

Social justice in between collective egoism and genuine solidarity: moral obligations with regard to the common good in developing countries

(Geert Demuijnck, Université Catholique de Lille, France)

(draft)

1. Introduction: international distributive justice

How plausible are conceptions of social justice when they are transposed into an international context? Political philosophers focus mostly on the distribution of well-being, etc. in a particular country. International justice is only indirectly discussed, i.e. with regard to environmental topics, migration or multiculturalism. This weakness is undoubtedly related to the absence of a political institution which could guarantee international justice being respected. Still, the actual evolution towards economic globalization makes the strictly national normative debate obsolete. Faced with globalization, egalitarians - traditionally the defenders of the Welfare State - are in a paradoxical position. On the one hand, if one thinks that justice should neutralize the influence of morally arbitrary factors, in other words, if one thinks that equal respect for all implies private and public moral obligations towards the very poor, one cannot really put a limit on the legitimacy of moral claims at the border of one's country. On the other hand, a flood of immigration may threaten the sustainability of the Welfare State. The paradox can be put boldly in the following way: too much concern for those who wish to immigrate for economic reasons undermines our legitimate concern for our fellow citizens. How can Western countries morally combine national solidarity with growing international inequality? The focus of my paper is thus on the moral obligations of citizens of the most industrialized and richest nations. However, these obligations have to be considered against the background of important factual developments.

The economist's contribution to the debate is to clarify some factual questions such as the following. What would be, in a framework of realistic, though stylized assumptions - imperfect mobility of capital, differences between countries in productivity level, and the relative scarcity of the production factors, etc. -, the most probable economic implications of widespread migration for the poorest group in the poorest country? What would be the implications for the unskilled workers in the industrialized countries (1) ? Are there alternative, economically equivalent, solutions with less migration? Other social scientists could try e.g. to guess what would be the other, non-economic consequences of a high human mobility rate.

In this paper I will mainly concentrate on what I consider to be the main topic, i.e. our moral obligations towards the very poor. Economic aspects will be mentioned in order to highlight their relevance for this ethical question. It will be argued that our moral obligations have changed radically during the last decades. There is a growing inequality in the level of economic development of different nations, and, moreover, there is a growing awareness of this inequality, which leads to a moral consciousness that

manifests itself to some extent in the behaviour of different economic agents such as consumers, firms, and also shareholders.

The philosophical debate about international distributive justice has recently been revived by the publication of John Rawls's *The Law of Peoples* (1993, 1999). According to Rawls, our obligations towards people in developing countries are rather limited. Other authors, like Thomas Pogge, Robert Goodin or Brian Barry, have defended more radical egalitarian positions, implying huge transfers of purchasing power, thereby somehow neglecting other moral obligations of e.g. citizens towards their fellow citizens. It will be argued that these different moral obligations cannot be taken into consideration separately. Whereas some transfer of material goods (and, *a fortiori*, a cutting-back of the poorest countries' external debts) seems a minimum requirement, solidarity at different social levels (from family to global solidarity) cannot be contradictory as an ideal. The following question may be useful in order to develop a reasonable hierarchical classification of moral obligations: if solidarity in a liberal economy implies the acceptance of some form of the rawlsian maximin, should it also imply either the acceptance of an immigration rate which equals the growth rate of the GNP (which implies a constant GNP per capita ratio), or a contribution to the common good in developing countries which neutralizes this growing inequality?

2. Any concern for equality implies global justice in a globalized economy

In this section I want to show that, in a globalized economy, concepts of *social* justice which are partially based on principles of equality, can only limit their scope to the nation-state at the price of accepting the strange and incoherent moral motivations of that nation's citizens. In order to spell out my point, I shall start from a difficulty in Rawls's theory.

The moral foundation of egalitarianism (2) is the notion of equal respect - mostly related to concepts such as *common humanity* (3). Equal respect remains an empty and somehow hypocritical notion if it is not echoed in some form of justice. That means practically such things as that your basic rights should be respected, which in turn leads to more practical questions like access to essential services such as health care, education, etc. (4). Egalitarians who argue for a more equal distribution of these essential goods may admit that equality of condition is not the ultimate goal. Pareto-superior allowances, especially such allowances as improve everyone's situation (and in which the worst off are better off than under a strict egalitarian regime) are morally acceptable.

