

Global Justice: A European Perspective

Sophie Papaefthymiou, PhD
Professor of Law

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The globalization of economic exchanges and the universalization of risk have challenged the classical theories of justice and democracy, meant to apply to small communities, and have caused a paradigm change in the field of political and social theory.

Contemporary global issues, like climate change, global risk, poverty and migration, have required transnational and international legal regulation and public policies. In theory, they have given way to new conceptions of justice, democracy, sovereignty, citizenship and human rights, which are assumed to be adequate to the new international political order. Global justice, deliberative democracy, cosmopolitan citizenship, universal human rights, “multicultural rights”, “the rights of others”, are some of the concepts used by political theorists to describe the current situation.

Among the new concepts and constructions, many have proved to be controversial, including the relationship between the concepts of justice and democracy, of particularism and cosmopolitanism, of equality and difference.

Under the influence of John Rawls’ and the utilitarian philosopher Peter Singer’s writings as early as in the 1970’s, political philosophers engaged in a debate on global justice. This debate opposed the “globalists”, defenders of global distributive justice by means of a cosmopolitan theory, to the “statists”, “strong” or “weak”, who sustain that justice requires an institutional frame and such a frame does not exist outside of the nation-state. Within the defenders of global distributive justice, “egalitarians” are opposed to the so called “sufficientarians”.

Instead of the “re-distributive ideal”, certain theorists of global justice suggest an institutional reform, namely a reform of the institutions which have caused an unfair distribution of resources.

Global justice theories are criticized for overlooking the causes of injustice and for focusing only on its symptoms and on the moral justification of the duty of assistance.

They are criticized also for being “parochial” (Amartya Sen): most of the participants in the debate on global justice are Western philosophers who do not take into consideration views from other parts of the world. Amartya Sen enriches the debate by proposing a theory of “capabilities”, which he contrasts with “resource” theories

of justice. Following Sen's suggestion, contemporary philosophers attempt a "de-parochialization" of the debate (see Maffettone and Aakash Singh Rathore).

Further criticism to the theories of distributive justice emanates from the theories of "justice of recognition". It is claimed that "recognition" and "representation" of human beings within a domestic political community as well as in international relations are the necessary complements to a fair distribution of resources (see Taylor, Honneth, Fraser).

A peaceful, cosmopolitan world regime would be the culmination of a political process which was suggested by Imm. Kant at the end of the 18th century. Kant defended a project of perpetual peace among nations and emphasized the need to avoid the creation of a world state.

Contemporary cosmopolitans consider the European Union as a transition to a cosmopolitan regime, insofar as it will evolve to a political entity (see J. Habermas). Meanwhile, the European Union has adopted policies of global justice: these are policies about the "global public goods" in the context of international efforts to achieve sustainable development. Global public goods "can be classified into five main types: environment, health, knowledge, peace and security, and governance". Special measures are taken in order to handle migration and poverty and to protect the world's cultural heritage.

The scope of the course is to give an overview of the main theories and of the European policies in the field of global justice. Students may present a collective work on a European policy of global justice. They will be evaluated on the basis of active participation in the seminars and/or a final written assignment.

It will be presented in a series of twelve (12) classes, as follows:

Class 1: Introduction

I. The Theories of Global Justice

Class 2: Liberalism

Class 3: Cosmopolitanism

Class 4: Neo-Republicanism - Global Republicanism

Class 5: Multiculturalism

Class 6: Theories of Justice of Recognition

II. The European Policies

Class 7: Environment - climate change - global risks

Class 8: Global poverty – migrations

Class 9: Economic crisis - pandemic

Class 10: Humanitarian Intervention - Just Wars - Terrorism.

Class 11: Cultural heritage

Class 12: European Animal Welfare. Global Animal Law

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