

Chapter 5

In Conclusion: Exploring the Possibility of a Conception of International Justice

“Of all the things of a man’s soul which he has within him, justice is the greatest good and injustice the greatest evil.”

Plato, *Republic*

“At his best, man is the noblest of animals; separated from law and justice, he is the worst.”

Aristotle, *Politics*

This study is concerned with exploring the possibility of arriving at conception of international justice – a conception of justice for states. Justice remains a central value in and commitment of politics, such that the legitimacy and ethical standpoint of political communities are often measured by their guarantee of and claims to justice. It is perhaps for this reason, that the discipline of politics, from its philosophical beginnings in the writings of Plato and Aristotle, has offered sufficient attention to the idea of justice. Plato’s concept of the ideal state was a political setup based on and committed to the value of justice. Plato’s *Republic* is perhaps a treatise on justice, which continues to be relevant for political theorizing and thought till today.

Even as the concern with justice in political theory is eclipsed by the dictate of order, justice continues to be relevant. However, it is only with the publication of John Rawls’, *A Theory of Justice* in 1971, that the concept of justice regains its importance and centrality. With John Rawls’s arguments such as the inherent inequality of starting places, the equalizing original position, the blindness of the veil of ignorance and the corrective imperative of the Difference Principle, all together contributed to revitalizing the focus on justice as well as the sub-discipline of political theory. In fact, it would not be wrong to say that among the most

fascinating and fulfilling contributions of contemporary political theory is a rich, substantive and critically meaningful discourse on justice. Theorists such as Charles Taylor, Will Kymlicka, Robert Nozick, Michael Sandel, Seyla Benhabib, Amartya Sen, Richard Rorty, Anthony Appiah, Susan Moller Okin, Nancy Fraser and Michael Walzer, among many others have offered theories, concepts and arguments which could keep any student of political theory occupied for several years.

However, while the concern with justice within states and societies has been sufficiently problematized and to some extent responded, even though contentiously, by scholars and theorists, there is still a lacuna or at most a cavity in the theorizing of international justice. While political theory has been able to raise a credible concern about and respond to the imperative of justice within states, it has not managed to work out a successful and convincing argument on justice for states. In fact, most of the scholarship in international relations on the issue of justice has been devoted to legitimizing and justifying the issue of justice for states. Put differently, scholars have paid a lot of attention to explaining why justice is and/or is not a concern for international relations. I must mention that there have been some contributions to the conception of international justice by such scholars as John Rawls, Kok-Chor Tan, David Miller, Charles Beitz and Gillian Brock. However, much of their attention has focused on why and whether we as citizens of a particular sovereign state ought to be concerned with and caring about the injustices and inequalities experienced by citizens of other sovereign states. The condition of the discourse on international justice is aptly summed up by Daniel Weinstock in the following words:

Billions of people in the world today live in conditions of appalling material deprivation. Political philosophers who have considered the unimaginable plight

of the world's desperately poor populations join in condemning this state of affairs as morally scandalous. They all agree that we ought to do much more than we presently do to alleviate their suffering. Political philosophers, however, do not agree on how to characterize the aid we ought to provide. In particular, they do not agree as to whether the obligations that dire poverty foists upon the world's more fortunate societies are to be thought of as obligations of justice, or whether they differ from the requirements that justice imposes upon them in some significant respects.¹

In this study, my main concern is therefore to consider the possibility of arriving at principles of justice for states. The questions that this study raises and attempts to respond to include: What can be a possible starting place for a creditable and viable concept of international justice? What ought to be the conception of the self and its relationship with the other for a just relationship among states? Any theory of justice, as mentioned in Chapter 1 of this study, must and often does begin from a valid conception of the self, and of the self's relationship with the other. What then is the conception of the self and its relationship with the other for the dominant theories of international justice, and what ought to be the understanding of this relationship for valid principles of international justice?

