GLOBAL EGALITARIANISM
Cosmopolitanism and statism

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Introduction

Global justice as a philosophical inquiry has excited much interest over the past two decades. If it appears to some observers to be less of a “hot” topic at the moment, it is nonetheless also true that it is now established as an area of specialization in its own right. In any case, under this inquiry, various topics or problems of justice are contested, including the problems of human rights and the limits of state sovereignty, international toleration and liberal internationalism, world poverty and social justice, just war and intervention and terrorism, and climate change justice.

But one topic that has garnered a large share of attention is that of global egalitarianism. The basic question this topic raises is whether global justice ought to include an egalitarian distributive commitment or principle. This question has prompted different theories and substantive positions on both sides. As a result, the literature on global egalitarianism has become rather crowded and can appear rather chaotic to someone who is coming to it anew. My aim in this introduction is to identify and clarify what I take to be some of the main contending views on this issue.

While there can be different ways of defending or opposing global egalitarianism, one significant fault-line between proponents and opponents of global egalitarianism is the opposition between “cosmopolitan egalitarians” and “statists”. Cosmopolitan egalitarianism, as its name suggests, favors global egalitarianism, whereas statism, as is also hinted by its name, denies that egalitarianism has scope beyond the borders of the domestic state. While I will focus on cosmopolitanism and statism as they pertain to the special question of global egalitarianism, I will note in closing that the cosmopolitanism/statism divide provides two competing philosophical starting points or perspectives on global justice more broadly.

What is global egalitarianism?

To start, a few remarks on “global egalitarianism” to define the parameters of this debate. The substantive question is whether global justice includes some duty of justice to regulate global economic inequality between individuals across state borders. Still, three points of clarification are important.
First, the debate is not whether there is a moral duty or duty of justice to redistribute resources to persons or countries in need to alleviate extreme poverty or to provide humanitarian relief against natural disasters. Indeed, many of the main positions against global egalitarianism in the literature accept that global morality would include a duty of assistance or humanitarian aid to countries or persons in severe straits. The debate, rather, is whether global economic inequality is a concern of justice; that is, whether an injustice remains when there is a certain economic inequality even when no one is suffering from extreme or absolute deprivation. The point of contention, in short, is whether there is a distributive obligation that is attuned to the relative economic standing of agents. It is true that concerns of poverty and economic equality can come together, as when excessive inequality results in the impoverishing of the less advantaged. But poverty and economic inequality are nonetheless conceptually and normatively distinct categories, and the question remains whether economic inequality independently of the problem of poverty is a concern of justice. Global egalitarianism is a commitment that goes beyond poverty mitigation.

Second, the debate on egalitarian justice is not a quarrel over the moral equality of persons. To the contrary, the plausible and interesting objections to global egalitarianism do not deny the moral equality of persons. The dispute is whether equal moral respect for agents translates into a duty to regulate economic inequality among them.

This is a familiar point in the domestic discussions. Most libertarians, if any, for example, do not deny that persons are entitled to equal moral consideration by the state. Their view, rather, is that equal moral consideration does not entail egalitarian distributive justice. To the contrary, their basic position, rightly or wrongly, is that respect for the moral equality of persons must rule out state-enforced egalitarian obligations among individuals. Thus, at issue is not whether persons are moral equals. Rather, the engaging issue is whether the presumption of the moral equality of persons entails some form of egalitarian distributive justice. Hence the distinction between egalitarianism (as a technical term) and moral equality is a useful one to keep in mind. In contemporary political philosophy, it is not unusual to reserve the term “egalitarianism” for the ideal that economic and social equality among agents matters, as distinct from the term “equality” which is used to refer to the more general and formal ideal of the moral equality of persons.

Third and finally, egalitarianism does not mean that there must be actual equality of outcome. This may be a rather obvious point to us, but it is worth clarifying because it will help illuminate what makes a principle an egalitarian principle.

