

Global Justice Must Be Seen To Be Done – A Defense of Integrated Pluralism

Abstract

Over the past two decades the academic literature on global distributive justice has generated a proliferation of positions regarding the question of how to conceive a globally just distribution of goods. One important development within this global justice debate is the emergence and increasing influence of several Pluralist theorists of global justice – including, perhaps most prominently, Fraser, R. Miller, and Risse. This article argues that Pluralists have not yet sufficiently engaged with the difficulty of how their conceptions of global justice could satisfy the publicity condition. This condition requires that the demands of justice must be publicly known to be recognized and fulfilled. This article explains why meeting this condition is especially difficult for the Pluralists. Then, it outlines an Integrated Pluralist position which, by placing special emphasis on global background justice, can meet the publicity condition. This position “integrates” concerns of justice emerging from a plurality of sites of justice. Thereby it follows “Integrationist” approaches to global justice – like those of Caney and Walton – which claim that the contents of justice of a given site of justice must not be determined in isolation from the grounds and contents of other sites of justice.

Keywords

Global distributive justice; publicity; John Rawls; pluralism; integrationism

Introduction

Over the past two decades the academic literature on global distributive justice has generated a proliferation of positions regarding the question of how to conceive a globally just distribution of goods. Many of these positions can still be placed into one of two camps, depending on whether they affirm that

some egalitarian principles of distributive justice apply among all individuals globally or only among co-citizens.¹ Globalists affirm the former and now include Practice-Dependent and Humanity-Based Globalists (Beitz 1999; Pogge 1989; Moellendorf 2002; Tan 2004; Caney 2005).² By contrast, Statists endorse the latter and include Strong as well as Weak or International Statists (Blake 2001; Nagel 2005).³ To clarify, the Practice-Dependent and Humanity-Based Globalists conceive global distributive justice as a relationship among all individuals globally. Strong Statists understand it as a relationship among citizens within a state. And Weak or Internationalist Statist conceptualize it as relationship among states and among citizens.⁴ In addition to the diversification and refinement of the Globalist and Statist positions, another important development within the global justice debate is the emergence and increasing influence of several Pluralist theorists of global justice – including, perhaps most prominently, Fraser (2009), R. Miller (2010), and Risse (2012).⁵

These Pluralists have taken up the insight of the Weak or Internationalist Statists that justice can refer to more than just one relationship and argue for recognizing an even greater *plurality* of distinctive ‘sites’ of distributive justice – that is, distinct populations of individual or collective actors to which specific requirements of distributive justice apply. For example, the European Union and its citizens may count as a site of justice to which a distinct ‘content’ of justice may apply. Therefore, Pluralists can hold, for example, that *egalitarian* requirements apply to the relations between citizens, whereas *sufficiency* requirements apply to the relations between states, given that the two sites contain different ‘grounds’ that are relevant from the perspective of justice. For instance, these grounds may refer to reciprocal relations among citizens and pervasive impact among states. Pluralists hold that there need not be only two sites with two corresponding grounds of justice. The transnational relations among EU citizens might also ‘trigger’ distinct demands of justice, such as political rights to participation in EU decision-making. Thereby Pluralists, different from Strong as well as Weak or International Statists, recognize that relationships among non-state actors like EU citizens and the EU institutions, may also constitute distinct

sites with specific grounds and contents of justice. Thus, they can be labelled as *Transnational* Pluralists.⁶ They represent a new camp of global justice theorists: they do not only recognize a greater plurality of grounds, sites, and contents of justice than the other two camps, but also view sub-global transnational relationships beyond the state as giving rise to problems of justice. DeBres (2012: 338) suggests that further developing these Pluralist conceptions “*is where the interesting future work lies*” in the global justice debate.

This article argues that Pluralists have not yet sufficiently engaged with the difficulty of how their conceptions of global justice could satisfy the publicity condition. This condition requires that the demands of justice must be publicly known to be recognized and fulfilled. This article begins by explaining why meeting this condition is especially difficult for the Pluralists. Then, it outlines an Integrated Pluralist position which, by placing special emphasis on global background justice, can meet the publicity condition. Critically analyzing how a conception of global justice could fulfill the publicity condition is of fundamental importance for conceptualizing justice in the contemporary world. This is because, as Waldron (1987: 146) explains, publicity is a necessary condition for the validity of a conception of justice:

People should know and understand the reasons for the basic distribution of wealth, power, authority and freedom. Society should not be shrouded in mystery, and its workings should not have to depend on mythology, mystification, or a “noble lie”.

