One indication of the depth of interest in this subject is that 6 (of 19) articles in the first volume (1971–1972) of the journal *Philosophy and Public Affairs* were devoted to aspects of the morality of war. For the idea of "waves" of thinking about global justice, see Valentini (2011, 3) (my "waves" are not precisely hers). This period has recently attracted the attention of intellectual historians; see, e.g., Forrester (2014).

philosophers in the years after World War II gave virtually no thought to any subject that we associate with global justice.

There was, however, quite a lot of discussion about one topic we would recognize as pertinent to the subject among academic international lawyers, scholars of international relations, and scholars of religion in politics. A “Great Debate” had broken out in the USA and UK before World War II about the relative merits of “realism” and “idealism” as orientations to foreign policy.³ The debate was carried forward after the war. Self-identified realist writers like Hans Morgenthau and George Kennan argued that a country’s foreign policy should aim to advance the national interest regardless of what might appear to be moral requirements, or requirements of justice, that conflict with it. They defined their “idealist” opponents as holding, instead, that states should give priority to international law and international morality or, perhaps, “the interests of mankind,” rather than the national interest.⁴

There were always dissenters (e.g., Wolfers 1952), but the realists were widely thought to have prevailed in this debate and, by the 1960s, political realism was the professional orthodoxy of international relations scholars in Britain and the USA. I do not aim to reopen the “great debate” but, having grown up when it was in its late stages, my impression is that the success of realism over idealism in the scholarship of international relations had less to do with arguments of moral principle than with the analytical superiority of realism as a framework for understanding the dynamics of international conflict. Idealism, to the extent that it provided a basis for explaining or predicting outcomes in international politics, would always appear naïve because it had no plausible response to the realist argument that the anarchic structure of international relations makes it dangerous for states to subordinate their interests to any larger concern for the global good or global justice. This argument, made in detail in Kenneth Waltz’s important book, *Man, the State, and War* (1959)—in my view, the most penetrating work of international political theory of the 1950s—was persuasive to most people who took it seriously. (Since I am speaking in China, I should observe that Waltz’s first epigraph, intended to illustrate what he calls the “first image” of the causes of war, is attributed to Confucius: “There is deceit and cunning and from these wars arise.”)⁵ Waltz’s argument depended on a sophisticated analysis of the dynamics of interaction under anarchy that he derived mainly from Jean-Jacques Rousseau. By contrast, there is surprisingly little explicit discussion of the moral questions involved in the claim that in conditions of anarchy the state is always justified in doing what it judges necessary to protect itself.⁶

Realism is important for our subject for its influence on the way international relations scholars of the time defined the main practical problems they faced. In their view a state’s most important interest was in protecting itself against attack.

³ See, e.g., E. H. Carr’s influential (1939).

⁴ For sample early and late postwar contributions, see Morgenthau (1952) and Thompson (1977).

⁵ The source—not cited by Waltz—is the Li Yun chapter of the *Liji* (*Book of Rites*), apparently compiled by Han court specialists. For the text see Legge (1885, 366) and Nylan (2001, 175). Thanks to Loubna El Amine for help identifying this source.

⁶ Waltz’s discussion of Thucydides, Machiavelli and *realpolitik* is uncharacteristically perfunctory. Waltz (1959, 210–217).

This interest was likely to be achieved most efficiently in a climate of international political stability. The central problem was to secure peaceful order, not to achieve global justice. The prevalence of realism among political scientists may explain why their colleagues in philosophy took so little interest in global justice. The young Brian Barry, for example—who would become one of the most important political philosophers of his generation—wrote, in a book published in 1965:

In relations between states the problem of establishing a peaceful order overshadows all others. No doubt it is possible for substantive general principles to be put forward and widely accepted, e.g. that rich nations have some kind of obligation to help poorer nations develop their economies. But any attempt to [do so] in the absence of a working international order seems a doubtfully rewarding enterprise.⁷

Barry's reference to the relations of rich and poor countries is interesting in retrospect because in later work he took the problem of global distributive justice very seriously (e.g., in Barry 1998, 153–156). But that change in perspective would have to await the emergence of a literature on global justice in the following years.

