

Reconceptualising global justice: a critical cosmopolitan account of global structural injustices

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The candidate confirms that the work submitted is their own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

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Abstract

Recent forms of globalisation have seen a revival of cosmopolitan thought, which, in part, attempts to grapple with what globalisation means for theories of justice. Despite the innumerable possibilities, debates about global justice are dominated by a cosmopolitanism indebted to a liberal ontological framework, one which places the individual at the centre of its analysis. In so doing, cosmopolitanism fails to unpack and examine the global social structures that reproduce a wide range of global injustices. Thus, there is a lacuna in the literature for a cosmopolitanism that is more structurally minded and able to examine, on a deeper level, the reasons why global injustices persist. However, when examining Iris Marion Young's influential structural injustice framework for solutions, it is apparent that her understanding of structural injustices focusses on the widespread agential action that produces them and less on the ideational context that shapes agential action.

In response, this thesis explicates a critical cosmopolitanism that places "individuals" within the social structures that most of us perpetuate and are subjected to, whilst also accounting for the broader ideational context that shapes and reproduces many observable structural injustices. This critical cosmopolitan alternative is most indebted to Marx's theorisation of the abstract and the concrete. The thesis notes how the equivalence between social abstractions and the concrete social relations within Marx's approach can provide us with a preferential structural injustice framework precisely because it can better account for the ideational milieu that shapes agential action and the structural injustices it produces as a result. Consequently, the grounding of a critical cosmopolitanism provides a greater insight into how structural injustices arise and are reproduced, which, in turn, shines a light on the transformative and emancipatory politics necessary to transcend them.

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Introduction

Contemporary cosmopolitanism has in recent decades provided normative frameworks for thinking about justice in global terms. For many, this is unsurprising, especially when one considers that contemporary cosmopolitanism has intervened at a time in which newer modes of globalisation continue to transform the lives of billions of people across the globe. The term globalisation is difficult to pinpoint and is often used as shorthand to refer to anything “globalised”, such as the ease at which humans can now communicate and move across borders, international trade, and/or globalising cultural trends. That said, it has also become shorthand for the root of many of the world’s problems, whether it be wars, widespread poverty, and/or the inability of capitalist crises to remain in one place. In this context, cosmopolitan thought has enjoyed success in pointing to the changing social processes associated with contemporary forms of globalisation, while arguing how normative theories of justice ought to be globalised in order to reflect these empirical changes. At the very least, cosmopolitans have forced those who have traditionally rejected global justice (see Blake, 2001; Miller, 2007; Nagel, 2005; Rawls, 1999) to justify why they wish to remain wedded to a Westphalian frame. The Westphalian frame, here, refers to those accounts that, for the most part, see justice as pertaining to the boundaries of political communities and applying to the citizens contained within them.

For many cosmopolitans, the need to globalise the scope of justice is obvious once one is made aware (if not reminded) of the statistics that illustrate the dire conditions billions of human beings are subjected to. For instance, Thomas Pogge (2001: 8) notes that ‘to appreciate the force of the question about priorities, one must know some of the salient facts about global poverty’: e.g. ‘about one-quarter of all human beings alive today, 1.5 billion, subsist below the international poverty line.’; ‘790 million persons are not adequately nourished, while one billion are without safe water and 2.4 billion without basic sanitation’ (Pogge, 2001: 8). Today the figures differ, but still are concerning, with 755 million people living below the international poverty line (World Bank, 2021). This picture in some cases will be exacerbated by climate change, with 900 million people estimated to be undernourished by 2030

(UNDP, 2020: 57)¹. Statistical discrepancies aside, the point remains: that, at present, billions are subjected to dire conditions, and cosmopolitans have relied on such empirical realities to make the case for a global conception of justice that seeks to address them.

What becomes clear from any cursory reading of cosmopolitanism, and the statistics it relies upon, is that it maintains a moral commitment to the advancement of humankind prior to any nationalistic and/or communitarian sentiments. This is perhaps best expressed by Martha Nussbaum (2003: 21), who asserts, ‘we should see ourselves not as team players, not as family members, not as loyal citizens of a nation, but, most essentially, as members of humankind with the advancement of our kind as our highest goal’. Contained within such a statement is the implicit claim that Western audiences have been socialised to think in a way that reproduces nationalism and thus stands in the way of a brighter cosmopolitan future.