Whatever the economic good is that an egalitarian principle aims to distribute more equally, it is not the case that egalitarian justice requires an end state in which the good is equally allocated among the relevant agents. What makes an egalitarian distributive principle egalitarian is that it takes an equal distribution to be a benchmark from which departures have to be justified. An egalitarian principle is egalitarian in that it specifies and limits the conditions under which an unequal distribution is admissible.

Thus, a distributive principle is egalitarian if it takes persons’ (or some moral agents’) relative standing to be of interest, and if it takes equal distribution to be the default from which departures have to be justified. To take a famous example, John Rawls calls his “difference principle” an egalitarian principle because it takes an equal distribution among cooperating actors to be the benchmark from which departures have to be justified. As we know, Rawls takes a deviation from the benchmark of equal distribution to be justified when the inequality accrues under an arrangement that benefits the worst-off class of individual most.

In summary, the debate on global egalitarianism is not about our moral duty to respond to poverty or other forms of absolute deprivation; it is not about the moral equality of persons.
Global egalitarianism

(which is taken for granted); and it is not about whether we should aim at distributive equal outcome as an ideal, but the extent to which unequal distribution ought to be allowed. What the debate engages is the question of whether global justice includes some principle for regulating or controlling economic inequality in the world.

Cosmopolitan egalitarianism

One may defend global egalitarianism in the form of a literal international egalitarianism. That is, one could propose that the global egalitarian requirement primarily applies between countries. How individuals per se fare under this arrangement of egalitarianism among states is a different matter. While this internationalist position is technically egalitarian, it is not the form of global egalitarianism that is typically defended, if at all. The global egalitarian position most frequently proposed takes the individual to be the basic unit of concern with respect to distributive justice. Specifically, it holds that individuals stand in a relationship of distributive justice to each other beyond the limits presented by the facts of political boundaries and membership or citizenship. It is this normative individualistic and transnational ideal of distributive justice that distinguishes the label "cosmopolitan egalitarianism".

But cosmopolitan egalitarianism is still subject to misunderstanding. Indeed, its modifier "cosmopolitan" itself can mean different things. So it is worth defining what the position normally stands for in order to better locate the opposition between the cosmopolitan egalitarians and their critics.

First, cosmopolitanism does not imply "world statism". The disagreement between cosmopolitan egalitarians and their opponents is rarely, if ever, a debate about the ideal of a world state. The debate, in the first instance, concerns the reach of egalitarian justice, and if issues about a world state should enter the scene, they do so only secondarily.

Second, the individualism of cosmopolitanism does not imply that global distributive justice cannot by way of implementation focus on distribution among countries. So long as the distribution among countries is regarded as a means towards realizing the ultimate goal of achieving egalitarian justice for individuals, treating states as the basic distributive unit for administrative purposes is compatible with the cosmopolitan egalitarian ideal. (Thus, the distinction between the ideal or objective, on the one side, and strategy and implementation, on the other.)

Finally, cosmopolitan egalitarianism does not mean that there is no space within global justice for national projects and expressions of collective self-determination. Cosmopolitan egalitarianism need not be cast as the only global end or value, such that all other commitments and principles must be justified or understood by reference to it.

Rather, just as we allow that, within the bounds of domestic justice, persons may do as they wish so long as the requirements of justice are respected and maintained, so within the bounds of global justice, there can be space for national pursuits and other collective projects so long as the requirements of cosmopolitan justice are upheld. Thus, cosmopolitan egalitarianism does not rule out non-cosmopolitan, that is, nationalistic, pursuits; what it does is specify the normative space for such pursuits.

Arguing for cosmopolitan egalitarianism

So how does one make the case for cosmopolitan egalitarianism? For our purpose, we need not get into the details of any particular cosmopolitan egalitarian argument or theory. It will suffice, in order to have a clearer target for the statist opposition, for us to outline one representative strategy in support of cosmopolitan egalitarianism.
First, cosmopolitan egalitarians typically do not reinvent the egalitarian wheel. Rather, they begin from some widely accepted or influential theory of egalitarian justice (conceived for domestic society), and from this starting point, attempt to show that the favored egalitarian theory logically extends to the global domain.