2. *The philosophical agenda of the first wave of thinking about global justice depended on the details of the way the literature originated—in criticisms of two important books. This produced a debate between “statists” and “cosmopolitans” that structured academic discourse for years.* By the “philosophical agenda,” I mean the problems that engaged philosophers and the alternative positions that emerged as solutions. The agenda that developed by the end of the 1970s was determined primarily by critical reactions to two important books—John Rawls's *A Theory of Justice* (1999 [1971]) and Michael Walzer's *Just and Unjust Wars* (1977). Both presented a liberal philosophical perspective in which the nation-state had a privileged moral status. In both cases, the critical reactions defined a cosmopolitan alternative. The opposition of “statism” and cosmopolitanism came to define the philosophical agenda.⁸

I shall say more about the way this opposition developed. First, however, we should remember that the early 1970s was not only the period of the NIEO proposals and the winding down of the war in Vietnam. It was also a time when famines in several parts of the world drew philosophical attention to global poverty. The famine in East Bengal, for example, attracted worldwide attention and provoked one of the most widely read philosophical papers on the subject of ethics and global poverty. In his “Famine, Affluence, and Morality” (1972), Peter Singer observed that we can all agree that it is a bad thing to suffer from lack of food, shelter, and medical care. He then argued that if we are in a position to prevent something bad from happening without suffering anything comparably bad as a result, then, morally speaking, we ought to do it. The conclusion was that the affluent have a responsibility to contribute to the relief of global poverty. Singer made it impossible to ignore distant suffering and forced readers to consider whether geographical boundaries drawn on

⁷ Barry (1965, xviii). This book was based on Barry's Oxford dissertation.

⁸ For a similar observation see Scheffler (2014).

a world map had fundamental moral importance. His own view denied this and so contributed powerfully to the cosmopolitan challenge to statism that emerged in the years after 1968.

Singer did not, however, cast the issue as one of distributive justice. For that we must look at the cosmopolitan critique of Rawls's book.⁹ Its impact in Anglo-American political philosophy was greater than any retrospective description can evoke. I can think of no systematic work of political philosophy written in English and published since 1900 that was as widely read and argued about. Rawls's theory of justice for domestic societies was distinguished by its egalitarianism. He held that economic and social inequalities are justified only if those who are relatively disadvantaged by the inequalities are absolutely better off than they would be in the absence of those inequalities. This was a highly progressive position, considered in relation to the political ideas of the time. However, when Rawls turned to what he called the "law of nations"—that is, his doctrine of international justice—he said the basic principle was that of the sovereign equality of states (Rawls 1999a, 352). His "law of nations" did not include any principle bearing on global distributive justice. In his view the scope of distributive justice was limited to the state.

Some of Rawls's readers noticed his neglect of global distributive justice almost immediately.¹⁰ It was especially striking in a book published in the midst of growing North/South conflict. The basic issue is this. In the context of the state, Rawls argued that the subject of justice is the distribution of the rewards and costs of social cooperation. By "social cooperation" he meant a system of economic interdependence based on a division of labor and embedded in a political and social basic structure. He observed that cooperation produces advantages that would not exist without it. The subject of justice, he said, is the division of these advantages among those who cooperate to produce them. Rawls's cosmopolitan critics pointed out that the world economy is also a system of social cooperation: it consists of a global division of labor embedded in a basic structure. If global economic interdependence is in this way analogous to the economic interdependence found *within* states, they asked, how can we say that the scope of distributive justice should be limited to the state?¹¹

The second important provocation was critical reaction to Michael Walzer's *Just and Unjust Wars*, surely the most influential book to result from the rethinking of the morality of war prompted by the US experience in Vietnam. Walzer revived philosophical interest in what we know as the "just war tradition." It dates, in the West, to the Roman philosopher Cicero and the Christian theologians Augustine and Thomas Aquinas. At the time Walzer wrote, the tradition was thought by many to be dogmatic and philosophically uninteresting. His book revived it beyond what could possibly have been expected (*Just and Unjust Wars* is now in its fifth edition [2015]).