This moral sentiment gives rise to a range of cosmopolitan literatures and approaches. One broad distinction is often made between moral cosmopolitanism and institutional cosmopolitanism (Beitz, 1994: 121). The former refers to the moral justification for a commitment to global justice as well as considering what cosmopolitan principles demand of the global order (see Pogge, 2002; Barry, 1995; Singer, 1972; Caney, 2005; Beitz, 1975). Moral cosmopolitanism has also given rise to literatures that outline the implications of combining previously disconnected theoretical frameworks. For instance, to merge a moral cosmopolitan sentiment with feminism (e.g. Pepper, 2013; Jaggar, 2014), or with social anthropology and concepts of identity (Benhabib, 2018; Appiah, 2007). Alternatively, institutional cosmopolitanism considers what institutional mechanisms and apparatuses would be best suited to bring about a moral cosmopolitan condition (e.g. Held, 1995; Marchetti, 2008; Cabrera, 2004; Archibugi, 2008).

¹ This passage relies on statistics that come from two different sources, this is partly because the 2020 Human Development Report (UNDP, 2020) is framed in terms of the impact climate change will have on poor communities, which meant there were no like-for-like statistical comparisons. The point remains, however, that millions of people are still subjected to dire conditions and that cosmopolitans have relied upon such statistics to justify globalising the scope of justice.

The normative frameworks developed in both of these literatures give rise to an applied cosmopolitan literature that concerns addressing a range of global collective action problems through a cosmopolitan lens. This literature seeks to cosmopolitanise a range of issues, including (but not restricted to): climate change (Caney, 2010; Page, 2011; Singer, 2002), global poverty (Pogge, 2002; 2007), global health (Ruger, 2009; Brown, 2012a), migration (Brock, 2020), and just war theory (Fabre, 2008; Hayden, 2005). Cosmopolitanism is, here, presented as a superior framework for thinking about global ethical issues and/or its ability to offer practical solutions to problems that statist approaches are said to fail to meaningfully alleviate. For instance, cosmopolitans often argue that excessive emissions of CO₂ mean that the negative environmental impacts stemming from these actions will be felt beyond the borders within which the emissions took place; thus, the argument goes that, if we are to be successful in reducing emissions, we must adopt a cosmopolitan framework (Dietzel, 2015).

What becomes apparent when surveying the cosmopolitan literature is that there are many cosmopolitanisms, as well as a wide range of global collective action problems that cosmopolitanism can be applied to. Nevertheless, what I argue in this thesis is that this diverse and varied mainstream cosmopolitan literature rests upon parochial ontological and methodological assumptions and is dominated by an indebted liberal theoretical framework. This means that, when surveying the cosmopolitan literature, one will notice that what is commonplace is applying cosmopolitanism to a range of global collective action problems, rather than examining and contesting what cosmopolitanism is as a normative theory. This trend becomes most obvious when one notices the ubiquity of defining cosmopolitanism as a commitment to individuals as the primary unit of moral concern, regardless of which part of the world's surface one inhabits (see Pogge, 1992: 48-9). This individualist commitment gives rise to a brand of global justice that considers how to redress the evident imbalances between those "individuals" who enjoy a disproportionate amount of the world's resources when compared to "individuals" subjected to dire conditions. In doing so, the basic framework for thinking about global justice becomes one that assesses how "we" – the affluent living in wealthy societies – ought to come to the assistance of "them" – the poor living in countries where access to basic needs is highly restricted (e.g. Pogge, 2002; Barry, 1998; Singer, 1972).

