

Global Cities, Global Justice?

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Abstract

The global city is a contested site of economic innovation and cultural production, as well as profound inequalities of wealth and life chances. These cities, and large cities that aspire to 'global' status, are often the point of entry for new immigrants. Yet for political theorists (and indeed many scholars of global institutions), these critical sites of global influence and inequality have not been a significant focus of attention. This is curious. Theorists have wrestled with the nature and demands of global justice, but have for the most part supposed that the debate is between statist and cosmopolitan formulations. Questions of redistribution, immigration, humanitarian obligations, coercion at borders, and territorial rights have correspondingly been cast as either the domain of sovereign territorial states, or of the nascent web of supranational institutions that might bind those states and peoples, morally and legally. Examining some of these issues and arguments through the lens of the global city casts them in a new and informative light, and buttresses an *associative turn* in thinking about global justice.

Keywords: global cities; global justice; inequality; immigration

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Acknowledgements

This collaboration began after conversations at the Urban Affairs Association meetings in San Francisco (April 2013) and the EURA-UAA Joint Urban Futures Conference in Paris (June 2014). We are grateful to the editors and reviewers here, and to many colleagues for helpful exchanges, in particular: Roger Keil, Margaret Kohn, Warren Magnusson, Sharon Meagher, Julia Nevarez, Kim Rygiel, Patrick Turmel, and Daniel Weinstock.

Global Cities, Global Justice?

In this paper we explore two central concerns of global justice scholarship – distribution and immigration – through the analytic lens of the global city. Our approach clarifies the appeal of *associative* approaches to problems of global justice, which occupy conceptual and empirical spaces between statist and cosmopolitan theories. Our analysis also has implications for invoking ‘global justice’ narratives in thinking about problems facing massive and growing urban agglomerations in the ‘global south’. Just as some urban scholars have suggested that old distinctions between ‘urban’ and ‘rural’, for instance, may be increasingly unhelpful for understanding the dynamics of vast ‘megacity’ regions in places like Southeast Asia (e.g. Mcgee 1991), so it may be that the dominant analytic categories prevalent in much contemporary political theory will have increasing difficulty making sense of the lived experience of so many of the world’s inhabitants in urban regions of the ‘global South’.

‘Global cities’ are urban centers or regions, linked in important ways into global networks, most typically networks of finance, management, and trade, but perhaps as importantly, nebulous but widely recognized networks of cultural production and exchange. Global cities, in short, profoundly shape regional and global economies of cultural production, material production, finance – and, frequently, all three at once. Scholars who study these cities have highlighted spatial patterns of class and racial segregation, evident as these large urban regions integrate more tightly into structures of global capitalism. As an analytic category, these cities were first identified almost exclusively in the ‘affluent North’: London, New York, Tokyo (Sassen 1991). The category finds purchase more widely, however, particularly in thinking about the place of growing ‘megacity’ regions in regional demographic and infrastructure dynamics in less-affluent and especially in post-colonial settings (e.g. Shatkin 2006; Roy 2011), although urban scholars have worried that the ‘global cities’ framework may “distract us from a more careful analysis of globalization and urban change in developing countries” (Shatkin 2006, 13; see also Hill and Kim 2000).

Political theorists interested in global justice can, we believe, find interesting complexity in how their concepts and arguments play out in the unique spatial and imaginative forms of the city, especially those identified in established and emerging 'global city' narratives.

Much of the debate over global justice is between cosmopolitans, who think that justice has a relatively undifferentiated geography and unrestricted domain, and those who think instead that the scope of justice is more limited, usually to fellow citizens within the borders of sovereign territorial states. More recently, theorists have taken an *associative turn*, complicating the statist-globalist dichotomy by taking seriously the variety of nested and overlapping forms of association that might invoke considerations of justice. Yet even associative theorists betray a subtle imaginative reticence when pondering the very spatial and institutional richness that their approach illuminates. Attention to the global city challenges this reticence in useful ways.

Both the city and the Westphalian state are distinct yet vitally interdependent forms of human association, each comprised of experiences and institutions at once distinct to their characteristic forms of association, yet importantly shaped against the other. In some types of cities, just as in some kinds of economic relationships (or security partnerships, or as signatories to some convention or treaty), those who are brought together in a particular way may have distinct duties of justice toward one another, which may differ in important respects from obligations outside of those relations. Attention to a critical spatial form of social life within the Westphalian state (that is at once also a vital component of global networks of finance, trade, and human movements and cultural exchange) highlights distinctive forms of association with their own characteristic normative terrains.

We miss important dimensions of justice if we obsess over constraining that virtue to particular kinds of relations, or trying to impose it on all relations *simpliciter*. Invoking a familiar distinction exemplified by John Rawls (1999), we need not deny that the *concept* of justice might plausibly be general in scope and

universal in domain; but the relevant *conceptions* of justice we appeal to are given substance by, and expressed within, relationships characteristic of particular forms of association. Furthermore, even if some conceptions of justice are plausibly limited to the Westphalian state, it does not follow that injustices cannot be ascribed to the forms of relationship and institutions built within that state's borders. Alternatively, even if our favoured conception of justice is global, the particularities of injustice may require us to attend to the complex interplay between the global, the national, the urban, and the local.