In this respect, Charles Beitz’s *Political Theory and International Relations*, published over thirty years ago, has paved the way. To simplify, Beitz takes Rawls’s theory of justice as his starting point, and seeks to demonstrate that there is no good reason to limit Rawls’s basic commitments and methodology to the state domain. To the contrary, Beitz argues, consistency in reasoning and methodology would require extending Rawls’s conclusions to the global domain as well. That is, we must arrive at a globalized version of Rawls’s two principles of justice, including his egalitarian distributive principle. Thus, according to Beitz, we have reasons to apply Rawls’s own theory of justice to the global context, his own reluctance briefly hinted at in *A Theory of Justice* notwithstanding. What is especially interesting is that in his own more worked out theory of international justice, Rawls confirms and elaborates on his resistance to global egalitarianism. But more on this later.

The details of Rawls’s theory of justice and Beitz’s interpretation of it need not detain us at the moment. What I want to draw attention to is the form of the argument that we can call “the argument by extension”. The extension argument seeks to show that a favored set of arguments for egalitarian justice for the domestic state ought not to be confined to the context of the state, but should extend outwards to the global arena. The normative core of the extension argument is that state and national borders are morally irrelevant and therefore ought not to obstruct the logical outward flow of arguments for egalitarianism to the world as a whole.

The way an extension argument unfolds will depend on the egalitarian theory it begins with. In general, in the contemporary egalitarianism literature, there are two basic approaches to defending egalitarianism. One approach takes it that egalitarian obligations exist between individuals as such given their status as equal moral agents. The other takes egalitarian obligations to apply not between moral agents as such but only between persons who enjoy or ought to enjoy some kind of associational relationship or ties. We can label the former the moral approach to egalitarianism, and the latter the relational approach.

The moral approach can take a variety of forms. “Luck egalitarianism” is just one version of the moral approach to egalitarianism, but it is an illustrative example. Luck egalitarianism, briefly, is the ideal that economic inequality among persons due to their misfortunes and bad luck is the common fate of society to be shared by all and not by the unfortunate alone. Therefore, justice would require some distributive mechanism to mitigate inequality among persons as a result of their luck. This is what follows from the equal moral regard for persons. Globalizing this approach, since the place of one’s birth or one’s country of residence is in general a matter of luck rather than personal choice, differences in persons’ life chances due to such matters ought not to stand uncorrected. To the contrary, there must be some global egalitarian distributive principles to counteract the unequalizing effects of state borders and citizenships on persons’ opportunities.

The relational approach likewise can take different forms. But one account holds that the relationship that is necessary for generating egalitarian commitments is that of fair social cooperation. That is, egalitarian duties are activated only when the relevant actors are also participating (or ought to be participating) under some shared cooperative arrangement. Some global egalitarians, adopting this cooperative ideal of egalitarianism, accordingly try to make the case that the global order is a cooperative arrangement of the sort that should trigger global egalitarian commitments. They point to features of the world order, such as trade relations and regulations, and international law and legal norms, as evidence of a global cooperative institutional order,
and conclude that if the ideal of social cooperation entails egalitarianism in the domestic context, there is a case as well for global egalitarianism. Indeed, Beitz’s proposal for a global difference principle turns on his claim that there is global cooperation of the relevant sort.8

**Statism**

Let us turn to the statist challenge to cosmopolitanism. But as with “cosmopolitanism”, it is useful to identify the parameters of the statist position to understand what it claims and does not claim with respect to global egalitarianism.

First, statism is not globalized libertarianism. Libertarians will unsurprisingly reject global egalitarianism because they reject egalitarianism across the board. To be sure, a complete defense of global egalitarian will have to content with libertarianism. But the libertarian challenge is a debate within political philosophy more broadly and not an issue that is unique to global justice. Statism presents special challenge *within* the discourse of global justice because it does not deny that there are egalitarian commitments domestically. Statism is a powerful challenge because it specifically targets *global* egalitarianism rather than egalitarianism at large. So, while egalitarianism within political philosophy must confront the libertarian objection, global egalitarians have a very different (and special) opponent in the statist.