However, G.A. Cohen (1992) has developed a rather surprising argument against this rawlsian way of reasoning, which seems *prima facie* to be easily acceptable: an egalitarian argument à la Rawls should, according to Cohen, necessarily end in an argument in favour of full equality.

Why is that? Cohen points to a contradiction between two elements of Rawls' theory. The first elements is that Rawls qualifies inequality which is the result of natural and

social inequalities as unjust: "[t]he existing distribution of income and wealth, say, is the cumulative effect of the prior distributions of natural assets [...] and their use favored or disfavored over time by social circumstances [...]. Intuitively, the most obvious injustice of the system of natural liberty is that it permits distributive shares to be improperly influenced by these factors so arbitrary from a moral point of view" (1971: 72). It is obvious that, when you eliminate systematically all influence from these arbitrary factors, you will end up with full equality of resources. (Cf. Barry 1989). At the same time, according to Rawls, one may sacrifice this equality if this is necessary to improve the situation of the worst off. This necessity is related to the incentives which motivate the talented. In short, if there is no cause justifying inequality, the beneficial *consequences* may deliver a justification (Cf. Cohen 1992) (5).

The second element is that, according to Rawls, citizens of a just society adhere to the principles which legitimize their basic institutions. Principles of justice are stable when people who are educated by the institutions which incorporate these principles develop the corresponding sense of justice and overcome their egoistic tendencies towards injustice (1971: 454). In other words, they are motivated by the idea of fraternity (or solidarity). This may, for example, include "the idea of not wanting to have greater advantages unless this is to the benefit of others who are less well off" (1971: 105)

The question is then why people who are firmly convinced that the situation of the worst off should be improved as far as possible and who are disposed to abstain from the exploitation of natural or social circumstances should need incentives (6). Indeed, if the talented adhere coherently to the principles which form the basis of the difference principle, they will agree to work for a normal reward for their effort. Of course, an exceptional reward which would recompense an exceptional effort merely respects the principle of equality. What is at stake here, are those incentive-based forms of reward, which lead to inequality. In other words, inequality creating Pareto-improvements may also have been made in ways that preserve the initial equality (7). Therefore, the conclusion is that those who seriously give priority to the worst off should defend a much more egalitarian position.

One could reply to this criticism by distinguishing radically between private and public values. A person may admit that public institutions should be so conceived so as to "maximin" the relevant *distribuendum*, and yet as an individual act to further his own interests without any further concern for solidarity. For instance, he will limit his efforts if he considers that taxes are so high that supplementary efforts are no longer rewarded. This strict distinction between private and public values makes adherence to the "maximin" compatible with an egoistic logic of incentives.

An important point to stress here is that social justice then becomes possible on the basis of weak motivation (justice does not demand that one should fully refrain from the pursuit of individual well-being) and a double reciprocity: one between the needy and the better off and one for the better off amongst themselves. The first can be interpreted as a hypothetical or actual insurance mechanism: I could have been born handicapped too or I could lose my job too. Reciprocity among the better off means that each person

individually agrees to pay his contribution if he is sure that the others will pay too. Any mutual distrust which would undermine this reciprocity is overcome by legal enforcement. This makes justice not only a desirable but also a feasible ideal.

But, as shown by Van Parijs (1993), the contradiction between private and public values reappears, even more sharply, if one considers an international, integrated economy in which a talented person can maximize his usefulness by leaving his country (8). In this case, the emigration of the talented is fully opposed to improving the situation of the worst off. In this case the somewhat schizophrenic compatibility between the logic of incentives (and private egoism) and the logic of maximin (and generosity by means of a political institution) disappears. Van Parijs concludes logically that sincere acceptance of the difference principle (9) should necessarily be combined with some degree of patriotism, defined as the refusal to leave one's community in order to improve one's own economic situation elsewhere. A patriot consciously limits the exploitation of his talents for reasons of solidarity with the worst off in his own community (10). However, this requires mixing public and private preferences in such a way that social justice now demands more than the weak motivation based on a guaranteed reciprocity: how can I, as a talented person disposed to stay despite financial advantages abroad be sure that other talented citizens will display the same disposition?