In this chapter and in conclusion to my study I make an assessment of the conception of the self and its relationship with the other contained in the three dominant perspectives of international justice, namely, Rawlsian, cosmopolitan and communitarian. In the section that follows this introductory note, I make this assessment by critically examining the different accounts of the self/other relationship contained in these

perspectives. After doing so, I move on in the concluding section of this study, to offer a viable alternative reading of the conception of the self/other, which I believe, can offer a credible starting place for arriving at principles of justice for states. I must mention that I am in no way making a comprehensive argument on international justice. My study is a humble attempt to critically invigorate the conditions necessary for arriving at international justice, and one such condition, according to me, is a credible defensible conception of the relationship between the self and the other. I do hope that with this argument, my study makes a small and somewhat significant contribution to the ongoing discourse on international justice.

5.1 Reviewing the Politics of the Self/Other in Contemporary Theories of International Justice

Justice in political theory has been broadly understood as the attempt to give to each what is due. Justice, according to this understanding is then a calculation of the dues that are due to us, whether as individuals, members of this or that community, class, race, sex or even nation state. It is this understanding of justice, perhaps that also renders justice an essentially and inherently political concept.

Politics, as noted in the first chapter of this study, is an idea and an activity which regards persons to be in conflict with each other, mainly on account of their socialness and social nature but also primarily because of the conflict of interests that characterizes the society which we set up and inhabit. For a long time, the home or family was considered outside the domain of politics on the grounds that it was a realm

which was not characterised by conflict; rather it was naturally just. Feminists have worked hard to reveal the latent conflict that characterizes the home and silences women in to a position of subordination where they lack the agency and freedom to exercise their rights and realize their interests. Politics is therefore about the conflict between two beings – the self and the other. It is this relationship which provides a critical lens through which to understand the political nature of society and human life. In fact, in the absence of the other, in particular, the idea of justice is rendered ineffective. Claims of justice are often understood as ethical moral claims as they emanate from the position of the other and are addressed in the interest of the other. It may also not be incorrect to suggest that the idea and conception of the self is only made manifest, evident and politically relevant in the face of the other. In the absence of the other, the self does not exist. What would explain the self in the absence of an other?

Recognizing the place and politics of the other, justice has emerged as a potent claim in contemporary politics. As mentioned in Chapter 1, much of the history of political thought, particularly in the west, was dominated by the concern with order, leaving justice at the margins of political thinking. With John Rawls's *A Theory of Justice*, the concern for justice 'returns' as the dominant concern of political theory. However, an analysis of this marginalization and return of justice would reveal that while politics concerned itself with the conception of the self only, leaving the other to the margins of political activity and territoriality, the concern with justice was also marginalized. For the self, and from the position of the self, politics can only be an activity and perspective for ordering.

As political theorizing has moved on to locate the other as its central starting point, and as the other has emerged as a major issue for political theory and practice, justice has come to be regarded as its chief concern. In fact, one of the central contributing factor of John Rawls is to, through the conception of the original position and the device of the veil of ignorance, to get the self to think of himself as the other. Interestingly, the principles of justice which Rawls offers also privileges the position of the other – the least advantaged. Justice therefore begins with the other. A understanding of politics which considers every person or entity as the self is devoid of the imperative and possibility of justice.

The international realm, as conceptualized by almost all dominant perspectives, regards each political entity – states, as selves. Each state is a self, a sovereign self, with little or no place for the other, and therefore no place for the imperative of justice. I must mention that such recognition of states as selves is important mainly for recognizing each state as equal. However, any initiative to raise to and respond to the issue and claims of justice would require the circumstances of justice – in this case, the identification of the other and the other's requirement of justice.

In the first chapter of this study, while reviewing the ongoing literature on the idea of international justice, I explained how much of the theorizing on this area, even though rich and substantive, has been lacking in terms of working from the position of the other. In Section 1.4 of this Chapter, I reviewed the works of such thinkers as Hedley Bull, John Rawls, Kok-Chor Tan, Michael Walzer, Gillian Brock, Charles Beitz and Peter Singer. While each of these thinkers offer credible understandings of the international political order and raise the imperative of justice, they fail in working out

a credible conception of the self and identifying and recognizing the circumstances of justice by starting from the conception of the other.

