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# Pathway to Global Justice: a Research Report

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## I. Background



The International Monetary Funds' (IMF) October 2007 *World Economic Outlook* (WEO) report shows that the world economy is growing strong in spite of the volatile condition of the financial market.<sup>1</sup> Strong economic growth, that is often associated with the increase in trade globalisation, has brought along an unprecedented wealth. Yet at the same time, and rather paradoxically, we live in a world infested with outstanding disparity. Abject poverty is still a sad reality that we have to confront. The United Nations Millennium Project website—in the Fast Facts section—states that approximately six million children die from malnutrition annually.<sup>2</sup> Something must have gone horribly wrong for children to die of malnutrition in this age of so-called economic advancement. What have we done wrong? Perhaps the answer to the question has to do with our actions, or lack thereof.

It is discomfiting that while a young Australian couple can relish a glass of champagne as they watch a box-office movie in a luxurious theatre in Sydney, a young woman in Africa have to either walk more than a mile to get access to clean water, or try to survive the day without getting raped or hacked off by militants. This situation can lead to a philosophical dilemma. For one can indeed argue—though I doubt the cogency of the argument—that there isn't anything wrong with a person, pampering herself with cocktails and entertainment while another person, living in another country, is struggling to survive. I suspect that one of the assumptions behind such dismissive response is that one does not have any obligation to others beyond the confines of one's state. My interest is in arguments that assume the contrary, i.e., arguments insisting that human beings have obligations to one another irrespective of biological and diplomatic boundaries; arguments that are grounded in egalitarian assumptions. To be precise, I am interested in theories offering egalitarian principles of global justice.<sup>3</sup> By egalitarian principles of global justice I mean a set of moral principles that are based on the assumption that all our fellow human beings, whomever and wheresoever they are, are of equal moral worth.

## 2. Introduction



One can argue that the discussion of egalitarian global justice involves two sets of concerns. The first set is in regards to the *scope* of the principles of global justice, namely, concerns regarding the subject to whom we ought to afford equal consideration. Consequently, moral relevance of state boundaries, and the extent of national partiality are of particular interest. The second set is in regards to the *content* of said principles, namely, concerns regarding the kind of equality that we ought to advance. One particular approach that I believe is instrumental in addressing the second set of concerns is Amartya Sen's capability approach.

The capability approach, as one author eloquently identifies, is essentially a "broad normative framework for the evaluation and assessment of well being and social arrangements, the design of policies, and proposals about social change in society" (Robeyns 2005a, p.94). The approach is concerned with people's capability, i.e., with what people can actually do or be. I am sympathetic with this approach and believe that it can be effectively used to develop principles of egalitarian global justice. For the purpose of my honour's thesis, however, I will be somewhat less demanding. Instead of asking what ought to be the content of a capability-oriented principles of justice in my honour's thesis, I will use Sen's capability approach as the standpoint from which to (re)consider the demands of egalitarian justice applicable at a global scope.

This report reviews literatures relevant to my honour's thesis, to wit, literatures in global justice and capability approach. There are, admittedly, a number of 'other' literatures that I have consulted during the course of my research that, by reason of brevity and focus, will not be included in this report. I would also like to note that the overview of the literatures would not be comprehensive as I intend to emphasise features of the literatures that I consider particularly relevant to the development of my thesis. Other subsidiary consideration, when needed, can be found in the endnotes section of the report.

The body of this report is divided into two sections. The division is based on the outline of concerns that I have laid out above. The first section reviews literatures dealing with issues surrounding the *scope* of egalitarian global justice, specifically with literatures discussing the moral relevance of the state, and subsequently the extent of national partiality. The second section of the report reviews literatures dealing with issues appertaining to the *content* of egalitarian principles of global justice; it is divided into three subsections. In the first subsection, I will attempt to review John Rawls' contractarian conception of social justice. On the second subsection a particular version of cosmopolitan theories of justice will be presented. On the third subsection Amartya Sen's capability approach, and works that are derivative of Sen's that serve as alternative conceptualisations of the demands of global justice are considered.

### **3. Scope of Global Justice: State Boundaries & Domestic Partiality**



Fundamentally, egalitarian principles of global justice would insist that human beings across the globe fall under the purview of the principles. This poses a lot of problems for those who believe that a membership in a particular nation-state requires partiality to one's co-national.<sup>4</sup> We must, therefore, ask: how morally relevant are national boundaries? If relevant, do we still have some extra-national obligations to other fellow human beings who are not members of our national community? Both are questions surrounding the issue of the *scope* of egalitarian principles of global justice.

