GLOBAL JUSTICE

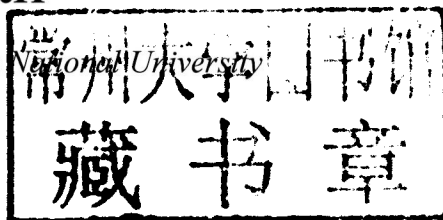CHRISTIAN BARRY AND
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Global Justice

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ASHGATE

Global Justice

The International Library of Justice
Series Editor: Tom Campbell

Titles in the Series:

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Theories of Justice
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Series Preface

Justice is one of the most enduring and central concepts within applied philosophy, and generates a vast and varied literature. This six-volume *International Library of Justice* series meets a number of distinct needs. The first volume, *Theories of Justice*, edited by Tom Campbell and Alejandra Mancilla, comprises a selection of some of the most important essays on the general theory of justice published over recent decades. One interesting aspect of this literature is the renewed attention that is being given to the notion of desert within theories of justice. Two further volumes, edited by Larry May and Paul Morrow, and Julian Lamont, respectively, deal with two traditional topics in justice that have undergone significant development in recent years – namely procedural justice, particularly with respect to constitutional law, and distributive justice, taking in important recent work on egalitarianism. Another two volumes, edited by Christian Barry and Holly Lawford-Smith, and Lukas H. Meyer, respectively, focus on the application of justice to less familiar areas, such as global institutions as they bear upon contemporary problems relating to extreme poverty and intergenerational justice. The sixth volume, *Justice and the Capabilities Approach*, edited by Thom Brooks, concentrates on the recent influential work by Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum on the relevance the concept of human capabilities in the formulation of policy on distributive justice, especially in developing countries.

Given the political priority that accrues to those matters that are categorized as having to do with justice, there is a tendency to extend the term beyond its distinctive uses and incorporate a very wide range of social values that relate to the proper ordering of social and political relationships. While the editors of each volume have striven to resist this inflation of the term 'justice' to cover all aspects of right human relationships, inevitably there is, in each volume, a substantial overlap with the bodies of literature concerned with the ideals of equality, reciprocity and humanity.

One such overlap arises with respect to rights, particularly human rights. Indeed, in some fields the discourse of justice has been largely overtaken by that of rights. The significance of this shift in emphasis within political rhetoric, which is one of the themes that features in *Theories of Justice*, recurs within the subsequent selections, raising interesting questions concerning contemporary political priorities and differing institutional approaches to social order.

The volumes in this series will assist those engaged in scholarly research by making available some of the most important contemporary essays on particular topics within the contemporary discourse of justice. The essays are reproduced in full, with the original pagination for ease of reference and citation.

The editors have been selected for their eminence in the study of law, politics and philosophy. Each volume represents each editor's selection of the most seminal recent essays in English on an aspect of justice. The Introductions present an overview of the issues in that particular volume, together with comments on the background and significance of the selected essays.

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Introduction

This volume is designed to expose the reader to the issues relating to Global Justice. Other volumes in this series include *Theories of Justice*, *Distributive Justice*, *Procedural Justice* and *Capabilities Approach*. What is distinctive about Global Justice in relation to these other topics is that it does not really demarcate a unified literature. At present, global justice research cannot readily be characterized in terms of a range of competing well-articulated theories of some single subject matter. Rather, it is constituted by a range of interconnected and overlapping philosophical discussions about the ethical norms that should govern the interactions between people, states, corporations and other agents acting in the global arena, as well as the design of the social institutions that link them together.

The essays included in this volume address some of these interrelated concerns, including the moral duties that affluent people have to the poor abroad, the applicability of egalitarian standards of justice at the global level, and the nature of responsibilities with respect to policy issues such as immigration, climate change and international trade. Other important topics, including the moral standards governing the use of military force, and the degree to which we ought to develop global institutions that authoritatively settle and enforce political disputes, have not been included for want of space.