If some degree of globalization is a fact, the conclusion of this discussion is a trilemma: you should either accept that giving priority to the worst off implies that inequalities resulting from incentives are unacceptable (thereby dropping the tension between personal interests and impartiality in favour of the latter), and become a strict egalitarian, or you should argue for an extension of your principles of justice at a global level (and bite the bullet of the absence or at least the weakness of international enforcement mechanisms), or you have to suppose that people have a very strange motivation structure they are motivated by both personal interest and impartiality. However, the border of their country is the horizon of their impartial view. Beyond these borders things become strangely complicated: their activities over there are constrained on the one hand by very limited obligations towards the local people (to respect their basic rights, to restrain from brutal exploitation) and not by any further form of solidarity, but on the other hand their obligations towards their own compatriots become at once very strong: the most obvious reason to cross the border, i.e. make more money than one earns in his own country, is morally unacceptable, *whereas this very logic of incentives is fully acceptable at home*. Moreover the nationalistic motivation is supposed to be very strong, because a state enforces not to flee. In other words, a Hobbesian logic of public enforcement to overcome the Prisoner's Dilemma, comes down to begging the question.

3. International inequality : positive evolutions with normative consequences

First of all a few facts are necessary to help us understand the questions we are discussing. I shall mention them here without going into details about the figures, which are however of interest in themselves (11).

Inequalities between states are much greater than any inequalities within the states themselves. This fact is beyond question, but the size of the difference is very difficult to measure. It all depends, obviously, on the criteria used to measure the differences and also on your preconceptions. It is, for example, possible to imagine a comparison between the weighted average of the Gini coefficients of different countries and a Gini coefficient calculated using the GNP per inhabitant of these countries. The second figure will undoubtedly be higher (12). But this form of comparison is based on an unacceptable preconception : the worldwide Gini figure would not take into account the inequalities existing within each country. Nevertheless, seeing as the richest countries are not necessarily the ones with the greatest inequalities, our initial theory would probably not be contradicted if more accurate measurement criteria were employed.

The second fact is more important from a moral point of view : these inequalities have been strongly increasing during the last decades. This is beyond question. In spite of the crisis which we in the West refer to incessantly, our average income has more or less doubled in the last thirty years, which is not the case, for example, in Central Africa (13). In many countries in that region the rate economic growth has been outstripped by that of population growth and, as a result, the GNP per inhabitant has tended to decrease (14). Nowadays the difference in standard of living between a poor European, one suffering from longterm unemployment, for example, and a poor African is enormous, far greater than it was fifty or a hundred years ago (15).

"Ought implies can" If, previously, there were differences in the standards of living between different sections of the world population, it was not always possible to do anything about it. Nowadays, with our modern means of transport and communications networks, the impossibility of the task is no longer a valid excuse for our inaction.

The role of the State in the rich countries is far greater than it was in the days when the State was perceived above all as a policing service. Since the end of World War II, in particular, the western world has seen the spectacular development of the Welfare State.

One last factor we need to consider : nowadays information spreads quickly to every corner of the globe. People here in the West, but also those in the Third World are fully aware of the differences in standard of living in the world today.

4. A few moral considerations

Let us turn now to a few moral considerations which also seem relevant to our debate. The first element is the basic moral argument in any debate about international distributive justice. I shall present it using the terms employed by the Canadian philosopher Joseph Carens : nationality plays the same role in modern society as did the feudal system in the Middle Ages. In other words, if, for egalitarian reasons, you wish to eliminate the influence of all morally random factors like skin colour, gender or intelligence, nationality seems to be the main morally random factor to take into consideration. Nobody deserves to be American or Burundi. Therefore it is illogical for a system of social justice to stop at the borders of a country, or exclude such foreigners as may live within these borders (16).