Traditionally, egalitarian concerns within liberal political philosophy have been focused on what obligations are owed domestically, within the confines of a particular nation-state. However, as Michael Blake (2005) suggests, when juxtaposed with the conventional liberal assumption of moral egalitarianism—that is, all human beings are entitled to equal moral consideration—the state-citizen standpoint seems oddly limiting (if not out of place).<sup>5</sup> Place of birth—as with race and/or gender—is

morally arbitrary; it is not something under our control, and as such, should not be morally relevant for any liberals. In other words, if one considers oneself as a liberal, one must not be partial to one's own fellow citizens as one must not be partial to those of the same race or gender. This seems to indicate that a liberal cannot be a nationalist. Some theorists, however, believe that national boundaries are more than just an empirical fact, since the implication of which might carry more significance than granted.

David Miller (2005, p. 56) writes, "Global inequality matters because of its effects, or because of what it tells us about the costs of achieving justice, but not because it is intrinsically unjust." Miller (2005, p.74) argues against attempts to advance egalitarian principles of global justice, and instead he offers to view global inequality as a *source* of injustice, rather than as inherently unjust. To illustrate his point, Miller (2005, p.75) argues that one can protest against grotesque working conditions in third world countries without having to insist that the workers defended attain the same level of working conditions, and the same terms of agreement as that of the workers in considerate factories in other countries. For Miller, egalitarianism at a global scope is rather demanding, and to some extent vague. He (Miller 2005, p.58-64) examines one form of egalitarian demands, equality of opportunity, and argues that it is unclear how we should understand equality of opportunity in a plural world in which conceptions of good differs from one culture to another. For example, with respect to education, Miller (2005 p.64) writes, "The metric problem arises not just because it is hard to determine how much educational opportunity an average child has in society *A*, but because the meaning of education, and the way in which it relates to, or contrast with, other goods will vary from place to place." Furthermore, Miller finds the principle that argues against the moral relevance of nationality substantively defective. He (Miller 2005, p.69) asks, "Why regard nationality as a morally irrelevant characteristics like hair colour rather than a morally relevant characteristics like differential need?" Furthermore, it is unclear why one should easily dispel nationality as morally irrelevant when significant political decisions that greatly affect the lives of citizens of a particular nation are mostly taken at nation-state level. By doing so Miller does not intend to undermine the pervasive effect of economic globalisation. However, Miller (2005,

p.70) argues, “It is not enough to point out that new international relationships supervene upon ... longer standing national ones.”

Other authors seek different types of arguments in defending the relevance of nationality in determining our obligation to that of strangers. Yael Tamir (1993) in *Liberal Nationalism* argues against the assumption that being a liberal must imply being a universalist. For Tamir (1993, p.65) a nation is a community conscious of their particularistic identity. In other words, for a nation to be a nation, its members must have a collective sense of belonging. A nation so construed is not defined solely by territorial marking. Indeed, the unifying feature of a nation is its shared culture (Tamir 1993, p.67-68). Tamir (1993, p.73) consequently asserts that “[m]embership in a nation is a constitutive factor of personal identity.” As an integral component of the formation of individual identity, and with that individual well being, national integrity must be protected so as to ensure that the community can flourish. As such, it is within the interest of the members of the nation that they are guaranteed the rights aimed at protecting their national identity. The special bond shared by members of a nation implies the existence of special concerns to the members of one’s (national) culture, and as such, the special concerns supersede the more general concern to all people/strangers (Tamir 1993, pp.99-102).

Kok Chor Tan (2005) offers an alternative to Tamir’s concentric view of our obligations to strangers. For Tan it might be the case that nationalism is actually a requisite of global justice. Tan (2005, p.59) argues that nationalism is a component of liberal democracy, the framework that is needed to advance global justice. Indeed, he sees the demands of global justice as “complementary” to the demands of domestic justice. In other words, there is no direct tension between national partiality and the advancement of global equality. In regards to one’s predisposition to one’s national culture, Tan (2005, p.53) argues that it does not imply that one cannot at the same time uphold the principles of global justice. For demanding cultural protection is quite different from demanding privilege with respect to material resources (Tan 2005, p.53). It is important to note, however, that for Tan (2005, p.53) nations can privilege its members’ access to material resources “so long as it also supports the appropriate background global context required by the idea of equal

opportunity.” Therefore, the question that we must ask is: co-national partiality with respect to what?