Standards of Global Justice

Part I of this volume is composed of three sections, all of which are theoretical in orientation. The first two focus on a topic that has loomed particularly large in the literature on global justice – the nature of responsibilities to address global poverty. While there is a large literature on the question of responsibilities to address global poverty, philosophers who have argued that the affluent in the developed world have responsibilities to help protect the global poor have usually invoked one or both of two types of argument. The first section of this volume includes articles that discuss the first of these arguments, which invoke what we shall call 'assistance-based responsibilities'. In Chapter 1, Peter Singer explores our responsibilities to assist the global poor by reflecting on the responsibilities of a person passing a shallow pond where another individual is about to drown. Both cases involve a person who can help another, at relatively little cost, to avoid severe misfortune. It seems obvious that the passer-by should save the child. According to Singer, a plausible principle that would explain our reaction to the pond case, and which would also lead us to recognize our responsibility in the global poverty case, states that 'if it is in your power to prevent something bad from happening, without sacrificing anything nearly as important, it is wrong not to do so' (Singer, 2009, p. 15). Assistance-based responsibilities raise many interesting questions. How do we choose who among the needy will receive our assistance? Must we prioritize along consequentialist lines, simply maximizing expected value, or are there other permissible orderings? If we fail in our duty to assist, are our responsibilities thereby compounded, growing more demanding over

time? Or do we, as Jan Narveson argues in Chapter 2, have a personal 'beneficence budget,' and so owe *nothing* in the face of desperate need as long as we have exhausted that budget? Can physical distance ever matter morally, so that our assistance-based responsibilities to those close to us are more stringent than our responsibilities to those far away, as argued by Frances Kamm in Chapter 3? And how could we establish whether or not it is plausible to attribute moral significance to such a factor? Arguably the most fundamental challenge in understanding assistance-based responsibilities is to determine how much they can plausibly demand of ordinary agents. The principle defended by Singer in Chapter 1 seems to be very demanding, since it is hard to argue that my apartment – or even my hand, for that matter – is nearly as important as an innocent person's life.

Some have argued that accounts of assistance-based responsibilities such as Singer's ought to be rejected because they are implausibly demanding. In our world, such critics argue, they would seem to lead to 'a life of hardship, self-denial and austerity' (Kagan, 1989, p. 360). Many hold that it is implausible to demand making large sacrifices – as Singer's various principles of required assistance surely would – when doing so would impose 'risks of significantly worsening one's life' (Richard Miller, 2003, p. 359). But how demanding is *too* demanding, exactly? (On demandingness in general, see discussions in Goodin, 2009; Scheffler, 1994; and the essays collected in Chappell, 2009).

Others have argued that views such as Singer's fail to take concerns of fairness seriously enough. Singer's principle of assistance might not demand very much of each particular agent, if each agent complied with it, since even small efforts from a very large number of agents might suffice to address global poverty. But it will demand a lot of agents in contexts where many or most other agents do not comply with their assistance-based responsibilities. Liam Murphy argues, for example, that, if an agent is doing her fair share of addressing the needs of the poor but others are not, then she does not have a duty to pick up the slack by doing the shares of the non-compliers (Murphy, 2000).[1]

The second section of Part I focuses on responsibilities to address global poverty based on having contributed to it, which we refer to as 'contribution-based responsibilities.' Contribution-based responsibilities are invoked powerfully in Thomas Pogge's Chapter 4 of this volume. Instead of seeing our responsibility to address global poverty as rooted in large measure in a general responsibility to assist people in need, those who affirm the principle of contribution argue that we should view such responsibilities as based on stringent ethical requirements not to contribute to severe harms and to compensate those who have been harmed as a consequence of failing to meet these requirements. Pogge and like-minded theorists stress how our conduct and policies contribute to global poverty, and how the global institutional arrangements we uphold (international trading rules, for instance, and recognition conferred upon illegitimate trade rules) engender widespread deprivation. This second type of argument invokes a moral principle that has significant intuitive support: that it is seriously wrong to harm innocent people for minor gains and that agents have stringent and potentially quite demanding responsibilities to address harms to innocents to which they have contributed or are contributing.

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[1]   Further commentary on and criticism of Singer's position can be found in the papers collected in Schaler (2009), §III. Another important collection of essays on this theme is Chatterjee (2004). For an alternative view of assistance-based duties (which he calls duties of 'humanity') see Campbell (1974).