⁹ On both parts of the cosmopolitan challenge—that due to Singer and that emerging from the critique of Rawls—see Moyn (2018, Chap. 6). Moyn discusses what he takes to be the role of the NIEO proposals in motivating my own work of the period. Much of that is inferential and I cannot comment on it here.

¹⁰ For example, Danielson (1973) and Scanlon (1973). Barry devoted an entire chapter in his book-length commentary on Rawls's book to this question (Barry 1973, Chap. 12).

¹¹ I pressed this line of criticism in Beitz (1975), expanded in part III of my 1979. A similar criticism was pressed in the next decade by Pogge (1989).

Much of the transatlantic literature about justice in war of the last 40 years consists of critical commentary on Walzer. I shall leave aside this part of the literature on global justice—philosophical thought about the morality in war deserves a study of its own.¹² There is one issue that originated in criticism of Walzer, however, that has significance beyond the subject of justice in war. This is the question of the moral standing of states. Walzer argued that states have rights of territorial integrity and political sovereignty. For the most part these rights prohibit outsiders from interfering in a state's internal affairs. In his view, the rights of states are based on the rights of their members to collective self-determination. He was prepared to recognize some exceptions to a general prohibition of outside interference (for example, when a government treats its people in ways that “shock the conscience of mankind”), but the exceptions are relatively narrow.

Because Walzer's view embodied a robust defense of states' rights against outsiders, it came to be identified with “statism.” Soon after his book was published, Walzer's version of statism came under challenge. Luban (1980a) observed that according to Walzer's view, a state that was illegitimate according to political standards accepted by its own people could nevertheless have rights of territorial integrity and political sovereignty against outsiders. Luban argued, in contrast to Walzer, that no state could claim a right of non-interference against outsiders if it failed to respect the basic rights of its own people. Luban borrowed the idea of “basic rights” from Henry Shue's book of the same name (1980), which was itself an important contribution to the emerging philosophical literature. In Luban's view a state's sovereign rights are conditional on its respect for the basic rights of its individual members. His view is “cosmopolitan” in the sense that it applies a common, global standard of moral legitimacy—the standard of basic rights—to all governments. It could thus justify political action across borders, including military intervention, in a broader range of cases than Walzer's view could accept.¹³

The contrast between statism and cosmopolitanism had implications that extended well beyond the context of war and humanitarian intervention. It seemed likely to influence one's views about many issues in which it could make a difference whether one believes that states are entitled, or even required, to give priority to the interests of their own people when they conflict with the interests of outsiders. It might also influence one's views about the significance of what might appear to be regional and cultural differences about political values (for example, in the “Asian values” debate of the 1990s; see, e.g., Bauer and Bell 1999). Because its consequences seemed potentially so wide ranging, the contrast between statist and cosmopolitan theories became a basic feature of the new literature on global justice from the very beginning.

3. Philosophical thought about justice in war and justice in the world economy developed separately and at different paces, producing two mostly distinct literatures. This was unfortunate although perhaps to be expected in the emergence of

¹² For an excellent survey see Lazar (2017).

¹³ The Walzer/Luban dispute continued in a long and important response by Walzer (1980) and a rejoinder by Luban (1980b).

a new subject. The raw materials for a cosmopolitan challenge to the statist orthodoxy of transatlantic liberalism were in place by 1980 in the literatures of justice in war and of global distributive justice. It is striking, however, that even though the challenge had a common basis in political morality, these subjects developed independently of each other. Political events of the 1980s—in particular, what seemed to be an acceleration of the nuclear arms race—prompted extended philosophical attention to some aspects of justice in war. The surprise is that the profusion of philosophical writing about global distributive justice did not begin in earnest until around 1990, which is to say, after the Berlin wall came down and the Cold War ended.¹⁴ Why might that have been?