Notably, this article does not argue for the superiority of Pluralism vis-à-vis the other major conceptions of global justice such as Humanity-Based Globalism, Practice-Dependent Globalism, Strong Statism, and Weak or Internatoinalist Statism. Instead, it takes for granted the validity of Pluralism and seeks to further advance this conception of global justice by way of proposing Integrated Pluralism as a way in which Pluralism can fulfill the publicity condition. For that purpose, the article is structured as follows. First, the article identifies three structural features of Pluralism by way of analyzing the Pluralist conceptions of R. Miller, Fraser, and Risse, which represent either the most elaborate (R. Miller and Risse)

or the earliest (Fraser) conceptions of Pluralism. Following that, based on Rawls's articulation of the publicity condition, the article explains how to understand this condition and its importance in the context of theorizing global justice. Then, this article shows why, given their structural features, the existing conceptions of Pluralism have difficulties to satisfy this condition. Finally, the article presents an Integrated Pluralist conception that meets this condition, namely by way of including an account of global background justice that serves as focal point for the publicity of global justice. This account "integrates" concerns of justice emerging from a plurality of sites of justice. Thereby it follows "Integrationist" approaches to global justice – like those of Caney (2012) and Walton (2020) – which claim that the contents of justice of a given site of justice must not be determined in isolation from the grounds and contents of other sites of justice.⁷ Different from Caney, however, the Integrated Pluralism that this article defends includes "integrationist" principles of background global justice, while allowing for an Isolationist approach for distinct sites of justice on the condition that background global justice is realized.⁸

Pluralistic theories of global justice

Pluralistic theorists recognize that there are multiple grounds of justice which give rise to the validity of various contents of justice within manifold sites of justice. Different from the Strong as well as Weak or International Statists, they explicitly argue in favor of recognizing further requirements of justice beyond those that are valid among co-citizens within states, among all individuals globally, or between states. A case in point is the existence of distinct requirements of justice within the EU that many Statists neither recognize nor mention.⁹ Indeed, some theorists who refer to themselves as Weak or International Statists might recognize that such *transnational* requirements are valid within the context of the EU. However, it is a stretch to assume that these Statists could affirm these as well as other such transnational requirements of global justice, e.g. those between multinational corporations and geographically dispersed workers, without admitting that such recognition turns their Statist position into a

(Transnational) Pluralist position in which states are no longer the most central sites of global justice. This is why it is appropriate to dub the Pluralist position as Transnational Pluralism. It represents a perspective that is not centered around the state and regards sub-global transnational relations, comprising non-state actors, as potentially triggering concerns of justice.

The remainder of this section identifies and illustrates three structural features of Pluralist conceptions of global justice: (1) they are *complex* because they usually recognize at least five grounds, contents, and sites of justice; (2) they are *indeterminate* because they do not set an upper limit but allow for an evolving number of grounds, contents, and sites of justice; (3) they are *fragmented* because they do not clarify systematically how the multiple grounds, contents, and sites of justice relate to one another. This section reconstructs these features by way of synthesizing the Pluralist positions of R. Miller, Fraser and Risse, who represent either the pioneer (Fraser) or most sophisticated proponents (R. Miller, Risse) of Pluralism.

Miller's (2011: 228) 'quasi-cosmopolitan' conception of global justice identifies not just one or two, but a 'panoply of relevant interactions' that ground distinct contents of justice in various sites. For one, Miller (2011: 40) holds that the moral relevance of the 'shared political life' within well-functioning states gives rise to a variety of political duties vis-à-vis disadvantaged co-citizens. He (Miller 2011: 43) contends that the existence of the modern state is only acceptable to all citizens on the condition that they all comply with 'duties of civic friendship' that guarantee a 'fair provision of benefits, [and the] mitigation of socially created disadvantage.' The other 'relevant interactions' that Miller identifies include trans- and international systems of production, trade and finance. In these systems there is a danger that the more powerful parties – such as corporations and richer countries – take advantage of the neediness of the weaker parties – such as workers and poorer countries. Miller (2011: 62, 68) claims that this gives rise to obligations of justice of the richer parties to direct some of their advantages towards overcoming the needs of the weaker ones. In addition, Miller (2011, 103) argues that because of the dangerous effects

brought about by greenhouse gas emissions of citizens of the wealthy countries of the Global North, these citizens possess justice-based duties of due care and cooperation for regulating climate change. Finally, Miller (2011: 209) argues, most of these citizens from the Global North must also comply with further duties of global justice due to their complicity in the American Empire. These are duties of political justice to respect the autonomy of those subject to imperial power and to compensate the victims of imperial excess. Notably, Miller does not limit the grounds, contents, and sites of global justice to these five. Rather, he leaves it open as to whether there may be additional ones. Furthermore, he does not specify the systematic relationship between these five grounds, sites, and contents of justice.