Hedley Bull in his master piece firmly establishes that there is an inherent order among states in the international order. Even though he labels this an “anarchical society”, he nevertheless regards this anarchical society to be functional, effective and relatively ordered. Bull does raise the concern with justice, although falls short of responding satisfactorily to it. He recognizes that while the developed world would chose to focus on order, the developing world would raise the concern with justice. Yet Bull regards the contemporary international system neither dysfunctional nor in decline. Were Bull to begin his political theorizing of the international world from the politics of the other – and her relationship with the self – he would have found it undesirable if not impossible to justify the ongoing international structure in the absence of a narrative of justice.

Michael Walzer similarly focuses his attention on justice in the international realm in his work *Just and Unjust Wars*. In this work, Walzer offers a rich and comprehensive account of the morality and justness of war by invoking the concepts of *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello*. Walzer offers an elegant account of the morality of war, by elaborating principles which states must abide by to prevent the outbreak of war and when in war to assure its just conduct and conclusion. The problem however is that Walzer does not regard the gross social and economic inequalities which plague the international political space as a war of kinds. It is indeed violent for some people to be denied an opportunity to live a fully developed humane life, only because of the allegiance they have and owe to a nation state. Why are the borders of states the determinants of justice and equality? Walzer seems to regard such borders as sites of closure and finality,

which enable him to evade the question of justice for states. More importantly, Walzer does not carry a conception of the self and the other in his account of just and unjust wars. For Walzer, the state is the only actor in the international system. As mentioned above, it would be difficult to conceptualize the self in the absence of the other.

John Rawls has been much spoken of in this study, and for obvious reasons. John Rawls is upheld and recognized as that political philosopher who returned the concern of justice to mainstream political theorizing, thereby giving political theory a legitimate and meaningful focus. Rawls is understood to have initiated the agenda of justice theorizing for not only liberal political thinking, but for what is today referred to as the global south. His *A Theory of Justice* is widely acclaimed as a work which unquestionably raises the question of justice by situating politics from the position of the self as the other. By employing the conception of the original position and with the device of the veil of ignorance, Rawls arrives at and justifies two principles of justice, the most important and pertinent of which is the Difference Principle according to which social and economic inequalities are to be arranged so that they are to the greatest benefit of the least advantaged – the other. In the first section of Chapter 2, I offered a critical examination of Rawls's theory of justice as fairness.

Rawls, however, limits his understanding and perspective on justice to the internal structure of advanced liberal democratic societies. He clearly sees the private space – family and household – as naturally just and therefore outside the ambit of justice. But more importantly, in his later work *Law of Peoples* disregards the possibility of justice for the relations among states. In Chapter 2 of this study, I have offered a detailed examination and critical analysis of Rawls's conception of international justice which

he offers in *Law of Peoples*. The second section of Chapter 2 was devoted to an analysis of Rawls's conception of international justice stated in this work.

In this work, Rawls seems to deny the possibility of justice in the international realm on the grounds that there are different types of societies and states, which may all not merit a common understanding of justice. There are decent well-ordered societies as well as rogue and societies which can be seen as 'burdens'. For such rogue and burden states, Rawls denies the applicability of justice. Rawls argues that the pluralism characteristic of the international society is implausible for a theory of justice. However, in internal structures, the fact of pluralism is similarly present, and does not hinder the plausibility of a theory of justice even for Rawls. According to him, while justice can be a shared understanding for well-ordered societies, it cannot be regarded as common to such societies which 'choose' to remain underdeveloped or which 'choose' to waste and plunder their resources. Clearly, while Rawls regards the unjust unequal starting place of persons in societies to be a poignant circumstance of justice, which invokes the discernment of principles of justice, he disregards the same unjust unequal starting place among states. If persons begin their lives at unjust unequal starting places in a society, in the international world, peoples begin their lives unjustly and unequally, purely accidentally, which also needs to be corrected.