It could be said that this is inevitable, as the individual is the necessary starting point for anyone who is serious about grounding cosmopolitanism. After all, if what is morally important is not determined by political borders and/or other arbitrary factors like one's communal ties, then it could be said that the individual, as a philosophical category, is the only possible starting point. That is to say, because cosmopolitans do not accept that moral priority ought to be given based on proximity, or based on some pre-established solidarity, then we can see how mainstream cosmopolitanism arrives at the conclusion that the only option is to disentangle individuals from their nationalistic bonds as the first step to engendering a "shared humanity". However, what I attempt to demonstrate in this thesis is that this is a false dichotomy, namely, we can ground a cosmopolitan theory that is not individualistic without collapsing back into communitarianism, nationalism, and/or statism. The problem, I will argue, is that a liberal approach to global justice disentangles "individuals" from their nationalistic bonds, but, in doing so, severs them from the social structures in which they are situated. As I will argue more fully in Chapter I, this results in an inability for most cosmopolitan accounts to unpack and critically assess what produces these conditions in the first place, beyond vague appeals to the forces of "globalisation". Consequently, there is a failure to critically assess and unpack, in more detail, the social relations that determine and reproduce the conditions that "individuals" reproduce and are subjected to across borders.

When analysing the cosmopolitanism literature, it is clear that there are different potentials that stem from its broader commitment to a global conception of justice. Yet, what is apparent is that these alternatives have been sublated by a cosmopolitanism that most often rests upon a narrow individualist ontological foundation. By doing so, when someone adopts a cosmopolitan framework, they tend to usher in a range of assumptions and presuppositions that remain unexamined. One major drawback of this lack of *critical cosmopolitanism* is that it narrows the terms of the debate and the space for disagreement within the literature on global justice – while also failing to reflect upon the ways in which global justice might offer distinctly different implications when conducted from a different starting point. What this means is that critical cosmopolitan alternatives are crowded out, with the focus being on how to apply liberal cosmopolitanism rather than to challenge it. The ubiquity of individualist

cosmopolitanism I am interested in is evinced in Michael Blake's (2013) aptly titled chapter *We Are All Cosmopolitans Now*. In it, he argues that cosmopolitanism used to be a contested term, whereas now all theorists accept, to some degree, the moral universalism contained in Pogge's aforementioned commitment to individuals globally, and, as such, 'the term itself is unlikely to be illuminating when used in political philosophy, and should be retired' (Blake, 2013: 39). Confident that global justice should begin from the same liberal assumptions, and thus illuminates nothing new, Blake casts cosmopolitanism as a settled debate that is no longer up for grabs. Indeed, for those who remain unconvinced by communitarianism, nationalism, and statism, it is tempting to see cosmopolitanism in its individualistic iteration as the only viable alternative (Dunford, 2017: 381). But what about a cosmopolitanism that begins from a different set of assumptions to those Blake assumes we all share?

What I aim to demonstrate in this thesis is that there is a fruitful *critical cosmopolitan* alternative that is able to overcome many of the limitations deriving from statism and communitarianism, whilst at the same time dislodging individualistic ontological and methodological cosmopolitan presuppositions. In this thesis, I aim to ground an alternative that places individuals within the broader social structures that they shape and are themselves shaped by. The purpose of this is to conduct a more thoroughgoing analysis of the structural nature of global injustices and what ought to be done to transcend them. This research attains its critical prefix both from a literature that is situated within the Critical Theory tradition and also "small-c" critical theories that are not necessarily associates of the Frankfurt School (e.g. Neo-Marxian/Marxism; Foucauldian thought). That is not to say, however, that there is no overlap between these "small-c" and "capital-C" critical theories, or that the latter does not continue to evolve over time, so much so, that to police the exactness of its philosophical boundaries is a futile enquiry. The term critical, then, is used loosely to refer to those theoretical frameworks that are critical of mainstream approaches. This refers to those critical approaches that challenge the analytical, liberal, and/or positivist approaches in various ways.