Of course, arguments regarding contribution-based responsibilities rest on empirical premises that are contestable. While it is certainly clear that there is a great deal of poverty in the world, it is much less clear that most of it could have been avoided had the global order been designed differently. And it is even more controversial that such alternative arrangements would require only small sacrifices by affluent people. Indeed, identifying just what effects a different global order would have had is necessarily a rather speculative exercise, and some of Pogge's critics have argued that he does little to provide the necessary empirical support for these claims (Cohen, 2010).

More fundamentally, there is widespread disagreement about just exactly what it means to contribute to global poverty, and indeed to harmful outcomes more generally. Alan Patten's argument in Chapter 5, for example, observes that a system of global institutional arrangements that would suffice to eliminate poverty in developing countries might require international transfers to provide for the basic needs of poor people, and trade regimes that offer them much better terms. Such measures may even involve asymmetries that permit certain kinds of discrimination against wealthy countries. Pogge is, according to Patten, trying to increase the moral significance of the failure of the affluent to prevent global poverty by camouflaging a controversial positive duty to assist as a stringent negative duty not to contribute to harm. Justice may well demand the institutional reforms advocated by Pogge, they say, but not on the ground that failing to bring such reforms makes the affluent *contributors* to their poverty (for further discussion see Barry and Øverland, 2011; Lawford-Smith, forthcoming; Satz, 2005).

In Chapter 6, Gerhard Øverland challenges the premise that contribution-based responsibilities really are all that much more stringent and demanding than assistance-based responsibilities. He argues that to maintain such a thesis would give the counterintuitive result that we should leave a person in desperate need in order to help someone suffering only mildly if we are causally implicated in the latter but not the former.[2]

It should be noted that there are additional bases for asserting that the affluent have responsibilities to address global poverty and comparable hardships. The first is *association*. We might have associative duties toward members of the global poor if we are in a relationship with them that we have reason, on balance, to value (Scheffler, 2001) – for example, if they are citizens of our colonies (or ex-colonies) (Ypi et al., 2009); or if we have undertaken a discrete, voluntary act that confers special obligations upon us (Locke, 1690; see also Simmons, 1996) – for example, entering into a trade contract; or perhaps if they are vulnerable to us (Goodin, 1985). In addition, it might be claimed that we have duties toward members of the global poor if we *benefit* from the injustice that they experience, even if we are not causally implicated in the fact that they experience it. It is plausible that in a situation where no one caused the harm that is experienced, or the person who caused it cannot make reparation, it is the person who benefited from the harm *rather than* an innocent bystander or a person who merely has the capacity to assist, who should alleviate the suffering (Barry, 2003; Butt, 2007). For example, if the United States accepts exports of Coltan from the Democratic Republic of the Congo then it has plausibly benefited from the terrible injustices committed against the Congolese as

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[2]   For further criticism and commentary on Pogge's views, and his responses to his critics, see the papers collected in Jaggar (2010) and the symposium on his work in *Ethics & International Affairs* (2005).

a byproduct of extracting that resource, and might thereby owe something to the Congolese as a result.

The issue of the *relative* importance of these different sorts of bases of responsibilities to address global poverty – assistance, association, contribution, benefit – is of considerable practical significance. For while these reasons to address poverty can complement each other – as when some agent has both contributed to the incidence of poverty and can address it effectively at little cost – they may also pull in opposite directions. For example, it may be that the citizens of some country can much more effectively address the poverty of those whose deprivations they or their state have *not* contributed to or benefited from, than the poverty of those to whose deprivations they have contributed – imagine that the former society is better governed than the latter, so that assistance they provide will be put to better use. The conflict between different reasons to address poverty can become quite acute when the likely effects of prospective interventions to improve the circumstances of the poor are not known. For example, contributing money to aid organizations can help the poor, but as many have pointed out it can also harm them. If reasons not to contribute to harm are much more stringent than reasons to assist, then evidence that some intervention to improve the lives of the poor may harm them or others will be a reason to reconsider the intervention (Schmidtz, 2000; Wenar, 2003).