In what follows we position our analysis against: first, the scholarly literature on the global city; and second, recent trends in thinking about global justice. We explore the distinctive kinds of goods produced and distributed in (and by) the city, and how an associative approach can make sense of this distinctiveness. We then consider the movement of peoples and the regulation of space, phenomena which take a decidedly different appearance when considering questions of immigration and border security against the backdrop of the sprawling urban regions of global cities.

Global Cities

Since at least the 1980s, and arguably since Peter Hall's seminal work, *The World Cities* (1966), scholars have identified shifting networks of major urban centers of advanced industrialized economies, among which global capital seems to be anchored. These cities host major financial and commodities exchanges, as well as the head offices of established (and aspiring) multinational firms.

While the prominence of certain cities as major financial centers – and as often, hubs of empire – predates much of the academic concern with the dynamics of modern global capitalism (e.g. Braudel 1984; Abu-Lughod 1989), John Friedmann offered the first systematic statement of the “world cities hypothesis,” conjecturing that some cities, by virtue of their emerging place in “the spatial division of labour” in the global economy, would exhibit profound structural changes (Friedmann 1986, 70). These cities would become “major sites for the concentration and accumulation of capital” (73) and, as such, would become

basins for immigration, but also would likely exhibit “spatial and class polarization” (76). The growth of these cities would, Friedmann speculated, generate “social costs at rates that tend to exceed the fiscal capacity of the state” (77). Subsequent work by Saskia Sassen (1991) and Peter Taylor (2000) has been enormously influential in shaping this research agenda, mapping out the myriad ways in which certain key cities are linked in the global economy, and then exploring the topographies, and spatial consequences, of these complex networks.

In one vein, ongoing work on global cities admits of seemingly endless academic refinement as new quantitative metrics are devised, and a variety of data sources mined, to show which cities and regions sit where in tangled webs of information flows (Castells 1996 and 2010; Matthiessen, Schwarz, and Find 2010), financial transactions and foreign direct investment (Sassen 2002), logistics chains and production and management hierarchies (Jacobs, Ducruet, and De Langen 2010). Even airline route maps and flight data have been scoured (e.g. Smith and Timberlake 1995; Derudder and Witlox 2005; Taylor, Derudder and Witlox 2007) to generate network topologies. The results have been fascinating maps and models of networks and nodes (Taylor, Catalano, and Walker 2002; Alderson and Beckfield 2004; Derudder and Taylor 2005; Ma and Timberlake 2013). Perhaps less fascinating is how these metrics have been deployed outside of academic research, providing fodder for rankings of cities into tiers of alleged global competitiveness.

In another distinct vein, scholars have found that these nodes in the global economy create pockets of concentrated and aggressively cosmopolitan affluence, as firms establish headquarters in and around urban cores, or within sprawling urban regions. As Friedmann conjectured and as Sassen argues for New York, London, and Tokyo, this process generates bifurcated spatial patterns of wealth and opportunity, as these technical and managerial elites demand a variety of goods and services, creating basins of economic attraction for immigration both within existing sovereign states, and across their borders. The result is

increasingly stark divides of wealth and opportunity etched into the spatial forms of these urban centers and their sprawling regions. There seem to be few incentives – and, of course, widely varying capacity – for broader levels of government to interfere with this spatial *status quo*.

Or so the argument goes. There is still much empirical debate over the nature, extent, and consequences of these spatial dynamics (e.g. Short et. al. 1996; Fainstein 2001; Nørgaard 2003; Smith 2003; Tai 2010; Timberlake et. al. 2012), and the usefulness of the analytic category as it finds applications beyond the ‘affluent North’ (e.g. Robinson 2002; Shatkin 2006; Roy 2011). Alongside these social-scientific and conceptual debates, issues of social justice are clearly implicated in the categories and processes that dominate this research: why else would sharp spatial bifurcations of socioeconomic class, and a hollowing out of middle-class employment and housing opportunities, be a consistent focus of research, if some intuitive sense of social justice were not lurking in the background? (Why not instead focus on allocative and productive efficiency of particular spatial and institutional forms of economic production, firm management, and government regulation?)

Ubiquitous issues of justice are especially evident when we think about some of the ways the ‘global city’ idea has been deployed, explicitly or implicitly, as a part of a normative claim about governance: cities, we are told (usually by consultants, chambers of commerce, or academics wooing a popular audience), need to compete aggressively to become more ‘global’, marketing their cities to attract the kinds of investments and residents that will put them squarely on the sorts of maps just described. In emerging economies and less-affluent settings, technology hubs and integration into financial and logistical networks anchored firmly in the ‘affluent North’ are common policy prescriptions, as research identifies – and advocates praise – emerging innovation clusters in places like Shenzhen, Bangalore, and Nairobi (see, e.g. Canëils and Romijn 2003; Zhang 2015; Rosen 2015).

The normative implications of such “globalize your city!” talk have certainly not been lost on scholars studying these sites and processes: many are explicitly concerned with social justice. The spatial dynamics of class, race, culture, and especially of life chances in global cities are matters of justice on any reasonable understanding thereof. Indeed prominent urbanists often move easily between explanatory and critical aims, exposing the dynamics – especially the spatial dynamics – of power and inequality.