This thesis is not the first critical assessment of cosmopolitanism that attempts to move away from liberal frameworks when grounding cosmopolitan alternatives. As will be explored further in Chapter

II, one example is David Harvey (2009: 94), who asserts that cosmopolitanism pays scant attention to anthropological and geographical conditions “on the ground”, while also arguing that it would be premature to outrightly abandon cosmopolitan frames of analysis and that there are ways to imagine a more geographically astute cosmopolitanism. Moreover, as will be discussed in Chapter I, Rainer Forst (2001) begins to dislodge mainstream approaches, in particular, by recasting globalisation from a scheme of interdependence to a scheme of exploitation, domination, and oppression. His account, however, falls short of a comprehensive alternative that explicates its own critical framework, but nevertheless provides some indication of how we might stray from liberal conceptions of global justice. In addition, Robin Dunford (2017), as discussed in chapters II and V, argues that cosmopolitan moral universalism reproduces a coloniality that dominates, and ultimately sublates, alternative cosmovisions. Alternatively, Dunford (2017) argues that all cosmovisions should attain equal status providing they do not threaten other cosmovisions from flourishing. As will be explored in chapters I and II, we are currently left with a dominant cosmopolitan theoretical framework that, on the one hand, assumes we are all singing from the same hymn sheet (liberal cosmopolitan global justice), and disparate attempts to ground a critical alternative that, on the other hand, currently cannot stand on their own two feet, but which could nevertheless offer the promise of a more comprehensive critical cosmopolitan alternative.

In response, this thesis engages with these literatures by outlining a critical alternative that attempts to dislodge current approaches to global justice and explicates an account that is able to better capture global social structures and the injustices that they produce. By doing so, this thesis aims to move the cosmopolitan debate beyond its current liberal impasse by dislodging, and then transcending, mainstream cosmopolitanism and its weaknesses. I refer to this as *a* critical cosmopolitanism because it is but one of the cosmopolitan alternatives that challenge mainstream approaches. That is to say, it is one alternative exploration into what global justice could look like when approached from a different framework and set of assumptions. This thesis thus follows in the footsteps of those “critical theorists” who have attempted to outline the limitations of an individualistic ontology when it comes to matters of justice, but does so by attempting to explicate an alternative theoretical framework of its own.

In sum, this thesis will assess the most basic tenets upon which contemporary cosmopolitan thought rests, unpack and problematise existing foundations, and offer an alternative framework, all whilst remaining broadly cosmopolitan in its sentiment and scope. In terms of outline, this will take the form of unpacking, in detail, the basic assumptions underpinning cosmopolitanism (Part I) before reconceptualising my alternative from the ground up (Part II). The aim, therefore, is not to reject cosmopolitanism outright, but to demonstrate how a critical alternative is better placed to characterise and transcend oppressive social structures.

Thesis structure

This thesis will be broken down into two parts, consisting of three chapters per part. Part I presents and unpacks cosmopolitanism, outlining the limitations of the present ontology and methodology, whereas Part II aims to respond to these limitations and ground a critical alternative. In doing so, Chapter I aims to present the dominant cosmopolitan literature that this thesis has in mind when critiquing cosmopolitan thought. In Chapter I, I argue that cosmopolitanism consists of a distributive conception of justice that attempts to determine who is owed what from a set of already produced social goods. In response, this chapter makes two main observations. First, approaching justice in exclusively distributive terms necessarily produces a range of proposals that are inherently symptom-based, insofar as mainstream cosmopolitans attempt to adopt principles of justice that remedy an unequal distribution of goods *ex post*, rather than unpack and examine in more detail how global social structures produce global injustices in the first place. Second, the literature rests upon the assumption that global institutional models cosmopolitans promote could ever be “impartial” in weighing up the interests of all individuals globally. In doing so, what is omitted are the rules and norms that underpin institutional and agential action and how a failure to analyse them leaves cosmopolitanism vulnerable to ushering in more and more subjects into exploitative and oppressive global social structures.

From this literature review, it is apparent that there is a need for an account that can place individuals within the global social structures they shape and are shaped by, as well as an account that captures the

ideational rules and norms undergirding oppressive social structures. In order to respond to this problem, Chapter II, broadly speaking, unpacks in more detail the ontological and methodological assumptions underpinning contemporary cosmopolitanism. This is done in order to demonstrate that it is not simply the case that what is needed is for cosmopolitans to shift their attention and conduct a more structure-centred approach than they have thus far, but, more fundamentally, that cosmopolitans need to rethink their deeply rooted individualistic ontological foundation in order to better understand how social structures reproduce global inequalities, and not just how to compensate for these inequalities. Therefore, to dislodge the ontological and methodological assumptions of this literature, Chapter II takes a step back, reflecting more broadly on why cosmopolitanism has been unable to consider the ways in which “individuals” are situated in relation to global social structures, beyond considering the role global institutional mechanisms play in reproducing global injustices.