A rather remarkable contribution of Rawls's understanding of international justice which he offers in *Law of Peoples* is his use of the term 'peoples' in place of 'states'. The world as we have come to understand, is divided into sovereign territorial states, each locked in a universe of its own, with purely political relationship with other states. The citizens and/or members of such states are regarded as a singular entity, mainly through the idea and ideal of nation and nationalism, so that they are regarded as

homogenous in the international political domain. By regarding the unit or conception of the self in his work on international justice as ‘peoples’ and not ‘states’, Rawls seems to have emphasized the need to rethink the starting place in international politics, at least for theorizing the imperative of justice. That Rawls chooses to title his work “Law of Peoples”, with peoples in the plural and law in the singular makes evident the centrality of the self and its relationship with the other when theorizing justice.

In spite of Rawls’s forceful commitment to the idea of justice – Rawls is recognized as a theorist of justice par excellence, his position on international justice is rather disappointing. His argument about the impossibility of justice – of justice for states, appears somewhat unconvincing and weak. States, even though sovereign, are historically and socially constructed and situated. The international system of states is consequently characterized by unjust inequalities which needs to be analysed and corrected. Also, such unjust inequalities do constitute unequal starting places which in turn provide credible circumstances of justice, which raise the imperative for justice among states. Rawls, however, is quick to discard this imperative in favour of the sovereignty of states and the dominance of the liberal political paradigm. Justice, for Rawls, can only be worked out for “peoples” in the international space and not for “burden” states or “rogue” states. In Rawls’s law of peoples, the other – burden and rogue states – is clearly outside the ambit of justice. In the third section, I discussed this shortcoming of the Rawlsian account of international justice whereby I studied the relationship between the self and the other. Rawls’s understanding of justice, therefore does not carry or contain a credible account of the conception of the self and its relationship with the other.

The publication of John Rawls's *A Theory of Justice* has allowed for a resurgence in the idea of justice. Several political thinkers and philosophers have offered critical contributions to the ongoing discourse on justice, which has today become a force to reckon with. For the sake of this study, I have chosen to focus on two such perspectives, namely cosmopolitanism and communitarianism. I justify my choice of these two perspectives on the basis of two arguments. First, these two perspectives offer credible accounts of explaining the international political system and its practices. As argued by Chris Brown, both these perspectives may be considered as valid paradigms for understanding and explaining the international political reality.² Second, cosmopolitanism and communitarianism begin from two different political understandings of the conception of the self: while the former begins from an individualist conception of the self; the latter regards the community and/or collective as its conceptual political starting point.

In the third chapter of this study, I have offered a critical examination of the cosmopolitan perspective on international justice. The chapter begins with an introduction to the logic of cosmopolitanism. Cosmopolitanism regards the person as a citizen of the cosmos – the world. According to the cosmopolitan perspective, state boundaries and borders do not limit the political nature and identity of people; rather people relate to each other across state boundaries. The section also traces the historical trajectory of cosmopolitanism beginning in the writings of ancient Greek philosophers and moving on to Immanuel Kant and today Thomas Pogge, Gillian Brock and Kok-Chor Tan.

Obviously, cosmopolitanism may be understood as the guiding force behind such political guarantees as the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights. However, while cosmopolitanism does manage to guarantee a basic right to being human, the question that this study asks is: does cosmopolitanism carry a credible account of justice for states? The second section of this chapter is devoted to answering this question, whereby the cosmopolitan account of international justice is examined. Here, I depend on the arguments of such thinkers as Kok-Chor Tan, Martha Nussbaum and Thomas Pogge. Interestingly, the discourse on cosmopolitanism is riddled with deep disagreements and yet there is a common binding thread, which is, that all people are similar and citizens of the world. To this extent, cosmopolitanism does begin with a conception of the self. The problem or lacuna is however, that there is no conceptualization of the other in a cosmopolitan perspective. Clearly, Kant did conceptualize the other in terms of the refugee, however present day understandings of the cosmopolitanism offer no reading of the other. To regard the refugee as the other in addressing the problem of international justice would be limited in two senses: one that it would involve the denial of all citizens who in spite of being located territorially within states, yet carry valid claims to justice; and second, it would question the affinity that citizens across states are expected to share in order to arrive at and agree upon principles of international justice.