While Tan assumes that the kind of equality that we must advance is that of equal opportunity, in reality, as David Miller (2005) points out, the notion of equality of opportunity, when applied globally, is subject to pragmatic worry. But unlike Miller, I do not take the worry as dismissive of global justice. If equality of opportunity is problematic when placed on a global context of justice, then perhaps we need to look for an alternative conception of egalitarianism. The question that we must subsequently ask is: global equality with respect to what?

## 4. Content of Global Justice



One can claim that the need for a theory of global justice is motivated by relatively vague concepts such as poverty, and inequality.<sup>6</sup> For it is unclear as to what qualifies as poverty, and more importantly, what sorts of inequalities should matter to egalitarians. Indeed, the problem for egalitarians is in determining which sort of inequality should take precedence over any others. One can, therefore, ask the following: should egalitarian principles of global justice be about global distribution of resources that guarantees the improvement of life prospects in deprived nations? Or should it be about guaranteeing access to what human beings need to flourish? Or should it address the problem of abject poverty, and what we ought to do to eradicate it? Or should it address the problems of poverty generally? Or should it address human suffering, and what streamlined steps ought to be taken in order to minimise and/or alleviate suffering? This section of the report will address literatures that have attempted to answer the questions above either directly, or indirectly.

### 4.1 Rawls' Theory of Justice

Rawls' conception of social justice that followed from the tradition of the social contract theorists such as Hobbes, Rousseau, Locke, and Kant (commonly re-

ferred to as contractarians) has been largely influential. His book, *a Theory of justice* (henceforth *Tj*) published in 1971, is widely considered to be a magnum opus in political philosophy. In *Tj* Rawls is concerned with justice as “the first virtue of social institutions” (1971, p. 3). His primary subject of examination is the basic structure of society, i.e., “the way in which the major social institutions distribute fundamental rights and duties and determine the division of advantages from social cooperation” (*Tj*, p.7).

One of the purposes of *Tj* is to derive principles of justice, and what Rawls means by principles of justice are those that ‘free and rational persons concerned to further their own interests would accept in an initial position of equality [namely the ‘original position’]’ (1971, p. 10). Rawls deprives the participants in the original position of their knowledge of status, talents, and what is good. And by doing so he puts them behind a veil of ignorance (1971, § 24, p.136). Because of the lack of personal information—such as personal goals—the participants cannot be self-motivated and therefore must consider everybody’s interest. This situation ensures the condition of fairness.

Rawls (1971, §11) proposes two principles of justice that would be adopted in the original position:

**First principle:** Each person has a right to the most extensive basic liberties compatible with similar liberty for all.

**Second principle:** Social and economic inequalities are justified if and only if they are both **(a)** to the greatest benefit of the least advantaged and **(b)** attached to positions open to all under conditions of fair equality of opportunity.

The two principles altogether are to be understood as the *special conception*. More importantly, they are to be ordered lexically (1971, p.61); the first principle, namely the principle of priority of liberty, is to take precedence over the second principle. The second principle contains what is famously known as the difference principle; a principle that requires the greatest benefit to the least advantaged. Rawls also provides a *general conception* in which he requires “all social primary goods—liberty and opportunity, income and wealth, and the bases of self-respect— to be distributed equally unless an unequal distribution of any or all of these goods is to the advan-

tage of the least favoured”<sup>7</sup> (1971, p. 303). Rawls notes that “the general conception is simply the difference principle applied to all primary goods,” and he also notes that the general conception will eventually assume the form of the special conception as social conditions improve (1971, p.83).<sup>8</sup>

Rawls’ contractarian theory of justice is crucial to my thesis because it demonstrates, on a conceptual level, how a structure of social justice can take shape. Rawls provides a conception of an egalitarian theory of justice designed to demand a fair/just structure in which citizens are guaranteed equality of opportunity, and equality of liberty. As such, his theory is useful in understanding some of the features of egalitarian justice. The difference principle (especially the general conception) is also significant to my thesis as it provides a model of distributive justice. Rawls’ theory is indeed a very useful *point of departure* in understanding what might be required in developing an account of egalitarian global justice.

