Abstract

This thesis is concerned with mapping one of the most topical discussions in the field of modern political philosophy, namely the contention about the existence, nature and extent of justice in the era of a highly globalised world. However, the clash about the existence of global justice, hitherto referred to as the clash between cosmopolitans and internationalists, is not viewed in its entirety. More specifically, this thesis aspires to make an introduction into the debate against the background of one of the most influential philosophical works of the 20th century which has significantly contributed to the delimitation of the term “justice”- *Theory of Justice* by John Rawls. This book incited joyful reaction from a number of cosmopolitan theorists, including most notably Charles Beitz and Thomas Pogge, who perceived it as a clear attempt at extending traditionally liberal ideals and precepts beyond the scope of nation states. The difference principle in particular caught their attention as it represented a suitable way of facilitating the ideal of social justice at global level.

Nonetheless, Rawls himself rejected cosmopolitan claims. As this thesis aspires to fully comprehend the reasons that led him to such a step, it will be necessary to introduce Rawls’ political philosophy in its entirety, thus starting with *Theory of Justice* and then proceeding to his later works. Consequently, the basic precepts of the cosmopolitans and their arguments for a global extension of justice as fairness will be elaborated on as well. Once having introduced both sides of the argument, the major ambition of this thesis is to decide whether Rawls’ confinement of justice as fairness to basic structures of modern democratic societies is legitimate, or whether it is necessary to follow the cosmopolitans in regarding state borders as morally arbitrary and applying principles of justice to the world as a whole.