We note, then, that our focus on global justice and the global city provides a space of common purpose and shared vocabularies between urbanists and political philosophers. Susan Fainstein (2010), for instance, has combined a sufficientarian account of well-being with values of diversity and participation to analyse a range of urban phenomena. David Harvey’s long-standing attention to the geography of social justice (1973; 1989; 1996) takes the spatial patterning of race, class, and opportunity as a vitally important concern in analysing urban forms and practices. Edward Soja (2010) has examined hopeful cases of grassroots mobilization for fairness and inclusion in Los Angeles as calling for a distinctly spatial reconceptualization of justice.¹

Global Justice

Theorists of justice have rarely been especially attentive to questions of spatial scale and associated geographical nuances of political institutions and practices. Michael Walzer’s discussion of neighborhoods and membership may be a rare early exception in his empirically rich *Spheres of Justice* (1983, ch. 2), and recent work on territorial rights in political theory suggests a welcome attention to the place-sensitive nature of many social goods and political practices. Debates over global justice might seem a fruitful place to build upon these promising directions, challenging the dearth of attention to *space* and *place*, at the very

¹ But see Nordquist (2013), and also Cunningham (2010). On normative and critical themes in urban studies of the global city, see more generally Harvey (2012), Sassen (1998), Keil (2007), Fainstein (2010), Purcell (2003), and Magnusson (1994).

least by contesting the imaginative dominance of a particular spatial form: the Westphalian sovereign territorial state.

Philosophers working on global justice for the most part assume, without much argument, certain spatial and organizational properties of the world to which their categories, distinctions, and arguments apply. These arguments are complex and multifaceted, but of late have been preoccupied by questions of *scope*. To whom, and over what domains, does justice apply? Justice is, in this work, overwhelmingly a question of rights and obligations (occasionally virtues), and it is either global in scope, across peoples and territories; or justice is an associative obligation, and so rights and duties are specific to particular spatially bounded, usually civic-national groupings—groups that feature the right sort of associative ties.

This is the imaginative reticence we flagged at the outset: whether we think of justice at the global or national levels, theorists tend to assume a relatively undifferentiated physical and jurisdictional state, instead of theorizing the actual associative richness of politics, within and across multiple jurisdictions and institutions. We frame the debate between *cosmopolitans* and *statists* in a way that demonstrates the attractiveness of the approach we favour: attention to associative richness and its moral consequences.

Cosmopolitans

Cosmopolitans argue that if we have rights by virtue of justice, then everyone has them; and if those rights have correlative duties, then we owe a duty of justice to whoever bears that right, whether or not they are fellow citizens, and whether or not they are spatially proximate. As Joseph Carens puts the intuition in a memorable turn of phrase, the existence of national borders restricting opportunities for mobility are “the modern equivalent of feudal privilege” (1987).

Early work in cosmopolitan justice explicitly extended a Rawlsian framework beyond the Westphalian state, and important strands of argument continue this project. Much of this work seeks to show that there is something like a global *basic structure* (e.g. Buchanan 2003, 209-18; Føllestad 2011) which

would thereby be bound by justice, and in particular the demands of Rawls's second principle of justice, which implies significant redistributive consequences, requiring that inequalities consistent with widespread rights and fair equality of opportunity must nonetheless be such that they work to the maximal benefit of those in the least advantaged social position. Such a structure, on this view, having profound and enduring (and largely unchosen) consequences for life chances, is the appropriate subject of justice (Rawls 1999a, 6-7). Several scholars have noticed, as Beitz (1978, 133ff) does, the fleeting remarks in *Theory* where Rawls speculates about an original position "between nations" that "nullifies the contingencies and biases of historical fate" (1999a, 332). That Rawls himself did not elaborate his own theory in this way has been a source of puzzlement, even frustration for those who saw and built upon this early global-redistributive promise (e.g. Pogge 1994; Buchanan 2000; Kuper 2000; Caney 2002).

Without doing too much violence to a vast, vibrant, and ever-growing literature, we think it fair to say that, even when cosmopolitans do not explicitly rely on Rawls or luck egalitarianism (e.g. O'Neill 2000; Singer 2004; Appiah 2006), their positions often trade on the force of a simple intuition: we do not choose where we are born, and so the geography of justice must be simple and extensive.

From Statism to 'Associativism'

Against cosmopolitan justice, a range of thinkers have advanced views that roughly cohere into statist accounts: it may be that we have moral obligations to distant others, but justice is a particular kind of obligation that arises from a certain kind of association. The Westphalian sovereign state is the preeminent justice-implicating form of association in modernity, and we might see it as the desired – and exclusive – site of distributive justice in particular, insofar as the state has been the most successful means to date in pursuing aims of social justice, as well as sometimes-correlative values, such as national self-determination. David Miller (1995) is the most prominent advocate of this kind of statism, although again, Michael Walzer

(1983) gave early voice to something like this view in his discussion of generic duties of mutual aid and stronger moral ties of citizenship (more generally, see Moore 2001).

Or we might focus on the state *vis-a-vis* justice not (or not only) in light of these instrumental virtues, but because, as Michael Blake (2001, 2013a) suggests, citizenship calls for a specific kind of justification which may have distributive implications for members, that neither commit them to broader obligations of justice outside the bounds of the coercive state, nor justify outsiders making comparably strong claims on members. In Blake's view, we can affirm justice as an impartial ideal, yet nonetheless recognize context-specific demands associated with that ideal. Citizenship, and the coercive authority associated with state membership, is a very demanding context in terms of justification. It shouldn't surprise us, then, if the demands of justice play out in distinctive ways within that sphere of justification.