The second moral consideration is connected to the fact that there are numerous exchanges nowadays between the developed and under-developed countries of the world. According to one possible interpretation of John Rawls' theory, which is explained particularly clearly by David Gauthier (1986), distributive justice is only relevant when there is a cooperative surplus, i.e. when the collaboration between two or more parties proves to be profitable for all concerned. This cooperative surplus may be defined as the difference between what the parties could have achieved on their own and what becomes possible on account of their collaboration. It is in fact this profit, the fruit of the collaboration, which should be fairly shared out. If there were no contact between the countries the situation would be completely different and, according to Gauthier, the question of distributive justice would be irrelevant. Insofar as there is economic integration there will be a cooperative surplus which needs to be divided fairly. The fact that the West depends, even if only to a marginal extent, on the poorer countries for energy and raw materials, gives us an idea of the size of the cooperative surplus.

It should be noted that this reasoning in terms of cooperative surplus is in itself open to debate, even within a single country. According to David Gauthier there is no moral obligation to share the cooperative surplus with those people who refuse to, or cannot, cooperate, and in particular handicapped people : from the point of view of strict justice they have no legitimate claims. There may be a place for charity with regards to the handicapped, but they have no justifiable rights to a share in the cooperative surplus. This doubtful logic can be transposed onto an international scale. We can imagine that a country like Burkina Faso which has neither energy nor many raw materials would receive very little if we reasoned solely in terms of an equal division of any cooperative surplus.

My third remark concerns the difference between a slug and a snail. Slugs stand for people and snails for the State. When a snail moves he takes his house with him. People may move from state to state, whereas when the State moves it remains the State in its new location. Seeing as people can move from state to state there are many possible arguments in favour of fixed or sedentary populations and against massive migratory movements. It is consequently impossible to separate the question of freedom of movement, for people or for capital, from the question of international justice. From a moral point of view, any restriction of movements can only be justified in a context which is itself just, and where differences between standards of living in different countries are much smaller than they are at present.

5. John Rawls' Law of Peoples

John Rawls' starting point is the liberal idea of tolerance. For him that which is 'just' should take precedence over that which is 'good'. In other words the State is neutral with regard to the question of the good life. Transposing that tolerance onto the level of peoples leads to the following, somewhat surprising conclusion : all peoples are not obliged to have a liberal or individualistic lifestyle. Therefore, an authoritarian, hierarchical society, based on religious principles for example, is perfectly acceptable.

The question of peoples' rights can be formulated thus : how can we understand a global society made up of different peoples from a moral point of view, taking it for granted that these peoples have the right to determine their own institutions ? Traditionally, the starting point was that of national sovereignty : nations have the right to go to war and the right to object to any outside interference. Rawls accepts this traditional position even if he stresses that, in reality, the idea of sovereignty no longer commands universal acceptance. The right to wage war has been replaced by the right not to be attacked. Secondly, when we consider infringements of the Human Rights, there seems to be a movement towards the right to interfere.

If Rawls's approach is normative and therefore does not in any way discuss the reality of power play between nations, his discourse does take into consideration questions of feasibility. His attachment to the idea of national sovereignty is one example : John Rawls takes into consideration the fact that different peoples exist and that this idea is solidly rooted in people's minds and culture all over the world. As a result, Rawls firmly rejects the idea that a global "original position", i.e. a hypothetical situation in which we should choose global principles of distributive justice without knowing our own nationality.

Rawls takes into consideration questions of feasibility here just like he did in this theory of social justice. But it is important to note that the question is not the same. In part III of *A Theory of Justice*, Rawls asks whether a Rawlsian society could be stable. A society is considered stable to the extent that the children educated in that society can adhere to the principles which govern it. To express this in a more concrete manner, the stability of any society, for instance a Rawlsian society, depends on Rawlsian principles being compatible with moral psychology. Therefore, the question of feasibility in *A Theory of Justice* was not : "Are people, in their current situation, capable of accepting Rawlsian principles ?" but rather : "Is a Rawlsian society viable in the longterm, considering people's moral psychology ?" Rawls is seeking realistic evaluation criteria here and not necessarily a political strategy.