As an aside, as we will see, what makes the statist position especially interesting *philosophically* is that it attempts to show why there are egalitarian obligations at home but none globally. One of the things the statist literature has done is to put forward for our consideration different reasons why egalitarianism matters. If nothing else, this has enriched contemporary political philosophy considerably.

Second, statism does not deny that there are global duties of assistance or humanitarian relief in response to extreme poverty or famine or natural calamities. (So statism is also not a libertarian view in this other sense.) What statism rejects is that there are duties of distributive equality in addition to our moral duties to make sure that basic needs of persons are met.

Basic needs can be defined more robustly or less by different statist theorists, but nonetheless, for each, what we owe to foreigners is not comparative and there is a cut-off point in principle to our obligations. In contrast, egalitarian duties are comparative and ongoing, and therefore belong to a different class of duties from the duty to provide for basic needs.

Third, to reiterate a point made earlier, there is no implication in statist views that persons in the world aren’t moral equals. To the contrary, the most interesting statist arguments affirm that persons are moral equals. What they deny is that this moral equality of persons translates into an egalitarian ideal in the global setting. Thus, statism consequently does not deny that individuals are the ultimate units of moral concern. In fact, the most plausible and interesting statist positions affirm the moral primacy of the individual. But even though individuals are the ultimate units of moral concern, statism holds that international justice must be understood in terms of the relationship between state associations in light of the special moral status of the state.

So statism is a carefully circumscribed, and thus a forceful, position. It does not reject egalitarianism across the board; it supports certain global duties of humanitarian aid or duties of assistance; and it does not flippantly deny the moral equality of persons.

**Two statist arguments**

In its basic form, statism relies on two substantive claims. First, it denies that egalitarianism applies between moral persons as such. Rather, it holds that egalitarianism takes hold only under special social conditions, in particular within special kinds of associations. That is, it supports the
Kok-Chor Tan

relational view of egalitarianism. More specifically, it holds that egalitarian duties are triggered
by the unique circumstances of political association. Hence the label “statism.” Second, and this
is the clincher, it claims that since the relevant egalitarian-triggering association does not exist at
the global level (given that it is unique to the state), there is no basis for global egalitarian duties.

Just as some influential global egalitarian arguments are inspired by Rawls’s theory of
justice, the statist arguments we will discuss below are self-consciously efforts at interpreting
and defending Rawls’s own objection to global egalitarian as outlined in The Law of Peoples.9

Rawls formulates different objections to global egalitarianism in The Law of Peoples. But of
special interest is his claim that, while the criterion of reciprocity within the democratic state
will require that the gap between the rich and poor be regulated, reciprocity among peoples
in the international context does not require a similar regulation of economic inequality.10

Reciprocity in the latter would require only some form of duty of assistance, to help ensure
that all peoples are capable of establishing and maintaining well-ordered domestic institutions
of their own. Rawls’s point is thus quintessentially statist in form. That is, on his view, there
is something special or unique about the (liberal) state that generates egalitarian obligations of
justice; but no similar grounding condition exists in the global context. The statist arguments
we will examine below are in fact attempts at trying to make sense of this special egalitarian
triggering feature of the state, and as mentioned, each of the statists we will discuss regard them-

selves to be developing Rawls’s anti-global egalitarian thesis. Different statist theories provide
different accounts of what this special egalitarian-triggering feature of political association is.
We will look at two different statist arguments in turn.

The coercion argument

The coercion argument claims that egalitarianism matters among persons within a political
association because of the special fact of state coercion. On one version of this argument, due
to Michael Blake, state coercion is in the first instance problematic because it involves a viola-
tion of individual autonomy.11 When individuals are coerced, their choices are restrained. Yet
the state has to be necessarily coercive because this is how the state can best protect and enforce
individual freedom.