Note that I consider Rawls’ theory as a point of departure because in regards to my interest in the content of an account of egalitarian principles of global justice, Rawls’ theory is not particularly helpful. In *TJ*, Rawls is not too concerned with what we owe to human beings all across the globe. The best indication of what Rawls thinks about other people outside the confines of a particular nation-state in *TJ* is in §58. The section is mostly, but not entirely, concerned with a plausible global original position in regards to matters of *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello*. What I consider to be particularly interesting in §58 is the way in which Rawls (1971, p.378) views contracting parties in the extended, global original position as “representatives of different nations who must choose together the fundamental principles to adjudicate conflicting claims among states.” Charles Beitz (1985, p. 285) conjectures that Rawls assumes nation-states to be “largely self-sufficient, but not entirely self-contained.” What is most curious is Rawls’ (1971, §58) statement that each nation-state has equal fundamental rights, such as the right of self-determination, and of self defence.<sup>9</sup> The premise of the fundamental rights of nations seems indicative that, for Rawls, foreign policies are primarily devices to protect national interests; not a device to further an egalitarian global cause.<sup>10</sup>

There have been attempts made to extend Rawls’ original position beyond what he originally intends it to be in *TJ* so as to make it applicable at a global

scope. Beitz (1979, p.151), for example, argues that the economic and cultural links that currently prevail in the world ought to imply that there exist a scheme of social cooperation at the global arena, and consequently national boundaries should not be morally significant for they “are not coextensive with the scope of social cooperation.” Thomas Pogge (1989) takes a similar position with Beitz. For Pogge “any comprehensive social system has a basic structure and thus falls within the purview of Rawls’ conception of justice” (Pogge 1989, p. 24). Pogge, along with Beitz, consider the prevailing global socio-economic cooperation as a strong case for making Rawls principles of justice universally applicable. In other words, the current socio-economic order is deemed sufficient to generate a global difference principle whereby we are required to ensure that the position of the least advantaged people of the world is to their greatest benefit. It can be said that the impetus behind Pogge’s and Beitz’s extensions/modifications of Rawls’ basic structure is their cosmopolitan perspective.

## 4.2 The Cosmopolitans

Cosmopolitanism is by no means a monolith. As Charles Beitz (2005, p. 17) notes, “The adjective ‘cosmopolitan’ can be applied to many kinds of things—for example, to schemes of world political order and conceptions of individual cultural identity.” For the purpose of this report the kind of cosmopolitanism discussed is the one that holds that the foundational unit of moral concern are individuals all across the globe. Indeed, the idea of cosmopolitanism (in the context of political philosophy) is not novel. It traces as far back as ancient Greece, and it also comprises of a number of kinds of differing conceptions.<sup>11</sup> With respect to contemporary conception of cosmopolitanism in political philosophy—the version I am concerned with in this report—, a distinction can be drawn between the *strong* version and the *weak* version.

Brock and Brighouse (2005, p.3), borrowing from Scheffler (2001) and Caney (1999), clarify the distinction between *weak* cosmopolitans and *strong* cosmopolitans. The former hold that there are *some*, moral extra-national obligations, whereas the latter believe that *all* kinds of principles of justice that applies domestically should as well apply globally. In this report I will only present the strong version of

cosmopolitanism, as it is in my opinion that strong cosmopolitans provide better example of the greater extent of global scope of justice.

Thomas Pogge's (2002, 2004, 2005a) argument for a global economic reform is an example of a strong version of cosmopolitanism. Pogge (2004, p. 266) argues that world poverty can be understood as instance of *radical inequality*, a concept he borrows from Thomas Nagel (1977).<sup>12</sup> As such, Pogge (2004) offers a reform on property rights, by proposing a system of distributive taxation scheme he terms Global Resources Dividend (GRD) that will annually generate an impressive amount of international reserve fund that can be used to improve, inter alia, researches in poverty-affiliated diseases, and ensure that the global poor can meet their basic needs<sup>13</sup>.

Another example of a strong cosmopolitan would be Peter Singer. Singer's (1972), argument is based on two premises:

1. Suffering, in this case starvation, is a bad thing.
2. If we can prevent something bad from happening without sacrificing something of comparable moral significance we ought do so.<sup>14</sup>

Based on the second premise Singer believes that we have a moral obligation to prevent something bad, such as starvation from happening, wheresoever it occurs. It does not matter who is suffering, and where they are geographically, if the suffering can be prevented we ought do so. Singer's principles are indeed very demanding. It requires one to give up to the point that giving more would mean bringing oneself to deprivation. One might be justifiably concerned with Singer's approach as it is focused on individual conduct, instead of institutional obligations. While it is true that Singer's argument is isolated in terms of what an individual ought to do to other individuals<sup>15</sup>, as Charles Beitz (1979b) once noted, granted that Singer's famine relief argument "pays little attention to institutional factors in the distribution of food, [however,] his argument could easily accommodate them."