Within Fraser's (2009: 28, 65, 95-6) theory of 'postwestphalian democratic justice', it is an 'all-subjected principle' that entails pluralism about global justice. According to this principle, Fraser (2009: 66) claims, 'joint subjection to a governance structure' demarcates a site of justice. Since there are multiple governance structures of this kind on the local, national, regional and global levels, it follows that there are manifold sites of justice as well. Furthermore, different contents of justice are deemed valid within these various sites because on Fraser's (2009: 96) account all those who are members of a particular site of justice must themselves validate site-specific contents of justice through discursive political justifications in which they 'participate as peers.' Fraser (2009: 5) emphasizes the existence of multiple sites of justice within 'novel forms of "intermestic" politics' situated in between truly global – in the sense of all-encompassing – and strictly domestic affairs. Such 'intermestic politics,' Fraser (2009: 14, fn. 4-9) clarifies, includes dealing with multinational firms and transnational investors that avoid national taxation, as well as the struggles of transnational feminist movements and diaspora communities. Furthermore, Fraser's Pluralist conception maintains that the 'all-subjected principle' in combination with the idea of an intersubjective validation of contents of justice neither determines how many grounds, contents, and sites of justice there are, nor sets an upper limit to their number. Instead, their exact number is open and can evolve dynamically. In addition, their systematic relationship to one another is left undetermined.

Similarly, Risse's (2012: 2) '*pluralistic internationalism*' fails to determine the systematic relation between the five sites, grounds, and contents of justice that it recognizes. Furthermore, it is also not committed to the view that these are the only ones there are. In contrast to Miller's and Fraser's theories that only contain relational grounds, however, two of his grounds are non-relational – to wit, common humanity and earth ownership. Common humanity commands that a limited set of human rights must be recognized so as to satisfy the needs and secure sufficient agency of all human beings. Accepting the validity of this content of global justice does not require any reference to associations like the liberal state, which is why the ground of this content is non-relational. Furthermore, Risse (2012: 113-5) argues that all human beings should have an equal opportunity to satisfy basic needs to the extent that this turns on using collectively owned resources. In addition, Risse defends state-membership, membership in the global institutional order, and subjection to the international trading system as relational grounds of global justice. They correspond to these contents of justice: citizens' fair share of primary goods as determined by Rawls's difference principle (Risse 2012: 24-31); membership rights in the global institutional order that command that everyone can enjoy the rights based on common ownership of the earth (Risse 2012: 134-45); and gains from trade that must neither be generated by the violation of human rights nor fall below the value of the contributions made in order to produce and provide exported goods and services (Risse 2012: 272).

Before explaining how the three structural features of Pluralism – complexity, indeterminacy, and fragmentation – render it difficult for Pluralist conceptions of global justice to fulfill the publicity condition, the next section will clarify the meaning and importance of this condition.

The understanding and importance of the publicity condition

Most political philosophers who are working in the liberal and social contractualist traditions recognize that satisfying a publicity condition is an essential feature of conceptualizing justice. Publicity is a central

feature of these traditions because they demand that those who are expected to comply with certain principles must be able to consent to, or view as justified, these principles. Put differently, if the principles must be justifiable to those persons to whom they apply, then a condition of their validity is that they are publicly known by those persons. Since the Pluralist theorists belong to the liberal and social contractualist traditions, it is surprising that the question of how the Pluralist conceptions fulfill a publicity condition has not yet been asked.¹⁰

We now turn to Rawls' conceptualization of the publicity condition, since he provided a particularly clear formulation of this condition. Rawls (2001: 121; 2005: 66-71) distinguishes three levels of publicity that are individually necessary and jointly sufficient conditions for a theory of justice to count as public. The first level, Rawls (2001: 121) specifies, consists in 'the mutual recognition by citizens of the principles of justice together with the public knowledge (or reasonable belief) that the institutions of the basic structure actually satisfy these principles.' The second level involves knowledge of the facts based upon which the principles of justice have been deemed justified. Finally, the third level refers to the knowledge of the entire justification for adopting a conception of justice. This knowledge is not only factual, but also includes normative reasons. This article employs solely the first of these three levels to criticize the existing Pluralist positions.