Cosmopolitanism does offer an idealized if not utopian understanding of a 'globalized world', where state boundaries appear to be politically irrelevant or apolitical lines drawn on the map. The reality is starkly different. Citizens are located within state borders and their claims to justice are primarily determined by such borders. The cosmopolitan perspective, by regarding all citizens as similar and similarly citizens of

the world not only renders political state borders as irrelevant, it also moulds the world in to a homogenous entity, with little or no difference between people. If people are not different, it is difficult to justify the circumstances of justice; if we are all citizens of the world; who among us is the other? And in the absence of an other, what justifies claims of justice?

One of the most forceful criticisms of the cosmopolitan perspective emanates from the ideal of nationalism. According to the perspective of nationalism, we as members of states also are members of national communities, to which we owe allegiances and obligations. Allegiances and obligations outside the bounds of the national community are unimaginable as well as unjustifiable. Kok-Chor Tan has tried to demonstrate the compatibility between cosmopolitan aspirations and nationalist allegiances. However, Tan fails to offer a politically convincing account of the conception of the self in his work. It is not sufficient to suggest a compatibility between cosmopolitanism and nationalism in the absence of a credible conception of the self/other relationship.

The perspective of nationalism is closely and conceptually connected to the communitarian perspective. According to the communitarian perspective, we as persons are not individuals, standing free of all attachments, ends and conceptions of the good. Rather we are members of communities, whereby our ends, conception of the self and understanding of the good are shaped by such community membership. In Chapter 4 of this study I offer an examination of the communitarian perspective on international justice. I open the chapter with an examination of the idea of communitarianism.

Communitarianism is a perspective put forward by such thinkers as Charles Taylor, Michael Sandel and Alasdair MacIntyre, among others. According to such thinkers,

persons, including citizens, determine their conception of the good and identify themselves in community contexts. Communities define and determine a person's life choices and her conception of the self. At once, this would seem as a credible starting place for justice in the international political system, where persons are located within the communities of nation states. Needless to say that the international political system is not made up of individual actors or as communitarians argue "unencumbered selves".³ Communitarianism then does seem to carry a more accurate representation of the actors in the international realm, and may therefore be understood to carry the possibility of a more credible account of justice for states.

The problem with the communitarian perspective of international justice, as stated in Chapter 4 of this study is that it carries a fixed and inflexible account of the other. The other is one who is outside the bounds of the community, never to be included. For a credible account of international justice, the other ought to be considered as one who can be accommodated or recognized. In fact, from a communitarian perspective, persons are expected to only owe allegiances and demonstrate affect and affinities to members of their community: any display of affect or allegiance for a person outside the bounds of a community are difficult if not impossible to justify.

Although the communitarian perspective offers an account of the other, it does not offer space for recognizing the other. Rather by locking people into communities, and by recognizing persons only as members of a community, communitarianism curtails the space for a conception of international justice. What is missing perhaps is a conception of an "international community" or "trans-nation state community". Were this to be theorized by communitarians it could result in the possibility of an understanding of international justice.

However, this would require a rethinking of the idea of the nation-state; a reconceptualization of the self and possibly the other in international politics.

In the chapters above, I have attempted an exploration of the Rawlsian, cosmopolitan and communitarian perspectives on international justice. While they all offer equally compelling and convincing accounts, they all fall short in different ways of offering a credible understanding of the conception of the self and the other – a prerequisite, in my view, for a valid conception of international justice.

In the last section of this study below, I offer a possible plausible understanding of the conception of the self and the other for arriving at principles of justice for states. I must mention that I do not in any way claim to offer any grand solution to the problem of international justice. My attempt is just a modest one, which is, to begin to explore the possibility of arriving at principles of justice for states.

5.2 An Alternative Conception of the Self/Other for the Possibility of International Justice

The issue of international justice – justice for states, is undeniably and undoubtedly immediate, important and imperative. The world which we inhabit is one which is characterized by gross and deep unjust inequalities, which determine and influence the lives of each one of us in definite and uncertain ways. Several millions of us live in conditions of extreme poverty and are routinely subject to conditions of unjustified denial and neglect.

Such neglect and denial is witnessed and experienced in terms of the access to decent human livelihood, malnourishment and malnutrition, infant mortality, exposures to environmental toxicity, denials to means of subsistence, poor or lack of health facilities, access to education and health, and even denial of the right to live.