Thomas Nagel (2005) pushes this thought further, insisting that, distinct from generic humanitarian duties, justice *only* arises when we stand in this relation to one another: as both the authors and subjects of coercive state authority. Critical here on both articulations of the view, Blake's and Nagel's, is the link between the vital functions of the sovereign territorial state, the centrality of coercion to the successful realization of those functions, and the need to justify that coercion consistent with the equal moral standing of citizens. Thus (more) egalitarian distributions of some material and social goods are required to satisfy the demands of equal citizenship within the sovereign state, where (ultimately coercive) governance is necessarily impersonal, mediated by complex and spatially dispersed institutions.

Because his point of departure is the difference between abstract principles and their implications in particular contexts, Blake's approach is closer in spirit to our aims here, and is friendlier to the recent direction we have in mind, which rejects Nagel's strong statism, yet retains a recognition of the distinctiveness of the link between the Westphalian state and egalitarian dimensions of justice claims.

There are several plausible grounds to question statism, not least ambiguity over what precisely we mean by *coercion* (e.g. Valentini 2011). Our interest here is with another puzzle, aptly raised by Cohen and Sabel (2006): why rush to a strong statism, as Nagel does, before considering a more empirically sensitive associationalism? As with Nagel and Blake, we can usefully think of justice as an associative obligation, but not one exhausted by either global or statist forms of association. That is, we can follow, among others, Cohen and Sabel (2006), Helena de Bres (2012), and Blake (2013a) in recognizing the myriad ways we enter, or are drawn into, associations. We are then led to think critically about *each* of these kinds of relationships, and their varied genealogies, as having distinctive moral characteristics and associated normative implications, especially with respect to the justification of coercive responsibilities and distributive shares. Call this an *associative turn* in global justice thinking.²

Institutions and Associations

Some prominent work in cosmopolitan theory, especially in response to statist objections, distinguishes carefully between moral and institutional cosmopolitan claims (e.g. Tan 2004, 26). A growing concern has been the analysis and justification of specific institutions (e.g. Held 1995; Caney 2006; Moore 2006; Lenard 2012; Ronzoni 2012). Inevitably this focus has been beyond the Westphalian state. Theorists have evaluated, or used as potential models, existing international regimes and organizations such as the international criminal court (Mayerfeld 2003), the WTO and the European Union (Cabrera 2004, ch. 7; Maffettone 2009; also, Garcia 2007; and Risse 2012, ch. 18), the UNDP and ILO development agendas (Van Den Anker 2005), the possibility of Tobin-style taxes, or at least convergent taxation standards globally (Brock 2008 and 2011), a federal reimagining of the UN system (Marchetti 2006; also, Cavallero

² A complementary turn in international relations scholarship has attended to how sovereignty is increasingly disaggregated and variegated among states, transnational networks, and multilateral institutions (Slaughter 2004), and how legitimacy might be reconceptualized to better account for the distinctive features of emerging institutions of global governance (Buchanan and Keohane 2006).

2009; and Tinnevelt and De Schutter, eds 2010, ch. 5), the regulation of GMOs (Toft 2012), and obligations to mitigate anthropogenic global climate change (Shue 1999; Caney 2014).

A great virtue of this focus has been to challenge the state-centric complacency of so much past political thought, while simultaneously drawing our attention to institutions and their characteristic structures and relationships. Still, most of those regimes and conventions are solidly mired in the legacy of Westphalia, even as they look beyond the state: they are, after all, *international* institutions and accords. Our thought, then, is to use the associative turn in global justice to look in exactly the other direction: toward arguably the oldest spatial form of economic and civic life in human history, and certainly in the history of human civilizations. We show how this nuanced approach to justice can help us understand the global city, by exploring two specific issues of vital importance in the global justice literatures: redistribution and migration.

The Associative Terrain of the Global City

We do not to deny the vital and enduring importance, and moral distinctiveness, of the sovereign territorial state; nor are we chiding those who look outward to multilateral institutions and international organizations as they explore the demands of justice. Our aim is to complement both directions of concern by asking what our theories of justice – both for and beyond the sovereign territorial state – can tell us about a profoundly important spatial and imaginative form of social life: *the city*. Analysing justice in the (global) city further vindicates the associative turn in thinking about (global) justice.

Goods, Production, and Distribution

What does a city *produce*? A diverse range of material goods, certainly. Also, *services* seems an obvious answer, especially when considering global cities. Yet we can easily describe Westphalian states in the same way (as we routinely do in reporting national economic statistics, for instance), and for broad geographic regions bound by concerted institutional convergence, such as the EU or ASEAN.

We could say, without courting much controversy, that *any* system of political authority produces vital *social goods*, by making possible a range of solutions to problems of coordination and confidence. Since Hobbes, political theorists routinely think of the sovereign territorial state as making possible the varied goods of civilization, from arts and sciences to industry and commerce. The production of material goods and various services, but also *ideas*, supervenes on a stable and legitimate system of authority. That system also produces certain kinds of relationships, largely by making them possible. For instance, the very idea of shared citizenship as a relationship among strangers only makes sense against certain historical, political, technological backdrops, in which we could imagine ourselves in such relations with distant people we would never meet, as Benedict Anderson (1982) has so memorably argued.