More specifically, Chapter II examines the social ontology of the individual and its auxiliary ideal theory methodology which is commonplace within the mainstream cosmopolitan literature. Here, it is argued that the ideal approach to justice fails to respond to a range of injustices that will not be corrected even if the ideal conception of justice is achieved on its own terms. Moreover, it is argued that an ideal approach to justice is unable to create the space for reflecting upon how the “individuals”, central to cosmopolitan theory, relate to the broader global social structures that many reproduce and even more are subjected to. It is argued that we would be better off starting with injustices and theorising about how to correct them. In response, this calls for a critical cosmopolitan approach that begins by attempting to grand theorise about the broader oppressive social structures that reproduce a range of global injustices, as a prerequisite for considering what it is we might do about them.

Chapter III introduces the work of Iris Marion Young (2004; 2006; 2011), who presents useful interventions in debates about structural justice. Here, the chapter considers the ways in which a structural injustice framework is more suitable for thinking about global injustices. It notes that Young’s account is better able to capture how multiple agents go about their daily lives in ways that produce a range of global structural injustices, additionally noting how this takes place in a wider range of arenas

(e.g. formal: corporations, markets, workers, policy-makers, workplace; informal: household, and everyday public spaces), when compared to the cosmopolitans examined in Chapter I, who tend to focus on formal institutions and the policies they implement.

It is in Chapter III that this thesis makes one of its central claims, namely, that, whilst Young provides a useful entry point, her account of structural injustice falls short because the actions that produce the injustices she is interested in occur in accordance to pertinent rules and norms that shape this behaviour. Whilst Young (2011: 52) acknowledges that rules and norms play an important role, her account is vague and does not offer an in-depth ideational analysis of these rules and norms, where they came from, and how they are reproduced across time and space. Consequently, Chapter III introduces the role neoliberal rules and norms have played in reproducing the injustices Young is interested in, creating the space for Chapter IV to explicate an alternative structural injustice framework that is better positioned to account for neoliberalism. The main task of Part I, then, is to identify this lacuna in the literature, whereas the task of Part II will be to respond in such a way as to avoid the cosmopolitan theorisation dismissed in chapters I and II.

In order to develop an alternative structural injustice framework that is better able to respond to the weaknesses of mainstream cosmopolitanism and structural injustice theory, this thesis continues to analyse the same types of structural injustices Young presents (e.g. sweatshop working conditions and housing shortages). This provides a comparative analysis that attempts to demonstrate the preferability of thinking about unpacking and problematising the rules and norms and the role they have in shaping agential action, when compared with Young's (2011) account that focusses, almost exclusively, on widespread agential action. To this end, Chapter III introduces the role neoliberalism has played in reproducing the injustices Young is interested in, but it is not until Chapter IV that neoliberal rules and norms are unpacked in more detail.

Consistent with the critical cosmopolitan approach defended in Chapter II, Chapter IV aims to better capture how structural injustices arise as a prerequisite for thinking about what this means when it

comes to doing something about them (Chapter VI). The purpose of Chapter IV is twofold. First, to unpack the term neoliberalism and its etymology as a precursor for analysing the role it has played in reproducing structural injustices. Second, to develop an alternative framework that is able to capture the role of widespread agential action and the rules and norms that shape them. To address this, Chapter IV then turns to Hegel (2010) and Marx's (1973) distinction between the abstract (universal) and the concrete (universal). Here, I argue that Hegel and Marx's concept of *totality* is a useful conceptual distinction that helps us to think about the way in which neoliberal abstractions arise from the contestation of certain concrete social relations, and, in turn, gain hegemony, and, in doing so, continue to shape and normalise concrete social relations across time and space. In other words, the abstract concerns the rules and norms that shape widespread agential action, whereas the concrete considers the material world that is shaped by this agential action (i.e. the structural injustices it produces) as a precursor for thinking about the dialectical relationship between the two. I refer to this process as the *abstract-concrete dialectic*, which aims to explain how the rules and norms shape agential action as well as accounting for the mechanics of aggregated agential action that produces structural injustices.