The third section of the volume is devoted to articles that examine the issue of the relationship between standards of domestic and global justice, and in particular whether egalitarian demands ought to be globalized. Cosmopolitans argue that the standards of domestic justice apply globally – perhaps with some relatively minor modifications. The cosmopolitan ideal, as Catherine Lu points out in Chapter 7, is typically understood as rejecting parochial limitations and prejudices, and requiring extensive common moral responsibilities. So, for example, if you are an egalitarian at home, you ought also to be a global egalitarian. The motivations for this sort of view are straightforward and well captured by Simon Caney's argument in Chapter 8. Most of us share the conviction that people's life prospects should not be influenced – or at least not influenced unduly – by morally arbitrary factors, such as race or gender. Despite this, in today's world, people's life prospects vary dramatically depending on whether they have been born in, say, Sub-Saharan Africa or Europe – and facts about place of birth seem every bit as arbitrary as race or gender from a moral point of view. As Christian Barry and Laura Valentini point out in Chapter 11, anti-cosmopolitans who believe in egalitarian justice at the domestic level must therefore try to provide plausible reasons for why these standards should not apply at the global level. Much of the literature on this topic has thus taken the form of critics of cosmopolitanism arguing that there are morally relevant features that distinguish the domestic and global levels – features that make standards applicable at one level but not the other.

Some theorists – well represented by Thomas Nagel in Chapter 9 – have argued that egalitarian justice applies exclusively to domestic political communities in virtue of the particular form of coercion exercised within them (see also Blake, 2001). Egalitarian justice only applies in the presence of a particular form of coercion, and the relevant kind of coercion is present at the domestic level but absent at the global level. As Barry and Valentini point out, the moral premise of this sort of argument appeals to the importance of respecting autonomy. When coercively imposed rules generate an egalitarian distribution, all citizens have (roughly) the same opportunity to act in pursuit of their ends and nobody's autonomy is being unduly

undermined. The empirical premise of this sort of argument is that while domestic coercion is *systemic and ongoing,* international coercion is mostly a matter of one-off interactions – for example, military intervention, economic sanctions, or blatant forms of arm-twisting in international negotiations. Domestic coercion materialises in the form of coercively upheld rules having deep distributive effects over a bounded group of people. Accordingly, it is to those people and those people only that such distributive effects need to be justified. Since, it is alleged, no rules of this sort exist at the international level, justification through egalitarian distributive principles is simply out of place. Both of these premises can of course be challenged. Consider, for example, rules such as those constituting the sovereign state. As Tom Pogge and Leif Wenar point out, in Chapters 4 and 20 respectively, these constitutive rules of the global order authorize those controlling the preponderance of force within some territory to extract and sell its resources, and enter into binding agreements on behalf of their populations, often without their consent. Such critics argue that rules of these sorts are indeed coercive and shape the distribution of benefits across the globe in a systemic and ongoing fashion.

Political association of various kinds is another feature that purportedly differentiates domestic and global justice. Some theorists have conceived of the relevant notion of political association as that in which people interact guided by the idea of *reciprocity* and *fair* terms of cooperation (Sangiovanni, 2007; Nagel, Chapter 9). According to this view, egalitarian demands are inapplicable within any social systems whose rules were not recognized as binding by all participants, or which were not designed for mutual advantage. Critics of this view have argued that it would have unduly conservative implications. For example, a society whose rules were designed by small elites for their own benefit and simply imposed upon others would be one in which egalitarian demands were inapplicable, when it is precisely *these* types of social systems that give rise to the most morally objectionable inequalities.

Other critics of cosmopolitan egalitarianism have complained that, by requiring transfers (in whatever form) from one country to another, global egalitarian principles ignore the moral relevance of national responsibility in a plurality of objectionable ways. In Chapter 10, for example, David Miller argues that such principles place unfair burdens on the most productive political communities, undermine national self-determination and provide poor incentives to political communities who would bear little cost if they acted against the principles.