Another alternatively strong cosmopolitan argument is that of Onora O'Neill's. O'Neill in the *Bounds of Justice* (2000) focuses on our duties to each other in understanding trans-national justice, instead of the content of our entitlements. She (O'Neill 2000, pp.191-97) advances a *practical* moral obligations, i.e., obligations

that arises from the assumptions that we make as we interact with one another. She (O'Neill 200, p.196) asserts that “if we owe justice (or other forms of moral concern) to all whose capacities to act, experience and suffer we take for granted in acting, we will owe it to strangers as well as to familiars, and to distant strangers as well as those who are near at hand.” A practical approach so construed does not specify who is entitled to justice, but rather to whom one owes justice in acting a certain way. One must therefore be implicated in a discourse with other agents, and as such one is required to act justly. O'Neill as a good Kantian acknowledges the primacy of the duty to not use persons as mere means—by avoiding coercive conduct, or violating consent—and to treat each other as ends—by furthering humanity. In other words, for a Kantian, to be just is to refrain from violating other persons, and to be beneficent in fostering each other's humanity (1999, p. 549).

The cosmopolitan theories I've illustrated above substantially vary in terms what ought to be the content of our obligations to our fellow human beings. Pogge focuses his attention in poverty alleviation, and what steps can be, and ought to be done with respect to helping the global poor. Singer focuses on the badness of suffering and what we ought to do in order to reduce the amount of suffering and thus advance the overall welfare of human beings. O'Neill emphasis is on what we owe to our fellow human beings with whom we engage in activities, and thus we are demanded to pay equal consideration to those we (consciously/subconsciously) assume as active agents. Admittedly, with respect to egalitarian principles of justice, Rawls' conception of justice as fairness is the one with proper relevance—as Rawls is concerned with equal liberty and opportunity for all members of contracting parties. Nevertheless, the cosmopolitan theories illustrated above are still of importance to my thesis as they provide alternative accounts as to what content of justice ought to be implemented with respect to global justice per se. In the following subsection I will turn my attention to an alternative egalitarian approach to equality, to wit, Amartya Sen's capability approach.

### **4.3 Capability Approach**

In *Equality of What?* Sen (2006) asked the question: precisely what kind of equality should egalitarians concern themselves with? Sen specifically criticises Rawls' list of social primary goods for being too limiting. He writes, “If people were

basically very similar, then an index of primary goods might be quite a good way of judging advantage. But, in fact, people seem to have very different needs varying with health, longevity, work conditions, temperament, and even body size (affecting food and clothing requirements).” (2006, p.480) For Sen, Rawls’ characterisation of advantage in terms of what goods people possess signals a kind *goods fetishism* that systematically neglects the important side of the story, i.e., what people *actually* do with the goods. As Ingrid Robeyns (2005b, p. 35) points out, “Sen’s core claim is that goods are important not in themselves but in what their characteristics enable people to do and to be, that is, in the capabilities that a person can generate from these goods and services [hence the term capability approach].”

Indeed, with respect to egalitarianism, Sen is concerned with the space—the kind of equality—that we ought to consider. In his view, the space of equality must encapsulate the diversity of human needs. Consequently a proper theory of equality must take into account the relationship between the different evaluative spaces. Sen (1992, 1993, 2000, 2007) proposes to expand the limitation that arises from adopting a particular evaluative space, with the space of capability, to wit, the conglomeration of *functionings* that a person can choose. He refers to functionings as “various things that a person can do or be in leading a life” (1993, p.31). The term capability is just another way of describing the “substantive freedom to achieve alternative functioning combinations (or, less formally put, the freedom to achieve various lifestyles)” (Sen 1999, p.75). Consequently, the quality of a person’s life is to be examined based on her capability to achieve her desired functionings.

Sen claims that the capability approach is an agent-centred approach (1999, *xi-xiv*). In other words, for Sen, individuals are the foundational unit of assessment. As such, the diversity of human needs must factor in any assessment of human flourishing. I am highly sympathetic with the agent-centredness of Sen’s capability approach, and its relational account of evaluative spaces. As both features are precisely what differentiate Sen’s approach from other egalitarian approaches that are focused on a particular evaluative space—either liberty, resources, or primary goods.