Notably, this first level contains a *cognitive* and an *assurance* component. The cognitive component says that it should be public knowledge that all recognize certain contents of justice. That is, everyone should know that everyone knows that everyone is affirming certain requirements of justice. The assurance component requires that it should be public knowledge that everyone – when complying with a certain content of justice – is reasonably assured that all others (or nearly all others) likewise comply.

Now, why does it matter that a theory of justice fulfills a publicity condition? According to Rawls (1971: 586), 'respect for persons is shown by treating them in ways that they can see to be justified.'

Persons, to be treated with respect, should be able to accept a certain justification for our behavior as valid. Likewise, social institutions express respect to their members when they rest on principles whose contents their members can find justifiable. This basic idea of what it means for persons and institutions to show respect to persons is inextricably tied to a publicity condition. The cognitive component of the publicity condition asks that it should become common knowledge that the content of justice is accepted by all, and thus requires that this content is formulated in a way that everyone is able to comprehend.

Second, a publicity condition is part and parcel of a public justification of justice, which is all-important given the reasonable disagreement as to which conception of justice is best justified (Rawls 2001: 33).¹¹ Theorists of public justification therefore hold that the ultimate, but still fallible, validation of a conception of justice consists in a public justification in which all (or nearly all) persons affirm the validity of a particular conception of justice and know that all (or nearly all) others affirm it as well. The fact of reasonable pluralism thus urges us to refrain from accepting the validity of a conception of justice simply because we individually achieved what Rawls (2001: 31) calls 'wide reflective equilibrium', that is, a coherent conception of justice that emerges from a critical analysis of a range of alternative conceptions of justice and the moral theories that support them. Instead, theorists of justice must 'hand over' the testing of a particular conception of justice to the public. It is necessary to achieve what Rawls (2001: 31) calls 'full reflective equilibrium', which combines wide reflective equilibrium with the 'general reflective equilibrium' that arises once (nearly all) 'citizens recognize that they affirm the same public conception of political justice.'

Finally, the importance of a publicity condition is based on its role in establishing an egalitarian relationship. The publicity of a conception of justice enables, Lister (2013) argues, the expression of 'a relationship of mutual recognition as equals.' Larmore (2002: 370) articulates this 'point' as follows:

'The point is that just as the validity of a contract does not turn solely on the terms agreed to, but also on the fact of agreement, so justice consists in more than the proper

distribution of rights and assets. Principles of justice should also be public, each of us affirming them in light of the fact that others affirm them too.¹²

The importance of ‘the fact of agreement’ derives from the egalitarian relationship brought about by the mutual recognition of the contents of justice. This mutual recognition manifests that people view each other as equals who are willing to do their part if others are willing to do their part in an ongoing project of maintaining justice.

In sum, the importance of the publicity of a conception of justice is tied to these three roles that it enables a theory of justice to fulfill in practice: It guarantees the possibility that social institutions express respect; it facilitates a public justification of a conception of justice; and it ensures the possibility of mutual recognition as equals. Rawls (2005: 9, my emphasis) highlights this practical import of the possible publicity of his conception of justice as fairness as follows: ‘The aim of justice as fairness ... is *practical*: it presents itself as a conception of justice that may be shared by citizens as a basis of a reasoned, informed, and willing political agreement.’ Publicity facilitates understanding and realizing justice as an autonomous political achievement among equals. Therefore, the contents of a theory of justice must not be overly complex, indeterminate, or fragmented. ‘Social wisdom,’ Rawls (1971: 90) maintains, ‘consists in ... accepting the need for clear and simple principles.’¹³

