Introduction

Protests in favour of 'global justice' are becoming a familiar part of the political landscape. Placards demanding a more just, fair or equal world present a colourful accompaniment to every major meeting of world leaders. Social movement scholars are busily researching – and arguing about – whether a 'global justice movement' can be said to be emerging. There are also many organisations which campaign to try and raise awareness of global issues – such as Make Poverty History, Oxfam and the World Development Movement. And, sure enough, the idea of global justice is slowly creeping into the mainstream of political debate. When the leaders of the G8 wealthiest countries met at Gleneagles, Scotland, in 2005, they committed themselves to securing debt cancellation for the poorest countries, an additional US$50 billion in overseas aid and a (somewhat) more just system of international trade. Partly under pressure from organisations such as Make Poverty History, political leaders appeared to recognise that issues of global justice were going to be an important part of the political agenda for the twenty-first century.

But what *is* global justice, and what does it mean? Judging from the organisations and individuals who campaign about it, it incorporates issues such as global poverty, trade justice (and also fair trade), aid to the developing world, debt cancellation, and perhaps human rights too, as well as issues such as how to spread the costs of responding to climate change. But what, if anything, have these issues got in common? Broadly speaking, we can describe them as issues of *distributive justice* – that is, they concern how the benefits and burdens of living together are to be shared out between us. Advocates of global justice are arguing – typically, at least – for more equal

access to international trade networks for poorer countries or the provision of more aid, or are arguing that people in wealthier countries ought to reduce their carbon emissions because they are, currently, disproportionately large. As issues of distributive justice these are *normative* concerns – they relate to what people *ought* to get (what they are morally entitled to), as well as what they ought to do, or give (what their moral duties are).

The idea of global justice has also been a growth area – perhaps even *the* growth area – within political theory or philosophy in recent years. Very many, and perhaps most, universities now teach courses on the topic. Political theorists and philosophers have supplied *theories* of global justice – attempts to explain to us, or persuade us, what our entitlements and duties are, and where they come from. These theories provide the building blocks for courses on global justice. This book presents an overview of these theories, and shows how they might apply to some of the issues described above.

The book has two main aims. The first is to help students to navigate their way through debates on global justice and to orient them in the by-now extensive literature. Students on courses on global justice (and sometimes 'global distributive justice', 'international justice' or 'global ethics') can find that literature rather complex and difficult. It is undoubtedly a sophisticated and fast-moving set of debates, which does make certain demands on the reader. For that reason, an introduction or companion to academic debates on global justice is an important addition to the resources available to students. The book is not intended as a substitute for reading and engaging with theories of global justice directly, which is something for which there is really no substitute. But it is intended to provide a map of the territory and an accessible overview of the issues with which students will be faced – which should make the process of studying global justice less bewildering and more rewarding.

The second main aim of the book is to preserve the link between the important and engaging political issues mentioned at the outset and the theories which students will actually be spending much of their time studying. While the first part of this book provides an overview of the more important theories or *accounts* of global justice, the second and slightly longer part

moves on to the *issues* to which they might apply. These, after all, are what students are often most interested *in*, and what the theories discussed in part I are actually intended to provide guidance *on*. So the attention in Part II shifts to a series of significant political issues: human rights, the ownership of natural resources, trade justice, climate justice, and justice and migration. These issues all have resonance with political debates in the real world, and to bring that point home each of the chapters in part II includes a case study addressing contemporary issues or events. And, just as importantly, in each of the chapters of part II we try to assess just what the theories discussed in part I can tell us about the issue in question. Readers should get a sense both of what normative standards different theorists have suggested we ought to apply to global politics or the global economy, and what some of the practical implications of applying those various standards would be.

The scope and approach of the book

In any book of this kind decisions have to be made about what to put in and what to leave out. The book does not attempt to cover the entire field of global or international ethics. There is a series of important normative issues in international relations – such as just war, the ethics of humanitarian intervention, the morality of nuclear weapons or the appropriate response to terrorism – which will be left to one side. Our focus will be firmly on *distributive* questions: how ought the global economy to be organised? Do people everywhere have an entitlement of justice that their basic needs should be met? What level of carbon dioxide emissions should each person be allowed to cause? Who owns the world's natural resources, and how should rights over them be shared? This restriction is necessary to keep the book manageable, but should also reflect the content of many courses on global justice, which overwhelmingly focus on such distributive issues.