So how do we reconcile the problem of coercion and the necessity of coercion? How do we
resolve this paradox? For Blake, we do this by ensuring that the coercive state takes an interest in
the relative standing of individuals. That is, so to speak, the sting of coercion is blunted, indeed
made legitimate in the eyes of members of the association, if the institutions the coercive state
supports are institutions that include egalitarian values.

This is why egalitarianism matters domestically, namely, to help make legitimate the fact
of state coercion. But, and this is the key point, there is no functionally equivalent coercive
political authority at the global level, Blake observes. Accordingly, there is no analogous issue
of legitimacy at the global plane as in the domestic. Thus, while there is the precondition for
egalitarianism in the domestic case (state coercion could not be legitimate otherwise), there is
none for egalitarianism in the global case (since there is no global coercion to legitimize).

Thomas Nagel has a slightly different argument from coercion.12 For Nagel, coercion is
a problem that needs to be justified or made legitimate in the eyes of those being coerced,
but only in the case where those being coerced are also seen as joint-authors of the system of
coercion. (This circumscribing of the set of persons who are in standing to demand justifica-
tion for coercion against them has significance, as we will see below.) Nagel thus limits the set
of individuals to whom justification for coercion is owed. The rest of Nagel’s arguments then
follow roughly the same track as Blake’s: since there is no global coercive system that ought
to be regarded as the joint venture of individuals in the world as a whole, there is no need to introduce egalitarian obligations in the global setting.

The cooperation argument

The second influential statist argument focuses on a different and supposedly unique feature of the state or political association. Instead of coercion, the cooperation argument focuses on the ideal of the state as a system based on social cooperation.\textsuperscript{13} The state is a cooperative system of a particular kind: it supports and enforces a complex economic structure that determines persons’ entitlements, responsibilities, wages, contractual rights, rights of ownership, and the like. It also supports a common market for goods and services, and provides the infrastructure – roads, postal service, education, research support – that allows for the realization and delivery of services and goods.

Because of this intimate economic cooperation, citizens stand in some ideal of reciprocity to each other. This means that none can impose joint arrangements on others that they may reasonably oppose. The steps towards egalitarianism have to be filled in, but essentially, the criterion of reciprocity with respect to institutional arrangements will take us towards some egalitarian commitments to each other.

However, when we turn our gaze to the world, say the statists, we don’t find a similar kind of cooperative order. Contra global egalitarians, these statists insist that the global order does not exhibit the kind of economic relationships to generate the same reciprocity requirement. Yes, there are rules governing trade relations, treaties, and economic pacts among countries. But these do not amount to a common economic system in which people’s basic ownership rights, entitlements, and opportunities are fixed. Rather than a single economic structure, the international order is more like a minimally regulated stage in which different economic systems interact. Thus, although there is a reason for egalitarianism on account of the ideal of social cooperation, there is no similar basis globally.

Statism versus cosmopolitanism

Both the coercion and cooperation arguments share this basic argumentative form: they present a normative premise or claim about the basis/ground of egalitarianism, and they make an empirical claim about the absence of this ground in the global domain.

Thus, in response to these arguments, the cosmopolitan can target either the empirical or normative premises. Consider, first, the empirical premise of the coercion argument. Is it true that the global order is not a coercive one in the relevant sense? After all, one could point, for just one example, to the fact of immigration restriction. Individuals wanting entry into a (richer) foreign country can be barred, and coercively repelled. So can’t one say that the global order is at least coercive in this case, in the sense that persons aren’t free to move around? So, isn’t there some coercive order that stands in need of justification in the same way that the domestic order needs to be justified? Along these lines, some commentators have countered that the global order can be described as coercive in a normatively relevant sense as per the coercion argument.\textsuperscript{14} On the coercion argument’s reasoning, the global egalitarian might thus press, would this not lead us to global egalitarianism?

Nagel’s coercion argument, however, can evade this first challenge as stated. Recall that, for Nagel, it is not coercion that immediately needs to be justified (to the one being coerced). What needs justification is the coercion against those who are supposedly joint authors of the coercive system. That is, only citizens who are supposed to have a say in the construction of their
institutional structure are entitled to demand justification for any institutional coercion directed at them. So, Nagel’s version of the argument can accept that the outsider who is being kept out by our immigration laws is being coerced, but still maintain that we owe her no explanation because she is not regarded as participant and joint author of our system of laws.