One can only speculate. Certainly one reason is that the most prominent dispute about moral issues in US foreign policy in the 1980s concerned nuclear deterrence and defense. The Reagan administration escalated the nuclear arms race with the USSR and initiated the development of a capacity for ballistic missile defense. This stimulated renewed philosophical interest in the ethics of nuclear deterrence and of the possible use of limited-scale nuclear weapons in combat.¹⁵ This may have deflected attention from the emerging debate about global distributive justice. At the same time, whatever hope there might have been for the NIEO proposals disappeared with the Reagan administration's adoption of the foreign economic policies that came to be known as the "Washington consensus." The end of the Cold War around 1990, on the other hand, may have had a reinvigorating effect because it meant that a main obstacle to the development of new solutions to global problems had disappeared. In an atmosphere of new political possibilities at the global level, aspects of global justice having to do with the distribution of wealth and the protection of human rights came to be more prominent.

Whatever the causes, the two bodies of literature remained separated for most of the period with only limited overlap of subject matter and authorship. As a result we have one literature about justice in war and a largely distinct literature about justice in peacetime. In my view this is unfortunate, because the two subjects converge on fundamental problems about the nature of a just world order and the kinds of injustice that can arise in a world of territorial states.¹⁶ But it nicely illustrates the dependence of the content of philosophical thought about global justice on the circumstances of its origins and development.

4. *As thought about global justice developed, it emerged that neither "statism" nor "cosmopolitanism" identifies a single, stable philosophical position. This made room for a second wave of thought about global justice.* Much of the philosophical

¹⁴ Of course, there are exceptions. Important contributions of the 1980s include Shue (1980), Hoffmann (1981), O'Neill (1986), Nickel (1987) and Pogge (1989), pt. 3. Another influential contribution, in a work not mainly devoted to moral problems about global justice, was the concluding chapter of Keohane (1984).

¹⁵ Most of the philosophical works were articles published in philosophical journals. Kavka (1987) was an important book-length contribution. This was also the decade of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' important pastoral letter, *The Challenge of Peace* (1983), which argued against "first use" of nuclear weapons and advocated a freeze on their further development.

¹⁶ A recent attempt to bring the two subjects together is Fabre (2012).

attention paid to global justice in the period after 1990 focused on what was invariably described as a “debate” between statism and cosmopolitanism. Some writers argued that there was a deep divide between the two sides in the debate; others, that a reconciliation was possible. This debate structured the rapid growth of the literature on global justice well into the 2000s.

The debate between statism and cosmopolitanism proceeded at several levels. At the most abstract, the question was whether and to what extent the citizens of a state have special claims or rights to exclude outsiders from access to the natural and social resources within the jurisdiction of their state. Anyone tempted to defend the statist side of the debate needed an account of the basis of these special claims. Here a variety of views were possible. The traditional position was that the special claims derive from a more basic principle of state sovereignty, regarded a necessary norm of a peaceful world order—a *modus vivendi* without whose general acceptance no state could be assured of security in its jurisdiction over people and territory. This, for example, was the view of Hedley Bull, who held that the sovereignty principle is essential for maintaining order in international society and that it operates as an obstacle to global economic justice.¹⁷ Michael Walzer’s view is an example of a different position whose basis is in the value of collective self-determination: he held that respect for a state’s sovereignty is necessary in order to protect the state’s *people’s* rights to participate in a process of collective self-determination. In this view, the rights of states, which are political or juridical entities, derive from the rights of their people considered as a collective social entity. A third (“nationalist”) view—or perhaps a variant of the second—is also possible. It shares with the self-determination view the principle that certain kinds of social groups have rights to conduct their own political lives without interference. It adds that these rights attach in particular to *national* groups. A view of this kind has been advocated by David Miller, who holds that the value of national identity explains why we should value collective self-determination, which in turn explains why and when it is justifiable for states to give priority to the claims of their own citizens.¹⁸ This illustrates that “statism” is not the name of any single view but rather a label for a family of positions that reach similar conclusions from different starting points.¹⁹

As the abstract debate progressed, it emerged that cosmopolitanism, too, covers a range of different if similar positions. Essential to all forms of cosmopolitanism is the idea that the scope of political and economic justice is global. But this idea can be reached in more than one way. One view is that the scope of justice must global because distinctions among persons based on features such as their territorial

¹⁷ Bull (2002 [first published 1977], 16–17, 277–282). For a more progressive version of the view, see Vincent (1987, esp. 111–128, 143–150).