It seems to me that the existence of different peoples is more a description of the current situation than a genuine obstacle in the realm of moral psychology. The question of feasibility equivalent to the one in *A Theory of Justice* should have been : "Is it realistic to suppose that children, brought up in a system of worldwide distributive justice, which implies restrictions in each nation's right to determine its own affairs, would be able to accept, on the psychological level, these principles of distributive justice ?"

We may wonder whether this firm rejection of an starting position of worldwide distributive justice is not unlike the position of the defenders of the "good slave-owner". Still in the debate about slavery in the United States in the 18th century, some people said that slavery had always existed and would always exist, and that therefore, from a moral point of view, the important point was that of having moral rules and regulations adapted to the situation. Thus, there was a moral justification for the "good slave-owner". Other people claimed that slavery was quite simply a morally unacceptable system and ought to

be abolished (Carens 1987). We may then wonder if Rawls's position, and in particular his opinion that it is inconceivable to start from the idea of cosmopolitan world citizenship, will not be judged in future in the same way as we now judge for example Aristotle's position with regard to slavery.

The most important question for John Rawls is to define the rules of good conduct between, on the one hand, the liberal, democratic states and, on the other hand, the hierarchical, authoritarian states which provide unfavorable conditions for such "good conduct". He attempts to determine these rules from the "original position", applied in this case to various countries. These countries are ones covered by a veil of ignorance : the leaders of these imaginary countries are unaware of the size of their territory, the size of its population and its economic strength. They merely know that the material conditions necessary for a democracy are satisfied.

The principles which can be drawn from this original position are the following : first of all, freedom and independence. Secondly, there should be the right to defend one's own territory, rather than the more traditional right to wage war : the duty not to interfere with others is the other side of the same coin. Thirdly, contracts should be respected (*pacta sunt servanda*) and fourthly, the Human Rights should be respected. Rawls notes that, since 1800, there has not been a war between liberal, democratic countries (1993 :49). The essential question is that of the relationship between liberal states and hierarchical states. How should formal relationships best be conducted in these conditions ? One important element is obviously that of the Human Rights which place moral limits on pluralism. Yet, we observe that Rawls tends to tone down the Human Rights. For example, he thinks that limiting the right of free expression in a country does not provide a sufficiently strong excuse to justify outside intervention. We fall here into the paradox of tolerance by which the most tolerant party always gives in to the others. This is why the conditions prevailing for good relationships between liberal countries and hierarchical countries are by definition unfavorable.

What are then finally the consequences of Rawls' position for the question of international distributive justice ? First of all, insofar as he rejects the possibility of world citizenship as a baseline, international distributive justice must be a matter for each individual country. Insofar as hierarchical states reject the concept of domestic social justice, we can immediately conclude that they will not take the notion of international distributive justice into consideration. Rawls's position is rather surprising as it is the one which Robert Nozick defends in the debate about social justice within a single country : individuals have their rights and redistribution is unacceptable if it is not unanimously accepted by the population. Rawls affirms in the same way the rights of the peoples. We can therefore criticize his idea in the same way as we criticize Nozick's vision. More precisely, we can maintain that the aspect of Rawls's theory which Nozick criticizes is merely one possible interpretation of the theory. It is more plausible to consider his theory of justice as a theory about those fundamental institutions which determine a country's system of primary distribution rather than a theory of redistribution.. Insofar as these institutions are currently unfair, it follows that the distribution of goods within that

country will also be unfair. As a result, reasoning in terms of rights and a unanimous will to redistribute is pointless.

Secondly, there are very few countries which do not have the means to meet their own needs. Therefore, the problem is not necessarily one of resources but to a greater extent one of political culture. Many Third World countries have corrupt and repressive governments. John Rawls is undoubtedly right here. If inequalities between the standards of living in various countries is the responsibility of the governments of the countries concerned, there is no need to talk about international distributive justice. Even so, we can mitigate these remarks in two ways. First of all, the Third World does not have the monopoly in corruption. In addition, when there are corrupt people, somebody must have corrupted them, and western businesses are not innocent here. Moreover, corruption and poverty are inextricably linked : poverty corrupts. Is there any reason to hope that this corruption will disappear as the GNP per habitant improves () ?