The United Nations has worked out a Human Development Index which ranks nations on the basis of such indicators as health, life expectancy, gross national income, gross domestic product and access to schooling, to mention a few. However, not much is done to achieve this. The denial of access to any and all of this, which is clearly a historically determined injustice is regarded as an accident of birth and corrected in terms of aid. People are not regarded as bearing the rights or obligations to correct instances and experiences of internationally determined injustices and inequalities. Injustices and inequalities across states undeniably determine and influence the inequalities and injustice within states: to address and correct the latter depends on and requires a correction of and response to the former.

In this study I have examined three accounts of international justice, namely Rawlsian, cosmopolitan and communitarian. Having examined these perspectives, I argue, somewhat humbly, that the major lacunae in all these perspectives is the failure to conceptualize a valid conception of the self and its relation with the other for international politics. In this section, I offer a possibility of such a conception. By doing so, I in no way suggest a comprehensive solution to the problem of global injustice. In fact, that would clearly require a far more concerted attempt. My attempt is only to offer a plausible and possible beginning to conceptualizing the relationship between the self and the other, which would in turn raise the claims of and circumstances for justice in the global political system. I offer my suggestion below.

The world is today divided into sovereign states, each locked by borders and held together by nationalist aspirations and identities. As such there is no sense of affect, affinity or care among such states. Any feeling of affect or care is merely in terms of charity or aid, where one states conditionally, purely on humanitarian considerations and for as long as it chooses practical, cares for or decides to aid another state. There is no space for the politics of obligation or responsibility. The sovereign state system is clearly devoid of a sense of obligation, and therefore holds no space for justice. Perhaps it may not be entirely incorrect to state that the system of states – the sovereign state system - is an asocial space.

For any credible, plausible and possible conception of justice for states, it would be necessary, in fact a prerequisite, to rethink the system or structure of states. It would be necessary to reformulate the way states are understood in their relationship with one another. The three perspectives examined in this study, even as they offer convincing accounts of justice, fall short mainly because they fail to restructure the system of states. Such restructuring, in my view, should be done so as to bring forth a conception of the relationship between the self and the other. In the absence of a relationship between the self and the other, particularly the latter, the possibility and desirability of theorizing justice is somewhat defeated. Below, and by way of a conclusion to my study, I offer one alternative restructuring of the state system. I do not claim that this is a definite restructuring. I simply hope to offer a proposal which may contribute to further research in the area of international justice.

The present structure of states that is the sovereign state system is understood to have been formed through the Peace of Westphalia in 1648. Even though there are some disagreements to this, I choose to consider this for the purpose of this study.⁴ As noted by Daniel Philpott, “Westphalia did not create a sovereign states system *ex nihilo*, for components of the system

had been accumulating for centuries up to the settlement.... In two broad respects, though, in both legal prerogatives and practical powers, the system of sovereign states triumphed. First, states emerged as virtually the sole form of substantive constitutional authority in Europe, their authority no longer seriously challenged by the Holy Roman Empire. Second, Westphalia brought an end to a long era of intervention in matters of religion, up to then the most commonly practiced abridgment of sovereign prerogatives.”⁵

However, there have been some tethering of state sovereignty to international obligations. For instance, the signing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, whereby signatory states committed themselves to the guarantee of at least 30 rights to all persons, was certainly a roping in of state sovereignty. Over the years, the guarantee of human rights has emerged as a challenge and limit, even though not quite enforceable, on the ‘absolute sovereignty’ of states. Even though laudable, the regime of human rights does not work with a conception of the other in the international realm. The other is clearly the person, the member of the state, not the state per se. Perhaps, this is why, I argue, the Rawlsian, cosmopolitan and communitarian accounts of international justice fail to offer a convincing and credible account of the same. For any credible account of international justice, it would be imperative to restructure the international structure of states in such a way that it holds a conception of the self and the other, and therefore capable of awarding justice.