¹⁸ In Miller’s influential formulation, the elements of nationality consist of “a community (1) constituted by shared belief and mutual commitment, (2) extended in history, (3) active in character, (4) connected to a particular territory, and (5) marked off from other communities by its distinct publish culture.” Miller (1995, 27). Miller’s chapter 2 (“National Identity”) offers a detailed discussion of conceptions of nationality. For further development of his view see Miller (2007).

¹⁹ For some more detailed distinctions among different forms of statism, see Cohen and Sabel (2006, esp. pt. 1).

location or nationality—like their race or sex—are morally arbitrary (e.g., Caney 2005, Chap. 2; Tan 2004, 158). A different view holds that the scope of justice is global because the social relations on which requirements of justice are based are global (e.g., Pogge 2008 [2002]; Moellendorf 2009). Mathias Risse calls the first kind of view “non-relational” and the second kind “relational” (2012b, 7–8). This is a neat distinction but it is not obvious that one has to make a categorical choice.²⁰ Still, once again, we have what appears to be a case of multiple positions with a family resemblance rather than a single view.

The debate also proceeded at a less abstract level. Here I can only gesture at some of the main subjects of debate without illustrating them with references. One cluster of topics involves the content and basis of the principle of self-determination, the value of nationality, and the morality of secession. A second is the extent of a state’s rights against external interference and the grounds on which the international community may permissibly assert a responsibility to protect citizens against the government of their own state. A third cluster involves the rights of persons to migrate either in response to the threat of persecution or in pursuit of economic advantage and a state’s right to control the movement of persons across its borders by means of immigration and refugee controls. A fourth relates to what we might call global political justice—that is, the principles that should govern global political and economic institutions, either those that exist today or those that ought to exist. A fifth cluster includes the rules of the global economy—the global trade regime, tariff policy, regulation of global supply chains, and the use of trade policy to influence labor conditions. This is hardly a complete list of topics that implicate the statism/cosmopolitanism divide, but it will at least show the range of subjects that were framed in relation to it.

A particularly influential focus of attention was the analysis of global poverty as a violation of human rights. As I noted earlier, this line of inquiry can be traced to Henry Shue’s *Basic Rights* (1980). Thomas Pogge wrote a series of papers in the 1990s (collected and extended in Pogge 2008 [2002]) developing the thesis that global poverty is a harm imposed on the poor by the global rich who, by their inaction, allow a global economic order that perpetuates poverty to persist. Pogge identified his critique as cosmopolitan and combined it with policy proposals for reducing global poverty. Both the critique and the proposals have been controversial (see, e.g., Risse 2005; Cohen 2009).

John Rawls shared an interest in debate between statists and cosmopolitans and around 1990 began to write the work that would become his Oxford Amnesty lecture, “The Law of Peoples” (1993), substantially revised and extended in his book, *The Law of Peoples* (1999b). The theory Rawls set forth in this book is presented as a revision and enlargement of the view of global justice found in his *A Theory of Justice*, but this might be misleading. The “law of peoples” consists of a series of principles that Rawls argues liberal societies should follow in their foreign policies. These principles include the principles he had proposed in *A Theory of Justice* but there were two important additions that transform the view into something quite

²⁰ I discuss dilemmas about the interpretation of the cosmopolitan idea in more detail in Beitz (2005).

different from his earlier position. These are a principle requiring states to respect human rights and a principle requiring well-off societies to assist “burdened” societies struggling with historical and cultural disadvantages to develop to the point at which they can become internally well ordered and legitimate.