Nonetheless, it seems that Nagel’s move cannot evade this objection altogether. If a country’s right to enact immigration rules, and to enforce them, is in fact a right grounded in and sanctioned by the international order, then does this not raise the question as to the authorship of the coercive international order? So even if one needs to be a joint author of an institutional order before one can have standing to demand reasons for her coercion, immigration rules enacted by individual countries aren’t enacted in an international vacuum but are domestic laws given standing by an international order. This then raises the question of how we should understand the authorship of this international order that sanctions the authority of states to make laws that have global implications. Should we regard it as the joint creation of all individuals in the world if it is to be legitimate? If so, then individuals in the world at large have the standing to demand justification for any coercion they experience that is sanctioned ultimately by that international order. Would this not put us consequently on the path towards egalitarianism, analogous to the domestic case?

So I think some pressure can be put on the empirical premise of the coercion argument. Similarly, some pressure can be put on the empirical premise of the cooperation argument. The cooperation argument points to economic institutional facts and laws like property rights, contract laws, laws regulating transfers and transactions, and the like, to show why egalitarianism applies within the state. Are there not similar economic institutions in the global arena that can count as arrangements of cooperation? For instance, are there not international laws and norms regulating territorial rights, ownership of natural resources, and international intellectual property rights that are examples of global institutions and laws that ultimately establish and define the terms of ownership? Is the economic success of one country really so detached from and independent of a background international economic structure?

The above are complex issues and involve conceptual as well as empirical interpretations and research. My remarks are in no way meant as decisive or definitive. My point is that the jury is still out on the empirical claims underlying both the coercion and cooperative arguments.

At any rate, closer to the expertise of normative philosophy, even if the empirical premises of both the coercion and cooperation arguments survive scrutiny, their respective normative premises may not. Consider the claim that coercion is the sine qua non of egalitarianism. But is it true that coercion is a necessary condition for egalitarianism? One might allow that coercion is a sufficient condition for egalitarianism such that, should there be systematic institutional coercion, egalitarian duties are activated; but to say that it is also necessary is a much stronger claim.

The same question can be posed for the cooperation argument. The ideal of cooperation might very well generate egalitarian obligations; but couldn’t there be other reasons? Indeed, there is a lively internal dispute among statists themselves between the coercion side and the cooperation side as to which feature of the state is the triggering feature of egalitarianism. This internal disagreement fuels the suspicion that there is not just one necessary motivating reason for egalitarianism.15

More fundamentally, why take it as settled that egalitarian duties are “relational” in the sense described above? As mentioned, statists deny that egalitarian duties can arise between moral agents as such. But how decisive and secure is this assumption that egalitarian duties are necessarily “relational” duties? Couldn’t egalitarian obligations (also) arise straight away between persons as such, in virtue of their moral standing and relationship to each other, as the moral approach would have it?
Consider that there are non-relational approaches to egalitarianism on the table, notably luck egalitarianism. To be sure, these moral approaches have their legion of forceful critics. But this is not unusual for any complex philosophical account, and the disagreement between luck egalitarianism and its opponents is far from settled to my mind. To the extent, then, that non-relational approaches to egalitarianism remain serious contenders as grounds of egalitarian justice, the statist position turns crucially on a normative premise that is still open to argument.

Conclusion

Statists deny that egalitarian obligations obtain between equal moral agents as such. What activates egalitarian obligations are additional commitments or facts about associative relations among persons. These associative ideals or facts are, according to statists, peculiar to the circumstance of the state and thus absent in the global arena. Some argue, for example, that the coercive character of the state is the distinguishing feature that triggers egalitarian commitments among citizens; others prefer to highlight the cooperative character of the state, in particular in its economic institutions. These attempts can be seen also as ways of explaining why there is a special requirement of reciprocity among citizens that ought to control economic inequality among them, and that why there is no similar requirement of reciprocity among persons at the global level.