Sen’s approach, however, is not without challenge. Sabina Alkire (2003, p.10-11) notes that Sen’s theory is incomplete. In *Development as Freedom* Sen (1999, p.10) offers five sorts of *instrumental* freedoms that, according to him, helps to advance

the general capability of a person; these freedoms are (1) political freedoms, (2) economic facilities, (3) social opportunities, (4) transparency guarantees, and (5) protective security.<sup>16</sup> As Alkire (2003, p.31) notes, Sen is concerned with “general concrete issues such as life expectancy, hunger and poverty.” As such, his *instrumental* freedoms are perhaps adequate. On the other hand, Alkire, who is concerned with practical applications of the capability approach in the field of human micro-economic development, claims that more work needs to be done so that one can identify whether a person’s capability set has improved. She (2003, p. 27) writes, “[I]n order to see whether the capability set, taken as a whole, has expanded or contracted, one needs to identify the valuable impacts a development initiative has—positive and negative, tangible and intangible, quantifiable and qualitative.” Alkire, is not however, seeking to generate a prescriptive account of capabilities, such as that of Nussbaum’s list of capabilities (2000a, pp.78-80). She is interested in developing a list of valuable capabilities without losing much of the intended flexibility/generality of the capability approach that Sen intends to maintain.

Now to return to the question of global justice, we must ask the question: how does the capability approach relate to global justice? I have to admit that with respect to Sen’s version of capability approach, the answer is unclear. On the one hand, in regards to the *scope* of the capability approach, it is evident that the approach concerns all human beings across the globe, as it is concerned with human development in general. On the other hand, however, it is unclear whether human development per se is substantially a matter of justice. Therefore, what kind of moral obligations can be said to arise in adopting the capability approach is up to question. One particular version of capability approach that has a clear tone in terms of its relevance to global justice is Martha Nussbaum’s. Nussbaum’s (2000b, p. 209-12) list of ten “central human capabilities” that, according to her, are derived from cross-cultural empirical research is compiled based on the understanding of what constitutes a human life. Consequently, failure to ensure the capabilities listed would imply a violation of the right to be human, and as such we have the normative pressure to help those who do not have access to central human capabilities listed. As for Sen’s capability approach, questions remain: do we have moral obligations to provide *instrumental* freedoms to all human beings across the world? If we

do, to what extent should we be involved in ensuring that the freedoms are guaranteed, and delivered? More importantly, who should be involved in the exercise?

Perhaps this is unfair to Sen since it was not in his intention to develop principles of global justice per se; rather he was interested in what can be done to advance human development in general. As I have stated in the introduction, borrowing from Robeyns (2005a), the capability approach provides a normative framework from which we can *evaluate* the wellbeing of individuals. But the keyword here is “normative” if the capability is indeed a normative framework for evaluation, should it not imply that the injustices seen from the standpoint of capability are inherently unjust—as an egalitarian would insist. Or should injustice, from the point of view of capability, be understood as rudimentary. This, however, doesn’t seem to be the case. Nevertheless, with the risk of being cumbersome, in regards to capability approach as a matter of justice, it remains unclear as to *who should be responsible to whom, and to what extent*.

## 5. Conclusion



We have seen in the above the complexity of the discussion with respect to the issue of the *scope* of egalitarian principles of global justice. As it turns out, national boundaries are not something that can be easily dismissed as morally arbitrary. And as such, it might be the case that we can defend the need to be partial to our co-nationals. The only requirement is that we have to be able justify the concern with which we will be partial. In determining the content of our obligations to strangers we are faced with the challenge to specify the precise *content* of our obligations in observing national boundaries, and human diversity. As it turns out, there are many things that can be taken into consideration in making our decisions—poverty, suffering, obligations to not harm, resources, among many others. With respect to constructing egalitarian principles of justice, our task becomes even more complex. In focusing on a particular evaluative space egalitarians are bound to adopt a parochial point of view that is not coherent with the reality that

human beings are diverse by nature. Egalitarians must therefore position themselves in an evaluative space that is sensitive to the diversity of needs. The space offered is the space of capability. The problem in adopting a capability approach in confronting the issue of global justice is that it is unclear as to whether or not the capability approach can be seen as a proper egalitarian approach to global justice. Simply put, it remains unclear as to what would constitute the *scope* and *content* of egalitarian capability approach to global justice. Perhaps, the next task is to understand global egalitarianism from the point of view of capability, or vice versa, to understand capability approach in light of global egalitarianism. In this regard, I see the merit to further pursue my inquiry in my honour's thesis.