Two things should be said about this book’s place in recent philosophical thought about global justice. First, with the addition of a “duty of assistance” owed to less well-off societies, the theory incorporates an element of global distributive justice, though Rawls did not call it that. He offered very little argument in favor of the duty of assistance, although he made clear that he did not regard it as based on either cosmopolitan or humanitarian concern about the well-being of individuals. It is a duty owed by states (or “peoples”) to other states. The second point relates to the addition of a requirement to respect human rights. Rawls does not endorse the full complement of rights listed in the Universal Declaration of 1948 but does hold that basic human rights include rights to economic subsistence as well as to personal and civil liberty. These rights, he says, are binding on all states, and therefore limit every state’s rights of sovereignty. This, again, is a significant shift from the view taken in *A Theory of Justice* and constitutes acceptance of part of the cosmopolitan critique of statism. (He cites with approval Henry Shue’s *Basic Rights*—the same source referred to by David Luban in the cosmopolitan critique of Michael Walzer’s doctrine of sovereignty I referred to earlier [Rawls 1999b, 65n].) In both respects *The Law of Peoples* represents a step away from the statism of Rawls’s earlier views about global justice. This is not so much a theoretical convergence with cosmopolitanism as it is an attempt to articulate a third approach to global justice, neither statist nor cosmopolitan. Philosophers disagree about whether this “third way” is coherent (compare, e.g., Buchanan 2000; Freeman 2006).

There have also been other attempts to work out alternatives to the two families of views that have dominated the transatlantic literature. I mention two such perspectives, in both cases projections of more comprehensive political philosophies to the global level. First, the global implications of neorepublicanism. In the last few decades there has been a growth of interest in republican ideals in political thought (see in particular Pettit 1997). Although its focus has been on the institutions and extra-institutional life of a republican state, it is natural to wonder both how economic globalization affects the prospects of republican freedom at the level of states and what the republican ideal implies for the structure of the global political order (important recent contributions include Pettit 2016; Laborde and Ronzoni 2016). Second and in some respects relatedly, the implications for the global order of the critical theory tradition represented in the work of Jürgen Habermas (most substantially, Habermas 1984, 1987) and carried forward by Rainer Forst (most recently Forst 2017, pt. 5; also Forst 2012, pt. 3). Again, whereas traditionally the unit of concern was the structure of political and social power in state-level society, the emergence of global institutions and a transnational politics of human rights raises the question how we should understand the nature and basis of norms of global stature that aim to regulate uses of power both within and beyond individual societies (Habermas 2010). Both of these perspectives might be interpreted as alternatives to statism and cosmopolitanism, though it may be more illuminating to describe them each as in a different way orthogonal to the main division.

5. *The present (or third) wave represents a shift from a “vertical” to a “horizontal” approach to thinking about global justice. This has been philosophically productive.* By the early 2000s it seemed to many philosophers that the “debate” between statism and cosmopolitanism had run its course. It had clearly not ended—indeed, one of the most forceful philosophical statements of a statist view was published in this period by Thomas Nagel, who defended a position modeled in some respects on (though different from) the theory proposed by Rawls in *The Law of Peoples* (Nagel 2005). Nagel’s paper attracted a good deal of spirited critical commentary (e.g., Cohen and Sabel 2006; Julius 2006). However, the repetition of the statism/cosmopolitanism debate stimulated by Nagel’s paper served mainly to underscore the impression that the basic distinction was too crude to shed much light on the moral problems of global justice.²¹ I believe the “debate” served a valuable purpose by exposing the range and complexity of the moral considerations that bear on choices about the structure and norms of the global order. It certainly succeeded in calling into question beliefs about global justice that many philosophers had accepted uncritically. But in the years after the publication of *The Law of Peoples*, it seemed to many that new approaches were needed.

Philosophers responded in various ways. One result of the end of the Cold War was that the USA appeared, at least for a time, to be a global hegemonic power no longer restrained by great-power competition in its efforts to consolidate its military and economic position. This prompted some philosophers to reconceive the central problem of global justice in terms of controlling neo-imperial power rather than securing a just distribution of resources and goods (e.g., Miller 2010).

A more common response was to shift from what we might call a “vertical” approach to global justice to an approach we might think of as “horizontal.” Both sides in the statism/cosmopolitanism debate seemed to share the idea that a solution to the central dispute would have important implications for a wide range of policy problems, from the justice of humanitarian intervention and of intervention for human rights to government policies regarding immigration, trade, aid and development, and perhaps other subjects. The approach was “vertical” in the sense that the intellectual movement ran from the abstract to the concrete. A “horizontal” approach would have two features that distinguish it from vertical approaches. First, it would not attempt to derive the requirements of justice for particular areas of law and policy from a single, abstract conception of global justice defined by the priority that conception gives to the state’s duties to its own people. Instead, it would take up individual policy problems and attempt to grasp the moral issues at the base of these problems from an understanding of the policy problem in question. Second, and more basically, it would not necessarily consider “global justice” as the global analog of domestic justice, as if global justice were a value to be achieved in a political space distinct from that of domestic justice. Instead, it would frame the domestic and the global aspects of the problem in question as parts of a single problem about justice. A theory of fair trade, for example, might have implications for both the global trade regime and for social policy within states.