Thirdly, John Rawls does in fact recognise the obligation of the West towards the Third World, and in particular the obligation to support social and political institutions which uphold the Human Rights. However, to the extent that the Human Rights are perceived as moral limits to pluralism, this is a moral duty completely unconnected to the problem of distributive justice.

6. Rawlsian cosmopolitan egalitarians

Certain authors have been inspired by Rawls but themselves support a much more daring position on international distributive justice. One example is Thomas Pogge who suggests levying a global tax on natural resources (19). His idea works in the following way : each people would control the natural resources on its own territory, but it should equally pay a tax for the right to exploit them (for instance the Saudis should pay a global tax for the right to drill for oil). Obviously the price of the product would take this tax into account and so, in the long run, the consumer would be the one paying the tax. This tax would then be used to help the underprivileged people in the world. Pogge does not see the need for any form of world government in order to levy this tax. This proposition would imply a huge transfer in purchasing power. In my opinion, this transfer of purchasing power can certainly be justified and would lead to fairer institutions on a worldwide scale.

Nevertheless this suggestion comes up against serious feasibility problems. For the moment it is hard to imagine a political majority in favour of lowering to any great extent the standard of living in the western world. This difficulty is not an excuse, but it has to be taken into account. Sometimes a moral argument is advanced to justify the very weak transfers: solidarity with compatriots. The point is that global distributive would undermine social justice as it is realized in social security systems and other forms of social policy. Since we have special moral obligations towards our compatriots, based on a common culture and a common history, these obligations trump all forms of wider solidarity (20). I find most of the arguments in favour of national particularism with respect to distributive justice unconvincing. I can only see one moral argument which

could to some extent justify being more concerned with the fate of one's compatriots than with the other inhabitants of the planet : the argument based on honouring previous commitments. Let us look at an example : I am the father of two children, but I could adopt twelve more. The twelve I adopted from a third world country would increase their standard of living, but the lifestyle of the two children I have already may worsen to an extent that is becomes unbearable when compared with the lifestyle they could otherwise have expected. Do I have the right to improve the lifestyle of twelve children when that commitment will make me unable to fulfil a commitment I have already made ? It could be argued that the existence of a similar previous commitment limits the extent to which we can justifiably transfer purchasing power to other countries. We have already made the collective commitment to guarantee a certain minimum standard of living to the worst-off members of our own society. If we take on board world poverty as well, we shall be unable to honour that commitment. The remarkable variations in people's reactions towards the immigrant population illustrate this tension between previous commitments and new moral obligations. Public opinion differentiates between illegal immigrants who have been in Europe for years and ones who have just arrived. Many people are in favour of legalising the presence of those illegal immigrants who are already here. However the idea of closing our frontiers is less controversial. People accept more easily the idea of honouring commitments we have already made, in other words those towards people who already live and work here, and want to see them have some rights. On the other hand, we are far less willing to give those same rights to new arrivals or people who want to come here (21).

7. The 0.7 % norm

How can we transfer purchasing power and at the same time honour our previous commitments ? The idea I would like to put forward here is based on Pareto's argument, which is one possible interpretation of Rawls's difference principle. The argument goes like this : inequalities are justifiable insofar as they contribute to the well-being of the poorest sections of the population. This argument should not be applied to some hypothetical equal society, but to the situation as it really is today. We can accept on the one hand, like Rawls, that peoples exist and that for the moment we cannot reason without taking them into account. This situation limits the feasibility of many reforms. On the other hand, international distributive justice is a moral obligation. In short, no global original position exists, but there is an awareness of actual injustice and of our moral obligation to do something about it.

If we accept the current situation as a legitimate starting point (insofar as it solves the problem of feasibility) we could at least link the *growth* of a country's GNP per inhabitant to an obligation to, for example, *accept immigrants* or, in a vision based on fixed populations combined with the desire to preserve cultural identity, link it to an obligation to *give aid* to the poorer countries and thus reduce their inhabitants' desire to emigrate. Obviously, the GNP per inhabitant is not a very precise yardstick, and it does not take into consideration domestic inequalities and thus the Gini coefficient.