Generally speaking, this book should be accessible to students and general readers interested in issues of global justice, and it does not assume prior knowledge of political theory or philosophy. But its most likely audience will be students taking optional courses on global justice, in their second or third year of undergraduate study or on master's-level courses. Although there are now some very good anthologies of key essays on global justice, bringing together contributions from leading theorists, these courses are not yet well served by introductory guides or companions to the literature. This book addresses that gap. Two other features of the book should make it especially valuable to most readers. The first is the extensive treatment not only of *theories* of (or approaches to) global justice, but also of *issues* on which those theories might give us guidance. The case studies, in particular, attempt to make the connection with contemporary politics and current affairs a strong one. The second feature is the emphasis on charting the fast-growing literature. Each of the chapters of part II ends with a section on 'Further issues', which discusses emerging debates or controversies within the field

which appear likely to command increasing attention in the coming years.

In terms of the order in which readers ought to tackle the chapters, the three chapters of part I provide the theoretical underpinning for the issues discussed in part II, and so ideally should be read first. But each of the five chapters of part II could potentially be read in isolation. They could also be read in any order, which should be helpful, given that many university courses on global justice divide up and arrange the topics in different ways.

The structure of the book

Part I of the book aims to set out the most important theories of global justice:

- Chapter 1 introduces the *idea* of global distributive justice. We investigate just what a theory of global distributive justice is, and why we might think that one is necessary. Theorists disagree about exactly why we need global justice, with some suggesting that in a globalised world we need principles of justice to regulate the institutions that affect all our lives, and others arguing that it is because we are all human, with a right to equal dignity and respect, that global justice is necessary. We also briefly examine a distinction which will recur throughout this book, between *egalitarian* and *minimalist* approaches to global justice.
- Chapter 2 then examines egalitarian approaches to global justice – approaches which, in some way or another, argue that we should try to arrive at a more equal world. We take two prominent global egalitarian thinkers as examples and work through some of their more important arguments.
- Chapter 3 moves on to examine minimalist approaches to global justice. These approaches are less ambitious than their egalitarian rivals, and aim instead at securing the

foundations for a decent life for everyone. We examine three such accounts and address their implications for global justice.

Armed with these theoretical foundations, we move on in Part II to discuss a set of important issues.

- Chapter 4 discusses human rights. It is particularly concerned with a contentious issue: whether we can be said to have rights, as a matter of justice, to such things as food and shelter and housing. We shall assess the argument for these 'socio-economic' rights and also discuss the implications of a human right to health.
- Chapter 5 discusses issues of resource distribution. Many countries have access to plentiful natural resources buried under their territories, such as oil, coal or diamonds. For some theorists this raises issues of justice. We examine recent arguments about the 'resource privilege' or 'resource rights', which are said to implicate wealthy Western states and citizens in continuing global poverty. We also address broader questions about who ought to own the world's natural resources.
- Chapter 6 discusses various approaches to international trade. We are often told that international trade should be made more just, or that we should buy 'fair trade' goods. But what does this mean? The chapter examines various arguments for reforming the World Trade Organization's role in achieving trade justice, for 'fair trade', and for 'linking' international trade with labour standards.
- Chapter 7 addresses the challenge of climate change, and in particular discusses how we should distribute the costs of responding to it. Assuming that the ability of the atmosphere to absorb carbon dioxide is limited, how should we distribute the right to emit? What guidance can theories of global justice give us?
- The final chapter, chapter 8, examines the challenge of international migration. Broad arguments in favour both of free movement across borders, and of restricting immigration, will be considered. But we shall also discuss

the relationship between migration and distributive justice: would opening borders to more immigrants be a good response to problems of global injustice or a bad one? If richer countries gave more aid to poorer ones, would this entitle the former to keep their borders closed?

part I

Approaches

chapter 1