Finally, some have argued that cosmopolitan egalitarianism is an infeasible moral doctrine. Driving this critique is the thought that, since 'ought implies can,' any plausible normative ideal must fall within the limits of human possibility. And to be plausible it must not only be possible, but realizable without creating undue costs. In Chapter 9, for example, Thomas Nagel suggests that a world government would be required to implement egalitarian justice and that, in all likelihood, such government would be preceded by the establishment of a 'global Leviathan'. The costs of the *transition* from where we are, to a just global egalitarian order, would therefore be excessive.

Pressing Global Socioeconomic Issues

Part II is organized around specific topics, and is also composed of three sections. The issues germane to global justice are numerous. Since we lack the space to include chapters on even

a substantial subset of them, we have chosen essays on three topics that tie in quite directly with the issues of poverty and inequality: immigration, climate change and international trade.

Over the past several decades, the rights of states have in some ways been curtailed. For example, it is widely held that there are limits, articulated in human rights standards and other norms, to what governments can do to their own people. Not only would it be wrong to violate citizens' human rights: states have no right to do so and can become liable to coercion if they do. But states have nevertheless retained a great deal of their authority. Take a few examples that are relevant to the issues raised in Part II: states retain absolute authority over the control of their borders (decisions about who to admit – on what terms and for how long – and who to keep out); they determine, in large measure, the property rights to resources in their territories; they have complete discretion over their trade policies – they have authority to join in or withdraw from trade agreements; they can determine their energy policies, including whether and to what extent they will curb their emissions and join or withdraw from environmental treaties. Whether sovereign states should continue to enjoy such rights has been widely questioned in the global justice literature.

Much of the philosophical debate about immigration, for example, has been framed in terms of whether states should have a right to control unilaterally their own borders. There are various reasons to think that individuals' interests in being allowed to cross borders are so significant at present that they may outweigh the interests of states in controlling their borders. It is not just that freedom of movement is a good in itself, but that opportunities are distributed in a radically uneven way throughout the world. Many people have little prospect of achieving access to even minimally adequate sets of opportunities unless they are free to seek work and to settle in territories beyond their state. And even if people can access *minimally* adequate sets of opportunities, it seems unfair that this should be the best that they can hope for. Isn't it unfair, theorists like Joseph Carens (1987) ask, that opportunities are concentrated in some parts of the world and sparse elsewhere, so that people's life chances vary greatly depending on arbitrary facts about place of birth? Arguments for open borders have often proceeded along the standard lines discussed in Part I. In Chapter 13, Arash Abizadeh develops a different and novel line of argument: we cannot keep borders closed because we cannot *justify* keeping them closed to those who are excluded. Observing the ways that coercion interferes with autonomy, Abizadeh demands that coercive impositions in the form of border controls must be justifiable to those who are coerced (and disadvantaged) by them. Presently, at least, this demand is not met.

But there are also reasons to think that states – or at least the political communities on behalf of whom they act – have weighty interests in controlling their borders, and should therefore continue to enjoy rights to do so. For example, David Miller has argued elsewhere that the ability of a community to evolve autonomously over time is important to members' security, identity and well-being. These goods would be undermined in unacceptable ways if we were to deprive states of the right to control their borders (for example, Miller, 2005). Christopher Heath Wellman argues in Chapter 12 that political communities have a weighty interest in self-determination based on freedom of association, and that this grounds a right to control unilaterally their own borders. It is not that communities do not owe things to outsiders – they have responsibilities of humanity to help those in need – but they cannot be required to relinquish control of their borders to enhance the opportunities of outsiders any more than attractive and intelligent women are required to address the inadequate opportunities enjoyed

by unattractive and unintelligent men by engaging in romantic relationships with them. It is important to point out that advocates of the rights of states to control their own borders are not necessarily advocates of *closing* their borders. Rather, they defend the *rights* of states to do so, which is entirely consistent with believing that a more liberalized immigration regime would be the right policy to adopt.

In Chapter 14, Lea Ypi stresses a point that is often overlooked in debates about immigration – that arrangements, ranging from closed to open borders, should be sensitive to the effects of immigration on the capacities of *both* the sending and receiving states to meet the needs of their people. Liberalizing immigration in the form of permitting many more skilled workers to migrate from developing to developed countries, for example, may benefit the receiving country but aggravate problems in the sending country.