Pluralism’s difficulty of fulfilling the publicity condition

Pluralism’s structural features include *complexity*, *indeterminacy*, and *fragmentation*, which raises the question of whether persons can verify as to whether the requirements of Pluralism are publicly recognized. Fulfilling the publicity condition requires dealing properly with what Williams (1998: 245) calls ‘*the fact of limited information*.’ Limited information raises the problem that persons may not possess sufficient information, or may lack sufficiently easy access to relevant information, regarding the

affirmation and compliance with the demands of justice. What is more, since it should become *public* knowledge that the content of justice is generally accepted and followed, it would be insufficient if solely those with especially well developed cognitive capacities were able to accept and follow the requirements of Pluralism as well as recognize whether others do so as well.¹⁴ This implies that the threshold for possessing or accessing relevant information must not be set so high that only some (with above average cognitive capacities) but not all (including those with below average cognitive capacities) can at reasonable cost know of the acceptance and compliance with justice's requirements. Consider how this difficulty arises from Pluralism's complexity, indeterminacy, and fragmentation.

Regarding Pluralism's *complexity*, recall that Pluralists like R. Miller and Risse recognize the validity of at least five grounds, sites, and contents of justice. In the case of R. Miller's Pluralism, persons possess duties of civic respect as co-members of well-functioning states, duties as citizens of countries who have been complicit in the exercise of imperial excess by the United States, duties as members of multinational corporations and states that take advantage of other people's neediness, and separate obligations as contributors to dangerous climate change. And within Risse's Pluralism persons must determine whether the conception of human rights as protections of basic needs and normative agency, the idea of co-ownership of the earth and its corresponding rights and duties, as well as the principles arising from membership in the global order, subjection to an international trading system, and state-membership are accepted and followed. Arguably, this complexity renders it very difficult to meet the publicity condition. To further clarify this difficulty, note that persons would have to recognize that the requirements of global justice are accepted and followed *not only within a single but across the different sites of global justice*. In other words, it would not be sufficient that members of a single site would recognize that within their site – e.g. international trade – the requirements of justice are accepted and followed. After all, global justice does not consist solely of international trade justice, but also of many other considerations of global justice, such as human rights-based entitlements to agency. Therefore, to fulfill the publicity condition, a

conception of global justice must be conceived in such a way that members of various sites of justice can recognize that *across the different sites*, i.e. *within all sites*, justice is accepted and met. The respect, public justification and egalitarian relations that the acceptance and compliance with a conception of global justice is meant to bring about, and the possibility of which the fulfillment of a publicity condition ensures, cannot emerge globally if the publicity condition is merely fulfilled within a single site. This is because it is the *social fact* that persons accept and follow a certain conception of justice while recognizing that others accept and follow it as well that brings about said respect, public justification and egalitarian relations.

Next, concerning Pluralism's *indeterminacy*, it is hard to conceive how persons should recognize the acceptance and compliance with the various requirements of global justice when they can increase infinitely and continuously change. As the Pluralists neither determine nor limit the total number of grounds, sites, and contents of justice, it is possible that this number will continuously increase. Accordingly, it is conceivable that persons will experience a steady augmentation of the information that is necessary to obtain for verifying the acceptance and compliance with the various requirements of global justice. This difficulty arising from Pluralism's *indeterminacy* is perhaps most evident in Fraser's conception of global justice. She refrains from laying out a list of duties of justice and does not set a limit as to how many sites of justice may be delineated via her 'all-subjected-principle.' Another problem is that the relevant governance structures may continuously change in correspondence with the emergence and disappearance of governance structures. And even if such structures do not newly emerge or fully disappear, the ongoing contestation about jurisdiction regarding the various sites implies that the understanding of their boundaries is neither clear nor fixed. This further exacerbates Fraser's Pluralism's difficulty in meeting the publicity condition. Persons will easily be overburdened with the task of keeping track as to whether the requirements of justice are accepted and followed within manifold and ever-changing governance structures.

Fraser may object that her account meets the publicity condition, because it can become public knowledge that in all sites all members of these sites are able to co-determine the site-specific content of justice. People neither need to know what the substantive contents of justice are that are valid within these separate sites, nor do they need to be sufficiently certain that these substantive contents are being recognized. This objection thus says that it is possible to ensure that everyone has reason to be sufficiently assured that site-specific institutions guarantee the procedural requirement that all must be capable of determining the substantive contents of justice. Yet even on this interpretation her conception is unable to meet said publicity condition, because there are so many potential sites of justice whose boundaries are matters of contestation. Therefore, persons will be overly burdened with the task of recognizing whether for all sites of justice persons accept and follow the procedural requirements of justice that are valid within these sites. Consequently, Pluralism's indeterminacy renders it difficult for a Pluralist theory of global justice to fulfill the publicity condition.