In this sense too, however, the state also constructs *categories* of persons, and shapes those identities and interests themselves. This story is often told in ways that unsettle liberal philosophical sensibilities, emphasizing how the apparatus of state authority defines categories of citizenship, demarcates professions, even legitimizes particular racial and ethnic categories as official and thus, in some sense, sanctioned as *real*, at least for political purposes (e.g. Foucault 1977; Scott 1998; Nobles 2000; Hayward 2003 and 2013; Thompson 2016).

We are accustomed, then, for good empirical and theoretical reasons, to thinking of (sovereign territorial) states as themselves generating – and also making possible the construction of – particular kinds of goods: commodities, services, but also ideas, relationships, even particular kinds of persons, for good or ill. Still, while these processes of production may be characteristic of *any* formal system of political authority and social organization, they play out in distinctive ways at different spatial and organizational scales.

Indeed, it is striking that the popular analytic narrative just rehearsed – about political authority constructing categories of persons – is almost always a story about the rise of the sovereign territorial state

(e.g. Scott 1998; although cf. Magnusson 2011 for a rare alternative approach). Consider, in contrast, an important strand of sociological analysis of the metropolis (Simmel 1903; Wirth 1938), which emphasizes how the built forms and institutionally-mediated practices of the city allows considerable freedom for residents to invent themselves, relatively unhindered by either formal institutions or communal norms. In Simmel and Wirth there is, of course, considerable ambivalence about that freedom, especially with respect to how it fractures the urban psyche. All we mean to note here is the contrast between how the same underlying idea – that identities and interests arise within particular configurations of power – play out in very different ways, and with opposing contrasts, depending on the spatial and institutional scale of the analysis.

So, if both cities and states *produce* people (identities, interests), they also provide the spaces and possibilities for people to produce themselves. This is not an original point by any means; but again, scholars have systematically differed over which side of that reciprocal relationship they choose to emphasize, depending on whether they look at states or cities. *The kind of association matters.*

Another point that is especially clear when looking to cities, and especially ‘global’ cities, is that many of the social goods we associate with particular forms of association – not least the social goods implicated in defining particular personal and group identities, around shared values, interests, and practices – are not strictly amenable to redistribution, even as it makes perfect sense to talk of these goods as *distributed* in space and over time.

Many of the features highlighted by the empirical literatures on the global city – clustering of major firms, and especially their head offices, similar patterning of logistics and other high-level service firms – are a kind of local public good for firms and upper sectors of the labour market, characterized by what economists call *agglomeration externalities* (Papageorgiou and Smith 1983; Henderson 1997; van der Panne 2004; Duranton and Puga 2005). The emergence and consolidation of these place-specific local public

goods is path-dependent: a range of cumulative factors and decisions over time by myriad actors make both generalization and replication perilous. A curious feature of these cities, then, is how a particular non-fungible good is *distributed*, but not especially *distributable* over both time and space.

This thought applies beyond the well-studied dynamic information externalities of clustered firms in urban regions of advanced industrialized economies: think about the place of major cities in the economy of cultural production. Innovative communities in the arts cluster in ways that are now reasonably well-studied, and almost always require certain kinds of urban infrastructure (e.g. relatively cheap studio space) and associated services (e.g. a sufficient density and diversity of performance venues—theatres, clubs, bars and cafes). How particular urban neighbourhoods become attractive sites for innovators is well-studied but not particularly well-understood, despite some influential conjectures (Florida 2003). That said, it seems plausible the same kinds of agglomeration externalities identified by urbanists and economists are likely at work here as well.

In the emerging metropolises of Africa, South Asia, and the Americas, the dynamics of path dependence, and the kinds of agglomeration externalities that might emerge – indeed, are emerging – are difficult to predict. In some respects, these sites suggest dynamics that are both more hopeful for dramatic transformations of existing urban infrastructure (especially in former colonial settings, where legacies of infrastructure and institutions may be harnessed in creative ways), but also more dramatic in the resulting spatial inequalities of wealth and life chances. So-called ‘innovation clusters’ of ‘small and medium size enterprises’ (SMEs) are increasingly the focus of research by economists, policy analysts, and planners seeking to understand, and perhaps exploit (problems of causal inference aside), the hoped-for advantages of these clusters given patterns of regional governance (or lack thereof) and the possibility of selective integration into global supply and production networks (e.g. Oyelaran-Oyeyinka and McCormick 2007; Chaminade and Plechero 2015; Nadvi 2016). While some benefits do accrue, the resulting pressures on

often-desperately poor residents around these clusters are, however, striking: displacement, and precarious informal economies arising in the absence of viable social infrastructure, paired with pockets of urban affluence that do not seem to fit tidily into existing debates about gentrification in urban neighborhoods of the ‘affluent North’ (see e.g. Fowler and Kleit 2014; Ghertner 2014; Harris 2014; López-Morales 2015; Steel, van Noorloos, and Klaufus 2017).

