Introduction

Justice in the world economy: global or international, or both?[1]

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With this issue *International Affairs* celebrates its 75th anniversary. While the world into which it was born has changed astonishingly and tumultuously, many of the issues debated in the pages of *International Affairs* today would have been at least broadly familiar to interested readers in 1922 when it began (the journal was not printed for some of the Second World War years). States after all still jostle for power and influence though they certainly do so in different ways; wars and insurrections abound; and the impact of the world economy on the destiny of nations is clear and omnipresent.

But, of course, there are differences too. Among the most important is the growing sense that questions of justice are now central to debates about the world economy and, given the increasing centrality of this in all forms of politics, therefore to world politics more generally. This growing recognition has led to a very considerable literature on international justice, beginning in its

[1] Most of the articles that make up this issue were initially presented at a workshop on 'Justice and the global economy' held at the University of Warwick, 12/13 February 1999. The workshop was part of a continuing project on that topic organized through the Carnegie Council for Ethics and International Affairs (CCEIA), the St Andrews University Institute for Research on Emerging Policy Processes and the ESRC/Warwick Centre for the Study of Globalisation and Regionalisation (CSGR). Funding and sponsorship from the ESRC and the Carnegie Council is gratefully and duly acknowledged. The organizers of the workshop (myself, Richard Higgott and Richard Devetak) would like to thank Jill Southam, administrative officer at the Warwick Centre for administrative and organizational support, and Robin Hodess, CCEIA Program Officer on the project at Merrill House, New York. We would also like to thank all those who attended the conference but did not directly present papers: Simon Caney, Nigel Dower, Andrew Hurrell, Mark Imber, Peter Lawler, Stephanie Lawson, Onora O'Neill, Matthew Patterson, Kate Raeworth, Andy Reeve, Jim Rollo, Bob van der Veen and especially Stephen Toulmin whose opening lecture, developed from his 1998 Tanner lectures at the University of Cambridge, gave the conference a splendid start. We are also grateful to Caroline Soper, Editor of *International Affairs,* who expressed enthusiasm for the project from the beginning.

Thanks are also due to Joel Rosenthal, President of the CCEIA, whose enthusiasm for this project never wavered and whose agreement that we might develop it as a joint project has largely made it possible; and to Richard Higgott, who put the CSGR resources behind the project and has been invariably helpful and supportive.

[2] For some of the most significant contributions see Charles Beitz, *Political theory and international relations* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1979, 2nd edn, forthcoming 1999); Henry Shue, *Basic rights* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980, 2nd edn 1996), Onora O'Neill, *Faces of hunger* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1986); Brian Barry, 'Humanity and justice in global perspective', in *Democracy, power and justice* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1991); Thomas W. Pogge, *Realizing Rawls* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989). For good recent discussions which take the arguments further see Chris Brown, 'International social justice', in D. Boucher and P. Kekke, eds, *Perspectives on social justice* (London: Routledge, 1998); and

modern form in the mid-1970s and increasing rapidly thereafter.[3] The project that led to this special issue was launched not only with a view to developing and, it is to be hoped, expanding this already considerable literature but also perhaps to emphasize its centrality not just to those who are already inclined towards it (in, say, philosophy and political theory) but also to those who have a professional interest, as they say, in the evolution of the international system; principally, scholars and practitioners in international relations and international political economy.

There is no need to 'introduce' the papers. They will speak for themselves. However, among other things they indicate the extent to which there are already differences among advocates of greater justice in the global economy. Those who do advocate redistribution in the global economy as a matter of justice are often called 'cosmopolitans', in recognition of the claims many of them make concerning our duties (of justice at least) to others who are not our fellow countrymen. However, roughly speaking we may divide these advocates up (borrowing a phrase of Michael Walzer's) as 'thick' and 'thin' cosmopolitans.[4] Thick cosmopolitans (for example, Shue, Beitz and Bohman below) tend to believe that individuals are the primary bearers of rights and duties and that matters of justice are matters of justice to individuals. Social institutions (such as states) have only a second order and functional role on these accounts. Thin cosmopolitans, by contrast (for example, Armstrong, Devetak and Higgott) would accept a rather stronger role for groups and for artificial persons as bearers of rights and duties.

It is not the job of this introduction to try and argue the toss between these two views. However, it might perhaps be useful at the outset to consider two possible *objections* to the project as a whole, which might come from the two most dominant approaches within the academic study of international relations, but which also tend to be the two dominant frameworks policy-makers, at least in many countries, oscillate between.

The first objection, and the most 'traditional', is familiar to students of political realism of whatever time or context. Although able to be expressed in various forms, it comes down to the claim that 'justice'—and certainly distributive justice—can only properly be a concern once there is a settled hierarchy of social goods and ends, within which argument about appropriate allocations can take place. Such a settled situation, however, is absent in the anarchical international system where Hobbes's twins, 'force and fraud' still rule. As a number of the contributors to this special issue point out, this view of contemporary international politics is clearly disputed (see especially the arguments of Beitz, Bohman and Linklater below), but even if it is true that

Ethan Kapstein, 'A global third way: social justice and the world economy', in *World Policy Journal* 15: 4, Winter 1998/9; Charles Beitz, 'International liberalism and distributive justice', in *World Politics* 51: 2, January 1999.

[3] Michael Walzer, *Thick and thin: moral argument at home and abroad* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1994).

international politics does not have a 'settled' hierarchy, it is perfectly possible to argue that it does have a set of broadly agreed rules (expressed through international agreements, international organizations etc.) which is all that is required for justice to be a *concern*—though of course how prominent a concern and how effectively realized is another matter—few would, after all, deny that force and fraud still do play a large role in politics *tout court*.

The second objection, less familiar but, especially in the contemporary context perhaps even more powerful, is rooted in the (neo-liberal) economic framework dominant in today's world economy. Here the claim would be that to seek to develop 'justice' in the contemporary global context would, of necessity, mean intervening in market structures best left free and unrestricted. Just as this framework assumes that within the context of any individual society it is the elimination of regulations and controls that will lead to greater prosperity for all, it argues that the world economy should be minimally regulated, so as to create the maximum possible freedom for goods, investment and capital. Here, then, the argument is not that a concern for 'international or global justice' is effectively a category mistake (the realist objection), rather it is to claim that justice will in any event be impossible without wealth creation and that wealth creation globally requires the absence of the sorts of interventionary policy necessary to at least a strong notion of distributive justice.

A variety of responses to this view, explicit or implicit, can be found in what follows. For now let me emphasize that this view effectively already recognizes justice to be a legitimate concern, but offers reasons for trumping it in the current context, However, these reasons are themselves arguable. Obviously, those committed to a 'thick' cosmopolitan view of justice will necessarily contest them, but even those committed to thin cosmopolitanism will want to contest some of them as well. The fact of the contest, at least within societies broadly committed to liberal politics, is clear enough evidence of the importance of the question.

Of course, this does not mean that advocates of justice in the global economy will agree. As we have seen, debates already exist between 'thick' and 'thin' cosmopolitans across a range of issues. Among the intentions of the project which gave rise to this special issue is to probe the parameters of this debate and to see where they might effectively align in terms of specific issue areas or policies in today's world economy. Much of that, of course, will have to await later workshops. But a number of possibilities are apparent in the articles below. In any event, discussing the scope, practicality, institutional and political implications and potentiality of international and/or global justice is clearly likely to be a growth industry in the next century as the conditions that have led to the contemporary discussion become ever more important. A good enough reason for *International Affairs* to signal its first seventy-five years with a special issue devoted to a theme that will increasingly come to dominate its next seventy five.