Finally, as regards Pluralism's *fragmentation*, this feature implies that there are no clear priority or balancing rules for trading-off the realization of requirements of justice within one site vis-à-vis the realization of others in another site. Pluralists merely identify and justify multiple sites, grounds, and contents of justice, but do not argue how important the realization of justice in one of these sites is relative to the realization of justice in another site. Hence, relying on the existing versions of Pluralism, it might very well be impossible for persons to determine whether justice is being accepted and followed within the various sites of global justice. After all, due to feasibility considerations, it may indeed be permissible or perhaps even necessary to forgo the realization of justice in one site to realize justice in another site. However, without any systematic scheme that indicates the relative importance of the different sites of justice, persons cannot determine whether the lack of fulfillment of justice in one site might be justified by a principled prioritization of realizing justice in another site, or whether this lack represents a failure to recognize and comply with the requirements of justice in this site.

In the case of Risse's Pluralism, for example, it is not clear how to balance competing demands arising from the grounds of shared humanity, common ownership of the earth, and state membership. Should persons who are members of these three sites of justice prioritize the human rights principles deriving from shared humanity, the just distribution of natural resources arising from common ownership of the earth, or the basic liberties emerging from state membership? Ideally, persons will be able to meet all requirements of global justice that are triggered by the various grounds that are present in the multiple sites of which they are part. Yet under the present non-ideal conditions, Pluralism not only fails to provide sufficient guidance of how to rank the importance of the various requirements of justice but also renders it very difficult for persons to recognize that others are accepting and following the requirements of global justice.

How *Integrated* Pluralism Can Fulfill the Publicity Condition

One way in which Pluralists can respond to this difficulty of meeting the publicity condition is by adopting Rawls' insight that including an account of background justice renders clearer and more easily comprehensible the most fundamental or primary requirements of a conception of justice.¹⁵ Rawls (2001: 54), when explaining why his theory focuses on the basic structural requirements of background justice and not on the demands of justice applying to the interactional behavior among individuals, articulates this insight as follows:

Since a public conception of justice needs clear, simple, and intelligible rules, we rely on an institutional division of labor between principles required to preserve background justice and principles that apply directly to particular transactions between individuals and associations.¹⁶

In other words, a conception of background justice expresses the 'primary,' 'fundamental,' or 'basic' requirements of justice and thus represents an adequate focal point for determining whether the publicity condition is met: instead of asking whether persons accept and follow all interactional, individual

requirements of justice, the focus on the background social order limits such an inquiry – at least in the first instance – to the question of whether persons accept and follow the requirements of pertaining to background justice.

Adapting this strategy to meet the publicity condition at the global level, what seems necessary, therefore, is an *Integrated Pluralist* conception of global justice: one part should address questions of *global background justice*, and another part should deal with *problems of justice in several, more narrowly defined (sub-global) sites of justice*. Such an Integrated Pluralism would differ from mere Pluralism as it would include an account of global background justice and thereby integrate – that is, provide unity to – the pluralist grounds, sites, and contents of justice.

Caney (2012) and Walton (2020) defend alternative Integrationist approaches that do not focus on global background justice but on the specific ways in which considerations of justice from different sites must be related to one another, with special emphasis on climate change and trade. My Integrated Pluralist approach to global justice distinguishes itself from Walton's (2020) approach, however, in virtue of integrating the multiple demands of global justice at the level of background justice. My approach also differs from that of Caney (2012) by way of allowing that *under conditions of background justice* some site-specific questions of justice may be answered in isolation from consideration of justice in other sites.¹⁷

The basic idea of my version of Integrated Pluralism is thus that if a conception of global justice satisfies a publicity condition at least at the level of global background justice, this ensures that all who are members of several sites of justice stand – at least at one level – in egalitarian reciprocal relations that express mutual respect by way of publicly justifying a content of justice. Global background justice would have to ensure that at least regarding the background conditions of their interactions within several sites of global justice, persons stand in relations of mutual respect and reciprocal recognition as equals. If global background justice is maintained, these relations between persons will not be put into jeopardy.¹⁸ Thus, one important upshot of Integrated Pluralism would be that one should not only consider which grounds

give rise to which contents in several sites of justice. One should also ask how to create institutions that would secure background justice across all (sub-global) sites of justice to provide a systematic framing or unity for achieving justice in the more narrowly defined (sub-global) sites of justice. of justice.¹⁹ Thereby satisfying a publicity condition enables achieving *globally* an ‘ideal of social unity’ – which is also one of the main insights of Williams’ assessment of why theories of justice should focus on background justice.²⁰ Undeniably, realizing such an ideal by way of meeting the publicity condition at the global level seems extremely difficult. However, giving this a try is necessary to respond adequately to the difficulty that Pluralism’s complexity, indeterminacy, and fragmentation pose to a public justification of global justice.