## END NOTES

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<sup>1</sup> See International Monetary Fund (2007), *World Economic Outlook Report*, accessed from <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/weo/2007/02/index.htm>

<sup>2</sup> See United Nations Millennium Development Project, accessed 2007, [http://www.unmillenniumproject.org/resources/fastfacts\\_e.htm](http://www.unmillenniumproject.org/resources/fastfacts_e.htm)

<sup>3</sup> Richard Arneson (2002) notes that egalitarians are not necessarily people who insist that everybody has to be the same, or that everybody has to receive identical treatments. He writes, "An egalitarian might rather be one who maintains that people ought to be treated as equals--as possessing equal fundamental worth and dignity and as equally morally considerable." (Arneson, 2002)

<sup>4</sup> Even if we begin by assuming that state boundaries are irrelevant, and therefore should not be taken into consideration in determining the content of our obligations to one another, we have to still acknowledge the fact that state boundaries exist. And their existence should, at the very least, compel us to think about their relevance in our inquiry.

<sup>5</sup> What is meant by 'equal consideration' is a subject of disagreement amongst philosophers. The second section of this report illustrates the variety of views addressing that particular concern.

<sup>6</sup> It is not in my intention to undermine the concreteness of poverty and inequality. In other words, I am not disputing the fact that poverty and inequality exist. I am simply suggesting that poverty and inequality, as *concepts*, requires clarity.

<sup>7</sup> For Rawls, social primary goods are the type of goods that any rational person wants, and would need in order to obtain whatever end they so desire (1971, §15, p. 92). Amartya Sen (1992) in *Inequality Re-examined* criticises Rawls' particular categorisation for being too limiting.

<sup>8</sup> For an extensive discussion on the difference principle see Philippe Van Parijs (2003).

<sup>9</sup> Rawls would later expand his principles of "justice between free and democratic peoples" in *Law of Peoples* (2006). His stance on global affairs has incited reaction ranging from that of befuddlement to outright repulsion (Miller 2006, p.191).

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<sup>10</sup> Martin and Reidy (2006, p.6) emphasise that only later in the development of Law of Peoples (1999) did Rawls incorporate the duty of assistance to burdened societies. This appears to me as if Rawls is primarily adopting quasi-hobbesian outlook of conduct between nations. To Hobbes we human beings are essentially self-interested, war-mongering species. Hobbes (1991, p.168-169) candidly writes in *Man and Citizen* that “the tongue of man is a trumpet of war and sedition.” Indeed, for Hobbes the reason behind the formulation of social contract is man’s rational desire to avoid hacking each other off by forming a civil community.

<sup>11</sup> For more on the chronicle of cosmopolitan thought see Pauline Kleingeld and Eric Brown (2006).

<sup>12</sup> Nozick in *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* advances an important distinction between a historical principles of justice and a time-splice principles of justice (1974, p.153). Rawls’ theory of justice is presumably the latter, and for this reason is not acceptable to Nozick who prefers the former, historical principles of justice. For libertarian Nozick, just acquisition characterised by just steps equals just holdings. Therefore the idea redistribution of holdings ought to be wrong, if the holdings are acquired in just terms. Bypassing Nozick, and differing from Rawls, Pogge offers a historical account of distributive justice that relies on his premise that (1) grave injustices has been committed in the past, and (2) we have a duty to avoid causing harm.

<sup>13</sup> For an elaboration on Pogge’s health research proposition see Pogge (2005b).

<sup>14</sup> I’m using Singer’s Strong version of the argument, the weak version simply does not contain the word ‘comparable’.

<sup>15</sup> Singer (2004) would later expand the scope of his argument in his book titled *One World: the Ethics of Globalisation* where he systematically lays out the contentious issues surrounding climate change and humanitarian aid, and specifies what ought to be done in both governmental and individual

<sup>16</sup> The *instrumental* freedoms Sen favours bear resemblance to Rawls’ principles of justice, perhaps the most distinguishable difference is that Sen does not order his list of freedoms lexically as Rawls does with his priority of liberty. This is perhaps because Sen (1992, p. 21-2) views the notion of equality and liberty as intertwined, as opposed to the conventional libertarian view of liberty as prior to equality.

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