²¹ The most extensive expression of this view may be Risse (2012b).

In the philosophical literature of the last several years, we can identify several examples of such a “horizontal” approach. This paper is already too long, so I shall just list some sample topics and mention a few works to illustrate, chosen from a larger literature: (1) fairness in the global trading system (James 2012; for a critique, Risse and Wollner 2013, and for their own view, Risse and Wollner 2019, forthcoming), (2) justice in responding to global climate change (Shue 2014), (3) ethics of immigration and refugee policy (Carens 2013; Blake 2013; Miller 2016), (4) the basis and content of international human rights (Griffin 2008; Beitz 2009; for a survey, Cruft et al. 2015), (5) rights of individuals and states to the territory they occupy and the natural resources it contains (Stilz 2019, forthcoming, Chap. 8; Simmons 2016; on rights to resources, Wenar 2016), and (6) the relationship between the political philosophy of global justice and the philosophy of international law (Buchanan 2004; Besson and Tasioulas 2010). This list is hardly comprehensive; it aims to gesture at a broader disposition to regard problems of foreign and international policy as posing first-order problems of global justice. It seems to me a good thing—a sign of maturity?—that the transatlantic literature has arrived at this stage. It means that the philosophy of global justice is acquiring more of the texture and institutional detail of the philosophy of social justice within the state.

Having recognized this shift of perspective, I should add that it would be a mistake to regard the contrast of vertical and horizontal approaches as running very deep. One might still aspire to a general theory of global justice within which views about more granular problems might be represented, so to speak, as modules. But I suspect that such a general theory would be richer and more interesting as a result of focused engagement with more granular problems of the kind just mentioned.

Conclusion. Global justice has become a large and complex philosophical subject but it seems to me that there are still conspicuous gaps, or perhaps failures of emphasis, in the literature. I will conclude by noting two of these.

First, the subject of global *political* justice has not received the attention it deserves and needs. By “political justice” I mean the principles of political ethics that apply to the structure and rules of global political institutions. These questions arise, on the one hand, about institutions that actually exist—for example, the UN institutions, the governing bodies of international financial, development, and trade institutions, and the like. They arise, on the other hand, about the global institutional structure that ought to exist but does not. There has been some theoretical debate about whether a global “demos” can be said to exist and (relatedly) whether the idea of “global democracy” has any interesting content.²² There has also been discussion in connection of some of the topics listed earlier of the institutional changes that would be needed to reduce particular kinds of injustice (for example, in relation to climate). But we need a better grasp of the norms that can reasonably be applied to global governance institutions and of the ways these norms might feasibly be embedded in global governance processes that are accessible from where we stand today.²³

A quite different question—actually, a category of questions—involves the connection between ideas of global institutional justice and the responsibilities of

²² For a critical summary, see Valentini (2014).

²³ For an imaginative example of the kind of work I have in mind, see Buchanan and Keohane (2015).

individuals. It has been correctly observed that much of the philosophical literature concentrates, as it must, on issues involving institutions and social structures (Scheffler 2014, 26–33). What can be lost sight of is that we are ultimately interested in these issues because we hope as individuals to live in a more just world. We look to political philosophy, at least in part, for guidance about how we as political agents can act on this hope. We wish to understand how we can avoid complicity in injustice and where we can find opportunities to promote justice. For the most part the transatlantic literature avoids these questions about individual agency.²⁴ We should press ourselves to ask how ideals of global political and economic justice can be implemented in institutions that we can reasonably hope can be achieved and what we can do as individuals, as citizens, and as philosophers to advance these ideals.

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²⁴ Some notable exceptions are Young (2011), Ypi (2012), Caney (2015) and Singer (2016).

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