It is conceivable that there are multiple ways in which to substantiate Integrated Pluralism. Let me illustrate at least one possible substantiation by reference to a discourse theory of global distributive justice. Like Fraser’s Pluralism, the basic idea of such a theory is that procedures be in place that permit persons to deliberate upon (further) principles of global distributive justice. A discourse-theoretic Integrated Pluralism recognizes a plurality of (sub-global) contexts of distributive justice and holds that for the global basic structure to count as just, the following two conditions must be met. *First*, on the *international* level all representatives of states ought to be granted a sufficient degree of discursive or justificatory power in international processes of opinion and will formations that affect the lives of their citizenries. All representatives of states must be able to discursively construct the internationally valid principles of distributive justice, based upon which the structures of just international social and political orders are to be arranged. With respect to the distribution of holdings necessary for background justice, this means that the discourse-theoretic Integrated Pluralism does not argue for the implementation of a fully fleshed out content of global distributive justice. Rather, it urges that those affected by such distributive principles must provide the justifications that establish the normative validity of these principles themselves, even if only via representation by their state officials. Yet to afford all representatives of states sufficient discursive or justificatory power, excessive power asymmetries among

states must be avoided. This is why distributive inequalities among states must be limited through the institutionalization of appropriate structures to that effect at the international level.

Second (and directly related to the first point), the principles of global background justice must be ultimately justifiable to the persons who are the states' members. Therefore, to ensure that state officials are properly representing their citizens, the discourse-theoretic Integrated Pluralism also calls for just discursive or justificatory relations on the *intranational* level as a matter of global background justice. Domestically the basic structures of justification must enable members of states to put into question the validity of principles of distributive justice that shape their domestic social orders. This requirement does not necessarily call for an egalitarian distribution of holdings among co-citizens domestically, but it determines that distributive inequalities must be reduced if they prevent citizens from participating effectively in the justification of (further) principles of distributive justice. Should this domestic requirement remain unmet, international practices of justification will lack the normative quality necessary to reasonably presume the justifiability of the agreements reached in international processes of opinion and will formation. For if citizens lack the domestic political capability of questioning the opinions expressed and decisions taken by the representatives of states, the demands by members of states for the proper kind of justifications cannot be sufficiently considered in the determination of international priorities.

In sum, then, according to a discourse-theoretic understanding of Integrated Pluralism, global background justice obtains when internally just states determine, through suitably arranged processes of opinion and will formation at the international level, which distributive principles are to count as globally valid as a matter of global background justice. In addition, however, further principles will have to be determined for subglobal contexts of distributive justice such as the contexts of economic, environmental, or financial associations. Whatever the concrete contents of these further principles of distributive justice may be, they must not undermine the realization of global background justice understood along the lines

that just sketched. Thereby, Integrated Pluralism can overcome the difficulty that the complex, indeterminate, and fragmented nature of “unintegrated” Pluralism posed for fulfilling the publicity condition. This is because, different from “unintegrated” Pluralism, Integrated Pluralism’s principles of global background justice, by concentrating above all on certain intra- and international conditions for facilitating deliberations about global justice domestically and internationally, are limited in their complexity, determinate, and systematically ordered.