The rights of states with respect to engaging in international trade have also been challenged. In Chapter 20, for example, Leif Wenar argues that our current global trading arrangements are extremely problematic. Building on earlier work by Thomas Pogge, Wenar argues that the root of the problem is that the international community recognizes anyone with a monopoly on power within a state as having the authority to extract and trade natural resources from the state's territory. That means a corrupt dictator, for example, can seize power against the will of the governed, and then use the profits of trading the country's natural resources to buy the arms and soldiers necessary to stay in power. This sovereign resource right is not defensible, he argues, not only because it tends to engender social ills – civil war and other forms of violence, non-democratic forms of governance and endemic corruption – but because it violates property rights. It violates property rights since it fails to respect another core principle – enshrined in the UN Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as well as many other treaties – the natural resources of a country belong to the people of that country. As a result, current trading arrangements legitimize and facilitate a great deal of theft by enabling the misappropriation of resources from their rightful owners. Governments enable such theft, and the consumers of these misappropriated resources benefit from it. Instead, Wenar argues that we ought to adopt reforms of trade that penalize rather than reward violations of property rights, and which provide better incentives to develop and maintain just domestic institutions.

In Chapter 21 Mathias Risse questions other aspects of state rights to engage in trade. In particular, he rejects what he calls the Strong Westphalian View, which maintains 'the social costs of production and the prices of goods from a country should not be subject to external interference, unless such production involves atrocious activities such as slavery' (Chapter 21, p. 494 below). Risse argues that such an account is unacceptable because it fails to take into account the degree to which trade with oppressive regimes fails to respect the claims of their victims, and consequently gives rise to ill-gotten gains. How one should respond to such considerations is a contestable issue. Risse does not indicate which policy measures might serve to make international trading arrangements less problematic. Wenar proposes that the US and other Western liberal democracies should refuse to remain complicit in trading 'stolen' resources, and that the legal systems of these countries can help facilitate an end to trade in such resources by prohibiting their importation, taking legal action against companies that continue to do so, and imposing trade tariffs on the exports of third party countries engaging in such trade. Others have proposed other revisions of trading arrangements, such as that the right to trade be made conditional to some degree on the extent to which a regime refrains from oppression, or respects or promotes minimally adequate labor standards (Barry

and Reddy, 2008). But these proposals remain fairly speculative, and it is not clear what the effects of these reforms upon international trading rights would be and whether they could feasibly be implemented and maintained (Wisor, 2012).

Another issue that has concerned global justice scholars is the extent to which the topic challenges our notions of responsibility. That is, we recognize that global poverty, unfair trade and inequitable resource use are serious problems, but it is not always clear who ought to bear responsibility for doing something about them or whether standard approaches to allocating responsibility are adequate to this task. Samuel Scheffler, for example, has argued that some values which are embedded in what he refers to as the 'common-sense' or 'restrictive' view of responsibility, where individuals are 'more responsible for what they do than for what they merely fail to prevent, and ... are thought to have greater responsibilities toward some people than toward others' (Scheffler, 2001, p. 4), collaborate to 'limit the size of the agent's moral world' (ibid., p. 38), and are thus obstacles to understanding responsibilities to address global problems. As we come to coexist under shared rules and institutions (for example, markets in capital and labour, systems of property rights, trading regimes and constitutive features of the state system), we begin to substantially affect each other's livelihoods in ways that are difficult to predict. Merely following relatively narrow commonsense notions of interpersonal morality may blind us to ways that our conduct jointly affects others, particularly when mediated by complex systems of social rules.