A system of states, in order to award space to justice, must be guided and governed by the politics of obligations and responsibilities: states must be obliged and responsible for the condition of each other, and must be held accountable for correcting any injustices which are historically and socially created and/or conveyed. The system of states we live in order to

recognize the imperative of justice would have to be characterized as a social entity – an entity where on one hand, its members are tied together in relationships of affect and obligations and on the other, free to determine their choices and ends. The sovereign state system must be transformed or translated as a sovereign *social* state system.

Below I mention some of the characteristics of what I call a sovereign social state system:

1. The sovereign social state system, by recognizing its inherent and essential social nature would be rendered political, and thereby be understood as a relevant context and condition for justice. By merely situating sovereign states alongside each other, the place of the political is somewhat unclear. The social relationship between states, in addition to their sovereign nature, would enhance the political relationship between them. The sovereign *social* system would be a *political* system of states. For it was Aristotle that regarded the socialness of people to be the reason for their political nature.
2. The sovereign social system would recognize the historical, cultural and economic condition of each state as a cause of the social relationship among all states. The sovereign state system holds states responsible for their economic and historical location in the trajectory of development and progress, this when factors like colonialism, economic embargoes and blockades and military intervention have played a significant role in determining the location of a state in the path of development. A sovereign social system, by recognizing the socialness of states would recognize the factors responsible for the ‘underdevelopment’ and ‘backwardness’ of states, as well as recognize the imperative for holding the system

responsible and obligated to addressing these inequalities. Justice in such a system would then not be a matter of aid, charity or choice; rather justice would be an obligation, a duty, a right which would could be enforced.

3. With the establishment of a sovereign social system, it would be possible if not practical to regard states as selves or others. With the sovereign state system today, each state is a self; there is no conception of the other. The sovereign social system would conceptualize states as selves and others. With such conceptualization, it would be possible to raise the imperative of justice as well as consider valid the circumstances of justice.
4. A sovereign social state system would recognize justice as an essentially political value, such that it regards the benefits and burdens of the international system as open to redistribution among the member states. The sovereign state system, since it is devoid of a social basis, disregards the distribution of benefits and burdens as a legitimate issue and concern. However, once the state system is recognized as a social structure, it would be imperative if not prudent to legitimize the process and arrive at principles for redistributing benefits and burdens of social conflict and cooperation.
5. A sovereign social state system would not be obliged only to recognize civil and political rights as enforceable and justiciable; by virtue of its socialness and essential social character, it would also be obliged to recognize social, economic and cultural rights as legal and enforceable. A world devoid of social and economic justice is truly not a humane world.

To sum up, a sovereign social state system would be one in which states are not seen to be living in isolation from each other; where the injustices that one state confront are equally a

challenge for other states; where the social nature of the state system introduces a notion of the political; where the relationship among states is considered as a concern for justice.

My study is an attempt to examine and conceptualize the possibility of arriving at justice for states – at principles of international justice. While I may not have worked out the principles of justice per se, I hope that my study has indicated a prerequisite for such an attempt. In doing so, I hope to have contributed meaningfully to the ongoing discourse on international justice. Also, I hope to have opened up a possibility for future research in the area of international justice. International justice is an issue of growing political importance, which cannot and should not be ignored by research and policy makers. As stated by Kok-Chor Tan

so long as we think that justice in the domestic context is a coherent notion in spite of the variety of personal pursuits and partial commitments that citizens in liberal democracies have (in fact, it is this diversity of personal ends that makes the concept of justice pertinent), we can also accept the coherence of international justice. To think that the diversity of national points of view should rule out international justice, when the diversity of personal pursuits is not normally seen to rule out domestic justice, is to be guilty of double standards in our understanding and practice of justice.⁶

ENDNOTES

¹ Daniel M Weinstock, “Global Justice and Contemporary Political Philosophy”, p. 365

² See Chris Brown, *International Relations Theory*

³ See Michael Sandel, “The Procedural Republic and the Unencumbered Self”

⁴ Although most scholars agree with this view, there is some disagreement by others. Stephen Krasner in his work *Sovereignty* argues that nowhere in the settlement treaties is a sovereign state system prescribed. See Stephen D Krasner, *Sovereignty*.

⁵ Daniel Philpott, “Sovereignty”

⁶ Kok-Chor Tan, *Justice without Borders*, p. 200