Conclusion

The theoretical landscape of conceptions of global justice has become significantly vaster and more diverse over the past two decades. It is now possible to distinguish between Strong Statist, Weak Statist or International Statist, Humanity-Based Globalist, Practice-Dependent Globalist, as well as (Transnational) Pluralist conceptions of global justice. This article has not offered a comprehensive assessment of these conceptions. Instead, it critically analyzed the (Transnational) Pluralist conceptions, which endorse a considerable variety of grounds, contents, and sites of justice, and which represent the most dynamic theoretical development in recent years. Despite their importance in the latest debates on global justice, however, these conceptions have not yet received sufficient critical scrutiny regarding their difficulty of fulfilling the publicity condition. This article has shown that this is a curious neglect, given that the complexity, indeterminacy, and fragmentation of the principles of Pluralism render it overly burdensome for persons worldwide to mutually recognize that the requirements of global justice are accepted and followed. The article has explained that this is a serious problem, given that meeting the publicity condition is central for construing a theory of justice whose realization manifests respect and establishes valuable relationships of mutual recognition as equals who publicly justify a certain understanding of justice. The article therefore proposed an Integrated Pluralist conception, which

articulates relatively simple, determinate, and systematically ordered principles of global background justice, because it is thereby well suited to fulfill the publicity condition.

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¹ Beitz (2000: 677) labeled the camps of this debate ‘cosmopolitan liberals’ and ‘social liberals’. By now the terms Statism and Globalism are more common given that social liberals may recognize certain minimal concerns of justice or humanity beyond the state and may thus also be viewed as cosmopolitans; see also Risse (2012: 10), who states that ‘[w]e live on a “cosmopolitan plateau”’..

² Beitz, Pogge, and Moellendorf are Practice-Dependent Globalists to the extent that their justification of principles of global justice depends on the existence of global social practices. Tan and Caney are Humanity-Based Globalists because they defend such principles based on normatively relevant features of humanity.

³ Nagel is a Strong Statist because he claims that there are no other requirements of distributive justice besides the egalitarian ones to which state coercion gives rise. By contrast, Blake is a Weak Statist or International Statist because, he recognizes the validity of non-egalitarian principles of justice among all individuals globally, simply in virtue of human beings’ capacity for

autonomy. See Cohen and Sabel, (2006: 150) for this distinction between Strong and Weak Statism.

⁵ See also Forst (2012), James (2012), Valentini (2012), DeBres (2013, 2015)

⁶ For the idea that those theorists who recognize the fundamental importance of non-state actors when conceptualizing principles of global justice can be labeled “Transnationalists”, see O’Neill (1991), Forst (2012, part III), and Culp (2014, ch. 3).

⁷ Caney (2012: 259, fn. 7) acknowledges that an Integrationist approach need not be limited to the ways in which questions of climate justice are responded and that we can use this approach “in a more general way.” See also Culp (2017) for my critique of “Disaggregated” or “Non-Integrationist” approaches to theorizing justice.

⁸ Thus, my Integrated Pluralism is akin to what Caney (2012: 272) refers to as “Model II.”

⁹ Sangiovanni (2013) discusses these requirements at length. See also Harb and Vandamme (2023) on the idea that there are distinct requirements of justice in the EU that Globalism cannot capture.

¹⁰ Risse (2012: 12, 14-5) endorses the publicity condition explicitly. Fraser’s model of public justification via justificatory discourses in public spheres clearly relies on the acceptance of a certain understanding of the publicity condition. Likewise, R. Miller works within a broadly Rawlsian and thus social contractalist framework of political philosophy.

¹¹ Rawls (2001, 84) lists the fact of reasonable pluralism as part of the circumstances of justice (within modern democracies).

¹² In a very similar fashion, Lister (2013: 90) also argues: ‘Joint performance has value over and above the value of each individual’s compliance taken singly, because the common commitment affects the nature of the relationship we have with one another.’

¹³ See also Rawls (2001: 2-3)

¹⁴ Individuals should be able to verify the requirements of justice at small costs to themselves, which are similar in weight to those that may be required in order to fulfill what Rawls (1971, 115) defines as natural duty to comply with just institutions and to create just institutions where they do not yet exist.

¹⁵ What I refer to here as the “most fundamental or primary requirements of a conception of justice” can also be labelled as the “minimalist” demands global justice, as suggested by Forst (2012: 262) and Caney (2012: 278)

¹⁶ Rawls (2001: 41–2, 82–91) also endorses a corresponding distinction between political issues that concern ‘constitutional essentials and basic justice’ and other issues that do not.

¹⁷ My conception is in line with what Caney (2012: 272) refers to as “Model II”.

¹⁸ Of course, this strategy can only work if one assumes that the global basic order can become potent, that is, that it can shape what goes on at various sites of justice. For

¹⁹ This might require rendering state representative more sensitive to the representatives of other states, as argued by Ó Laoghaire, (2023).

²⁰ Williams (1998: 244). See also Wenar (2023).