These concerns animate Iris Young's Chapter 19. Young notes that many have protested and devoted significant amounts of energy to addressing issues such as textiles created in 'sweatshops', and other labour and production practices that strike them as morally objectionable. She argues, however, that such claims make little sense within a dominant conception of responsibility as liability. The liability model is primarily backward looking and 'assigns responsibility according to what particular agents have done'. It thus 'individualizes even when the agent it identifies is a corporate entity' (Chapter 19, p. 443 below). On this model, Young argues, it is indeed implausible to hold 'remote agents' (for example, consumers, corporate executives, university administrators and others in Europe, North America, Japan and other relatively well-off places) responsible for the workers' situation. She argues that this model of allocating responsibility can be contrasted with, and should be rejected in favor of, another way of conceiving responsibilities, which (drawing on Hannah Arendt) she calls the 'political responsibility' model. This model 'doesn't reckon debts, but aims at results, and thus depends on the actions of everyone who is in a position to contribute to those results'(Chapter 19, p. 447 below). Of course, the political-responsibility model faces significant challenges. For example, it is not clear that the assessments of behaviour that this model will yield will be inter-temporally consistent. This model simultaneously claims that those in a position to 'achieve results' have weighty and often decisive moral reasons to do so, while committing to the view that, should these capable agents fail to take action, they nonetheless should not be judged to have weightier reasons for addressing them later on because of that past failure. A second problem is that such a model seems to allocate responsibilities in a way that may be intuitively unfair. If some countries' ability to address climate change becomes more limited only because it pursues imprudent economic policies and wasteful military expenditures, can they plausibly claim that other rich countries which have not adopted such policies, but have instead both strengthened their economies and adopted more environmentally friendly policies, should take on a greater proportion of these costs? Why should agents who can now

take responsibility to address the plight of such workers at little cost do so when they know that they will be absolved should they fail to do so? One alternative to this model would be to stress, with Pogge, Risse and Wenar, the liabilities of those who benefit from, even if they do not directly contribute to, such practices. Insofar as 'remote agents' continue to consume goods and services produced in morally objectionable ways, they may plausibly be viewed as liable to bear additional cost to address the hardships suffered by those who make them.

The next section engages with questions relating to climate change. The claim that climate change is a real phenomenon and poses a real threat to the security and well-being of many present and future people is no longer reasonably contestable. But disagreement about what to *do* about the fact of climate change is intense and impassioned, partly – as John Broome points out in Chapter 16 – as a result of differences in the magnitude of the threat and our capacity to avert it relative to our capacity to address other pressing social and environmental problems. Indeed, Broome suggests elsewhere that the uncertainties associated with such issues are so great that they may challenge the applicability of cost benefit analyses (Broome, 1992). What *is* known is that quite significant reduction in the concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere needs to be achieved if increasingly damaging climate change is to be avoided.

We can usefully think about the stabilization of levels of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere below some acceptable level as a public good, and the members of the group who must produce that good as the countries of the world. We can think about the challenges to producing that good in terms of the *kind* of coordination that is required, and the degree to which the costs of supplying the good should be allocated among different countries. What kinds of coordination could that be? Production of the good could be a 'joint necessity' situation, which would mean that every country has to perform some action in order for the good to be produced. Or it could be an 'incremental good' situation, in which the efforts of any country make the problem a little bit better (and the more countries that make an effort, the better). Or it could be one of two kinds of 'threshold good' case, the first in which some number of countries must coordinate for the good to be produced, but it doesn't matter who does what after that threshold is reached, and the second in which some number of countries *and no more* must coordinate for the good to be produced – if too few then the good will not be produced, but if too many they will get in each other's way such that the good will not be produced either (Lawford-Smith, forthcoming). The challenge posed by climate change is probably best captured by the 'threshold good' and the 'incremental good' descriptions. The closer we get to carbon neutrality the better, and even if one country's efforts seem insignificant in the context of the big picture, it's clear that if one country acts then *something* is better than it otherwise would have been. And if a sufficient number of countries that are large emitters (it doesn't matter which) reduce their emissions enough, many of the projected harms can be avoided. It is clear that not all countries need to take action on climate change for the more serious projected effects to be avoided – efforts by the large emitters would be sufficient – so it is thus not a 'joint necessity' situation. It's also not a 'threshold good' with harm situation, since no likely reduction in greenhouse gas emissions or shift to more sustainable practices causes *harm* (at least not environmental or physical harms, although it might cause economic harms).

The fact that we aree facing what is often viewed as a threshold good case is a complicating factor in reaching an agreement about what to do. As Stephen Gardiner notes in Chapter 17, because the problem could be solved even if *some* countries free-ride on the efforts of others, and because contributing in solving the problem will normally mean bearing some costs, there