In comparatively affluent cities of advanced industrial economies, path dependence with respect to these externalities is more pronounced: Brooklyn will likely always have a larger and more prominent arts and literature scene than any city in Iowa or Kansas, not because midwestern US cities never feature attractive mixes of affordable studio space or sufficient information infrastructure (they often do), or thriving art and literature scenes of their own (again, they do), or the right mix of affluent Java programmers, culturally attuned architects, and innovative graphic designers. Rather, the history of Brooklyn matters deeply to the kinds of creative souls who are drawn there, and how the varied histories of particular artistic movements and trends are anchored geographically. The same is, of course, true of San Francisco, Paris, and London. Insofar as other urban neighborhoods do rise to prominence in the arts, it is often in opposition to some much older and well-established urban ‘scene’.

This, of course, is simply an example of what we already knew: the contingencies of history – from the geography of post-imperial national borders on the African continent, to the enduring appeal of Paris to writers and artists, to the cynical exploitation of weak or failed states across the Global South – may be morally arbitrary, and they are no less important for that fact. The lesson we can take from Rawls, and at least as far back as Rousseau in the Western canon (‘people as they are, laws as they might be’), is that political philosophy can help us identify those features that can be changed, and those those that cannot; and then persuade us how best, morally speaking, to change what can be changed, but also how best to reconcile ourselves to the latter kinds of fact.

The attention to cities makes clear, however, a particular property of these cases that might be less obvious for the national states or global ‘basic structures’ that preoccupy some global justice theorists: the dramatically unequal spatial distribution of agglomeration externalities cannot be redressed simply through redistribution of fungible goods. Attempting to do so often diminishes the attractiveness of the good in question: many artists and musicians simply don’t want to settle in the US midwest over more dynamic coastal cities, no matter how many financial inducements local and state governments deploy. In dynamic urban areas of emerging regional economies – think here of the distinctly and markedly coastal affluence of China’s emerging young technology elite in cities like Shanghai – this can create extraordinary migratory pressures in labour markets, as these spaces replicate the bifurcated regional economies described by the ‘global cities’ analytic framework.

It is telling that, in the case of attracting industrial investment in comparatively affluent economic settings, there is modest evidence that strategic incentives to attract firms only seem to work if there is *already* a sufficient density of related firms and associated infrastructure in the target urban region (Devereax, Griffith, and Simpson 2007). The evidence relating to the role of a “creative class” in urban dynamism and regeneration is turning out to be similarly complex and ambiguous, especially beyond the comparatively affluent North American urban settings that preoccupied Richard Florida in popularizing this concept (Marlet and van Woerkens 2007; Donegan et. al. 2008; Hoyman and Faricy 2009; Kratke 2010; Martin-Brelot et. al. 2010; Kolenda and Liu 2012; Musterd and Gritsai 2013). It seems that one cannot simply build the requisite agglomeration externalities through aggressive financial incentives and zoning changes.

The question of planning for, and forging outright, ‘innovation clusters’ or entire sector-specific cities, is far more complicated in non-Western settings. In the twentieth century, under the imperatives of a Stalinist-inspired model of rapid industrialization, China routinely built entire cities around specific

industrial plans; and after economic reforms beginning in the late 1970s, the PRC forged targeted (usually coastal) economic regions into competitive enterprise zones. Here, the questions of justice that arise relate directly to our next concern: migration and justice.

Before turning to that set of concerns, however, a lesson, perhaps, that some cosmopolitan theorists of global justice can take from these distributive complexities is that, when considering the existence and properties of, say, a ‘global basic structure’, we should perhaps first look for cases of important goods that are unevenly distributed global, but not distributable: the aesthetic appeal of certain countries and regions, perhaps, or plentiful natural resources, petroleum in particular, and other sources of the ‘resource curse’ that lets corrupt and unresponsive governments reap enormous returns from resource trade and foreign investment while allowing their populations to remain mired in poverty. Here too we could consider alternative energy sources—think of the recent dramatic fortunes associated with new financial products under cryptocurrency speculation, in no small measure driven by massive investment in ‘bitcoin mining’ close to cheap hydroelectric power.

Another thought (the one we are pursuing here) is that justice may have distinct implications for goods related to *agglomeration externalities* – in both industries and the arts – and so we need to be clear on what justice means, and demands, within the forms of association implicated in these goods. Justice cannot sensibly require that, say, Brooklyn or Paris compensate those places less attractive to artists and writers for no clear reason other than historical contingency. The space of distributive justice does not include all goods that might in fact prove valuable in a human life.

Still, justice may well require that we think far more carefully about rights to reliable access in urban centers, and rights to shape the character of particular kinds of places therein—if we think, that is, that these goods are valuable *per se*, and not simply the aesthetic residue of expensive tastes that bohemians and hipsters in affluent economies share for urban lofts, edgy bars, and comfortable coffee shops that permit

patrons lingering for long hours of writing and reflection. And we should think this, we argue, if we think that self-respect is importantly implicated in our effective capacities and feasible opportunities to exercise the freedoms that justice guarantees.