A commitment to provide aid for development brings to mind the famous commitment made by the industrialized countries to give 0.7% of their GNP to development aid, which was accepted by the UN in the context of their second development programme in 1975. This has been the accepted norm for 25 years now, but it has been honoured more in the breach than in the observance. Only four countries (the Netherlands, Sweden, Norway and Denmark) honour it. Nevertheless, we should reflect on the justification for that norm. From a moral point of view, a norm which varies according to each country's growth rate would be fairer. On the one hand, a relatively rich country faced with a recession has to increase its own social expenditure. On the other hand, a high growth rate makes an increase in international aid expenditure more easily acceptable. In addition, the explicit link with the immigration rate makes immigration limitation policy less morally ambiguous: the desire to preserve cultural identity can be divided from any form of collective selfishness. The disadvantage of any norm, like the famous 0.7 %, is that it leads to a very small transfer in purchasing power.

Footnotes

- (1) See e.g. Piketty (1997) for a very interesting discussion.
- (2) Used in a broad sense here, i.e. social justice is weakly related to, but not limited to, a certain form of equality.
- (3) To the extent that social life is organized in a closed self-sufficient nation-state, this comes practically down to a concept of common citizenship.
- (4) See Miller (1999: 31, 237) for a recent presentation of this discussion.
- (5) Cohen admits that this presentation of Rawls's justification of the difference principle is incomplete insofar as it detracts from the important argument based on the idea of the original position (1992: 1).
- (6) "For by arranging inequalities for reciprocal advantage and by abstaining from the exploitation of the contingencies of nature and social circumstance within the framework of equal liberty, persons express their respect for one another in the very constitution of their society" (Rawls 1971: 179).
- (7) "You cannot begin with equality because all inequalities are morally arbitrary in origin, and therefore unjust, and then favour an unequalizing Pareto-improvement when (as is standardly true) a Pareto-optimal equality is also feasible" (Cohen 1992: 23).
- (8) This "brain drain" is reality. A recent report from the World Bank estimates the number of highly qualified Africans leaving their continent at 23000 each year (See *Le Monde*, 4-5.06.2000)

(9) For Van Parijs, this means 'leximinning' real freedom. Cf. Van Parijs 1995.

(10) The requirement of patriotism is a pragmatic answer to this problem. If, on the one hand, one is ready to decline foreign incentives for reasons of solidarity with one's compatriots, why should one accept domestic incentives? On the other hand, someone who accepts the difference principle accepts the principles it is based on: inequalities resulting from morally arbitrary characteristics are unjust, and nationality is clearly one of these. And the question then arises why we should limit considerations of justice at the border of a country (Cf. Van Parijs 1995: 228 ff).

(11) Statistics dealing with inequality in the world can be found in the websites and texts published by international organisations like the World Bank, the UN or the FAO.

(12) One example of this tendency is Brazil, which is considered to be the country with the greatest inequalities in the world. The percentage of the population living below the international poverty line and having no access to clean drinking water or basic literacy is more or less the same as in the world population as a whole. (25% of the world population and 28.7% of Brazilians live on less than a dollar a day ; 22% of people in the world and 24% of those in Brazil do not have access to clean drinking water etc. Figures from the UNDP report on human development 1999.

(13) Other indicators, such as the Human Development Index show a slightly less dramatic picture. See also Easterlin (2000).

(14) These statistics are available in the UNDP report or the World Bank website

(15) By standard of living, I am referring to such things as life expectancy, access to health care, purchasing power etc., but not political or civil rights.

(16) However, some authors argue in favour of specific moral obligations towards one's own countrymen. See David Miller. I have criticized Miller's position in my article "Soziale Gerechtigkeit als Teil globaler Gerechtigkeit." forthcoming in a reader on global justice edited by K. Ballestrem (Leverkusen : Leske und Budrich).

(17) The metaphors draw on Chauvier (1999).

(18) I am aware that this empirical statement is questionable. But see the website of Transparency International (<http://www.transparency.org>) to have a rather clear picture of the link between wealth and corruption or bribery. Of course, wealth is only one, be it an important factor.

(19) Other examples are Beitz (1979) and more recently Jones (1999).

(20) See e.g. Miller (1995) and Walzer (1984).

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