These statist arguments rely on various claims that the global egalitarian can try to resist. For example, the global egalitarian can ask whether it is really the case that egalitarianism is an associative obligation and not an obligation that could take hold between persons (in the world as a whole) as such. Or, if she grants the associative approach to egalitarianism, she can try to show that the relevant egalitarian triggering features in fact obtain at the global level as well.

The problem of global egalitarianism has perhaps received more attention in the current literature on global justice than other questions since it engages the staple issues of analytic political philosophy, that of distributive justice and economic equality. While there is as yet no resolution to the global dispute, the statist response has inspired investigations into the conditions under which egalitarianism matters. As a result, a global justice debate has enriched and enlivened the well-traversed topic of egalitarian justice. It re-opens with important motivation a closer study of the question: Why does and should egalitarianism matter? The topic of global egalitarianism is a good illustration of how political philosophy makes progress when it confronts new problem areas.

But statism and cosmopolitanism have implications beyond global egalitarian justice. In fact, the statism versus cosmopolitanism opposition provides two general contrasting philosophical approaches to global justice more broadly. The statist approach to global justice takes it that global justice ought to be essentially understood in terms of justice between states (or some analogous collective agent, such as a people). Statism, therefore, understands global justice as a distinctive domain of justice from that of domestic justice, where justice is primarily that of justice between individuals (even if that relationship is mediated via shared institutions). The cosmopolitan approach, on the other hand, treats global justice to be basically concerned with justice between persons (even if their relationship has to be mediated by complex international and state institutions). Thus, there is no fundamental difference between domestic justice and global justice. Unlike statism, cosmopolitanism does not take global justice to be a distinctive realm of justice. It basically has a single tiered approach to justice.

To reiterate, the statist positions need not deny that the individual is the basic unit of moral concern. It is just that when it comes to global justice, we have to conceive of justice as justice between states rather than as justice between individuals given the moral significance of the state.
This difference in orientation between statism and cosmopolitanism can account for a range of substantive disagreements in global justice besides that of global egalitarianism. For example, with regard to the problems or questions of the ethics of immigration control, the balance between human rights and state sovereignty, and the tension between international justice and international toleration, our substantive positions on these matters can differ depending on whether we embrace a statist or cosmopolitan orientation. If we begin from a statist perspective, and treat global justice as a distinctive realm of justice, and as essentially a realm of justice that is concerned with the relationship between (just) states, we will be more inclined to favor giving states more rights over immigration control, regard state sovereignty as a value that is not reducible to individual rights, and opt for an understanding of international toleration that favors state rights. In contrast, if our orientation is cosmopolitan, then we will be more likely to prioritize the right of individuals to free movement over the right of states to restrict movement, to understand state sovereignty only in relation to individual rights, and to support an account of international toleration that defers to individual (as opposed to state) rights.

The statist versus cosmopolitan dispute is thus the philosophical core in the debate on global justice. Should we conceive of global justice essentially in terms of justice among free and equal persons or in terms of justice among free and independent states or peoples? Is there essentially just one domain of justice, within which each person is entitled to equal respect or concern? Or are there different domains of justice, with different primary subjects depending on the domain? Is justice universally uniform, or is justice necessarily pluralistic and contextual and must take different shapes (with different basic subjects) depending on the social realm in question? The subject of global justice thus instigates inquiry into the very character of justice itself.

Notes
1 I thank participants at a seminar in the Department of Bioethics, the National Institutes of Health, and especially David DeGrazia, for helpful comments and suggestions.
2 These terms have been used, for example, to capture these two general positions on global egalitarianism in Pablo Gilabert, From Global Poverty to Global Equality (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); and Laura Valentini, Justice in a Globalized World: A Normative Framework (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).
5 See also Thomas Pogge, Realizing Rawls (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989), Part III.
Global egalitarianism


15 See, for example, Sangiovanni’s criticisms of Blake’s (2001) coercion argument in favor of the cooperation argument; and see Blake’s reply (2013).