This line of thought is far more pressing for evaluating the claims of governments to legitimately restrict internal migration, for instance between rural and urban regions, as China's authorities did from the late 1950s until recent reforms of the *Hukou* system of household registration. Strong states against weak civil societies may allow for massive efforts at urban placemaking, industrial superclusters, and technological impositions on the vast scales we see in, say, China; but in the emerging economies of the Global South we find some space for creative challenges to either the technocratic hopes of would-be autocrats, or the imperatives of neoliberal development agendas. In Brazil, for example, but also elsewhere in the Americas, we find a range of now well-studied cases of constitutional reforms aimed at enshrining, for instance, a Brazilian 'right to the city' (Fernandes 2007; Lamarca 2011) as well as more radical 'insurgent citizenship' movements against rampant clientelism and dramatic inequalities (Holston 2009); and democratic experimentation fostering meaningful inclusion across entrenched divides of race and class (Abers 2000; Avritzer 2009).

We have emphasized that theorists of global justice all have reason to care about the city, and how it produces what it does. Different theorists will have different stories about why we should care about the global city. A statist might worry only about forms of spatially bifurcated inequalities and pernicious marginalization that prevent effective citizenship. An associative theorist will share these concerns, although will see a range of morally important forms of association threatened by these factors. Yet neither will hold *all* forms of inequality to be morally unjustifiable. Within these bounds, however, what sorts of redistribution are necessary will depend crucially upon how we understand the nature of the injustice at

stake, and that will depend on the kind of good in question, and the association for which that good serves a vital function.

To see this, consider a wildly popular kind of cultural production: Hollywood, and the far-reaching impact of American film-making upon the world's stock of stories. These stories are worthy of attention precisely in how they describe the world of social relationships, and who is excluded; who is taken as heroic, who is taken as villainous; and who is forgotten about entirely. A common (if difficult to hear) complaint of marginalized cultural and national groups is that their stories, to be heard with the force of a Hollywood production, must conform to certain tropes and norms by way of gaining the attention of producers and financiers.

Alternatively, these voices may hope to enter the global cinematic stage through a range of festivals, often working their way up from the likes of Sundance or Toronto to larger (global) city markets. Hollywood, then, is a metonym for an entire process of production, but it is also a *place*, the productive significance of which supervenes on financial power anchored in this and other urban *places*. Even as new centers of cultural production in film emerge in the Global South (India's 'Bollywood', Nigeria's 'Nollywood'), they are positioned against the global behemoth of 'Hollywood' and the imaginative geographies which this globalized mode of cultural production imposes.³ Justice requires that we examine exactly how access to those places is governed, not least because these widely influential tropes are so easily implicated with cultural marginalization or simplistic appropriation, which in turn undermine the ability of the marginalized and co-opted to regard their own plans, their own stories, as worthy of moral attention.⁴

³ On these processes, and emerging alternative sites of cultural production and exchange in film and other media, see, for example: Marston, Woodward, and Jones 2007; Lobato 2010; Miller 2012; and Thussu 2016.

⁴ Think here especially of the difficulties of maintaining traditions in the face of the dominant 'property' metaphor imposed, for instance, on matters of Indigenous heritage, e.g. Battiste and Youngblood (Sa'ke'j) Henderson 2000; and Brown 2005.

Novels and cinema fiction and documentaries can empower diverse voices. Our associative theory of justice can clarify the associational architecture that can foster such empowerment, and the networks of financial support and cultural production anchored in global cities will be critical elements of that architecture.

Immigration

Another way in which the focus on cities, and especially global cities, can inform debates over global justice is on questions of immigration. Again, an important statist strand in justice theory argues that the sovereign territorial state is the best feasible way to realize distributive justice: control over borders is a vital requirement to maintain the public goods and services necessary to discharge our obligations of justice to fellow citizens (Miller 1995). Furthermore, freedom of association might justify significant exclusions without strong justificatory burdens (Wellman 2011). Cosmopolitans and others rejoin that coercion at borders, and related strategies of exclusion for boundary maintenance and territorial control (Bertram 2014), is often harder to justify than it seems (Carens 1987; Abizadeh 2008; Cole 2011); and when it can be justified, legitimate coercion plausibly generates duties to those beyond borders (e.g. Cavillaro 2006). Still others suggest nuanced positions that attend to important features of border crossing, and the duties that those crossings impose on others (e.g. Lenard 2010; Lenard and Stahle 2012; Blake 2013b).

The turn to global cities casts this complex debate in an interesting light, since these cities are often basins of attraction for immigration across the socioeconomic and cultural spectra, but both within sovereign territorial states, and across their borders.

On the one hand, research on the spatial dynamics of labour and rental markets in and around the global city suggests that the spatial patterning of poverty and opportunity, which animates much of the statist-cosmopolitan debate about immigration and border coercion, *also* obtains within those borders. This suggests that the traditional understandings of sovereign coercion in the interests of members may not

adequately capture the critical moral mechanism at work in these cases: mobility and the place-dependence of many of our projects and aspirations are what matter.

On the other hand, think of the ways that private developers – often in concert with local planning offices and municipal governments – control public space in these cities, largely to suit the demands of affluent cosmopolitan elites. Subtle (and often not so subtle) strategies are deployed to police appropriate uses of public spaces, and to actively privatize many such spaces (see, e.g., Mitchell 1995; Kohn 2004). The same arguments that find purchase in the literatures on migration, borders, and global justice find useful application in thinking about justice in these urban cases as well. Notice here, however, that some of the ways in which this nuanced debate has developed in the ‘borders and immigration’ case require some rethinking.

In particular, Blake (2013b) makes the case that crossing a border into a reasonably legitimate and at least partially just state has the property of imposing a moral obligation on those already there: they are now bound to protect the newcomer's basic rights. The practical demands of this obligation may well be practically negligible to most citizens, but it is, nonetheless, a moral obligation imposed, rather than chosen. While there might be cases where I am morally compelled to accept a burdensome association that I did not choose, there are other cases where I am under no such compulsion. We should think of border coercion and granting of citizenship entitlements in the same way: there may be a plausible democratic right to exclude newcomers – from benefits, and even from the territory we inhabit – but that is a conditional and thus tightly bounded right, contingent on reasonably just institutions and to be weighed against a whole host of other considerations.

Consider the case of policing (and privatizing) public spaces, in cities characterized by deep socioeconomic and ethnocultural bifurcations associated with the global city dynamic. How should we think about our right to access certain spaces, and to enjoy those spaces in various ways? In the case of

immigration policy at the state level, the burdens of association are diffuse and contested (think of the interminable econometric debates over how to measure the impact of foreign workers on domestic wage rates and sectoral productivity).

In contrast, in the case of conflicts over urban land uses, the distribution of benefits and burdens associated with particular plans tend to be pronounced and very precise, but intractable by virtue of incommensurable desired uses of the same plot of land. The physical spaces of the global city lead us to think of immigration less in terms of claims of relative contributions to economy and society, or the moral grounds of our legal obligations to support others through state institutions (that is, the preoccupations of so much public and scholarly debate) and instead in terms of rights to access, and especially rights to shape the character of concrete, specific places essential to our lives together. Given the central role of global cities as basins of attraction for immigration of both highly skilled affluent workers and far less advantaged migrant workers, justice in the global city – so far as immigration is concerned – has to be understood in terms of the forces that bifurcate regional economies, and dramatically partition and police access and uses to the everyday spaces so vital to urban life for all residents.

Relatedly, we might think of global cities as being bound by global justice in distinctive ways, by virtue of their place in global networks of finance, trade, and migration. Perhaps these urban regions deserve more by way of political autonomy within their own Westphalian jurisdictions (e.g. Weinstock 2011; King 2014); but by virtue of that status, perhaps they ought to be held accountable for economic pressures that result from their global standing. Perhaps, too, the city, as a distinct political community and jurisdiction, should be held accountable for the effects of urban practices and institutions upon the viability of distinctive rural forms of life (e.g. Carr and Kefalas 2010). Certainly scholars find in these cities a

richness of possible forms of urban citizenship that rest uneasily with the dominant Westphalian understandings of citizenship as exclusive rights and entitlements within sovereign territorial borders.⁵

If this thought persuades, then there is reason to examine both movement between states, and movement within states (from rural areas into cities) as susceptible of similar normative analyses within the frameworks common in analytic normative political theory applied to immigration issues. The analyses will not be the same, but neither will the two forms of movement be wholly dissimilar, as they are on most contemporary philosophical analyses, largely on the strength of claims about the moral distinctiveness of sovereignty. A focus on the global city, in short, makes the political philosophy of migration more nuanced, by examining the distinct ways in which both states and cities experience, and benefit from, the movement of people in space.

Concluding Thoughts

We have surveyed the critical and empirical facets of the global city literatures, and outlined some of the key approaches and concerns that characterize the vast philosophical and theoretical literatures on global justice. One recent turn in those debates we have singled out as being of particular interest: attention to the empirically rich middle ground between statist and cosmopolitan camps in debates over global justice. This is the *associative* turn.

The spatial features of global cities – their patterns of race, culture, and class, and especially life chances – are bound up with what economists call *agglomeration externalities*, and especially *dynamic information externalities*. The factors that generate these externalities are distributed, but typically not *distributable*. The result is a class of associations that require distinct understandings of what justice demands in attempting

⁵ For example, see Purcell (2003) for a review and interpretation of some of this research in light of Henri Lefebvre's 'right to the city'. See also, for instance, recent work by Baban and Rygiel (2017) on inclusionary everyday urban practices challenging exclusionary and assimilationist national narratives in northern European countries facing sudden immigration pressures in recent years.

to evaluate and regulate these forms of economic and cultural life. An interesting conclusion here is that the distinctive features of such externalities suggest something like *a right to the city*, in the sense of a right to reliable access to vital urban spaces by virtue of their centrality in the myriad ways we meaningfully exercise our freedoms in relationships intimately bound to particular places.⁶

On thorny problems of immigration, attention to the global city further helps us frame contentious questions in ways that illuminate a lacunae in existing debates among theorists of global justice: attention to *how we access and use* those spaces vital to our shared and personal projects, but that are also intimately bound up with other uses, other interests, in ways that are not easily partitioned and regulated without destroying what is distinctive and attractive about those spaces. Justice requires we negotiate those difficult conflicts and convergences, in fair, inclusive, and principled ways, not attempt to partition and define them away.

⁶ The scholarly and activist literatures are vast on what the heterodox marxist urbanist, Henri Lefebvre, famously described as “a cry and a demand.” Among both advocates and sympathetic critics, all would likely agree that, whatever a *right to the city* is, it is best understood in terms of how we use urban spaces, not the market value of those spaces. To put the point another way: the right *to* the city stands opposed to property rights *over* urban space; see, e.g. Mitchell (2003); Purcell (2003); Harvey (2008); Attoh (2011); see also Kohn (2016).

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