The aim of Chapter V is to reflect in more detail to what the critical cosmopolitan framework developed in Chapter IV might be applied. To this end, thinking of global social structures as a totality reframes how we think about the spatial implications of global justice. It is commonplace within mainstream cosmopolitanism to think of global justice, as alluded to in Chapter I, as a case of extending justice *beyond* borders. To date, debates that centre on the spatial implications of cosmopolitanism note how it reproduces a one-directional flow that sees justice as emanating in the West before being applied to "the rest" (Harvey, 2009; Dunford, 2017; Mignolo, 2018). Whilst accepting this critique, Chapter V inverts it and argues that the problem with theorising in the unidirectional way and not in terms of totality is that it also overlooks how the conditions within affluent countries are just as important as what is going on beyond them, when it comes to understanding how social structures are reproduced across time and space. Therefore, Chapter V contests the *global* in global justice theory by rejecting the premise that what constitute "the global" are those social relations that exist beyond borders. Instead, it calls for reframing global justice as justice across borders rather than justice beyond borders. This then

sets the stage for not only thinking about how we must strive for a structural justice across borders. It also goes further and outlines how our understanding of how structural injustices are reproduced across time and space will inevitably impact what we mean by structural justice and how we might bring it about.

Chapter VI, the final chapter of the thesis, concludes by reflecting on what the critical cosmopolitan framework means when it comes to doing something about oppressive social structures. Here, I reflect upon the potential pitfalls of institutional co-option and ideational appropriation that can prevent social movements from making meaningful inroads. Furthermore, this means that calls to work within the present paradigm will do little to displace the neoliberal-capitalist totality because social movements will fall prey to its rationality, and thus emancipatory aims are likely to be derailed. In response, Chapter VI calls for a structural justice that attempts to seek reforms at the concrete level *as well as* ensure that this coincides with attempts to challenge the abstract level, too. To illustrate what this might look like, the chapter turns to the practical ways in which transnational feminist movements and the present ecological crisis both contain within them potentialities for a critical cosmopolitan praxis. This chapter considers the potential these movements have to transform oppressive neoliberal structures. In an attempt to draw the substantive part of the thesis to a close, Chapter VI concludes by reasserting that there are no guarantees for a politics of this kind, but, with the Covid-19 pandemic and the ecological crises lingering in the background, the backdrop for a structural justice that fundamentally questions oppressive social structures and agitates to transcend them is ever present.

What, then, are the implications of this new framework and what does it enable us to do?

Broadly speaking, this thesis makes contributions to debates about cosmopolitanism, structural injustice, and neoliberalism. However, rather than simply making contributions that rely upon the existent frameworks of each of these literatures, this thesis attempts to explicate an alternative framework that relies upon an original conceptualisation of each of these pillars in turn. In doing so,

my alternative framework is better able to situate the relevance of structural injustice and neoliberalism within a broader cosmopolitan framework. Whilst this thesis remains cosmopolitan in sentiment and scope, it does not attempt simply to encourage mainstream cosmopolitans to be more attentive to structural injustices and the role neoliberalism plays in them. It argues that this cannot be achieved if we continue to adopt the ontological assumptions and the methodological approaches that have become commonplace within cosmopolitan thought. Carol Gould (1980) has provided useful insights into thinking about how to offer an critical social ontology grounded in the work of Marx. Similarly, this thesis adopts a novel ontological and methodological approach that considers what the implications are for cosmopolitanism when conducted from a critical ontological starting point. This means that this thesis does not accept cosmopolitanism as a settled theoretical framework but instead creates the space for a research project that, I will argue, is better positioned to be able to respond to global structural injustices.

The implication of doing so is that this thesis will explore the structural injustice literature in order to unpack and examine the need for a new cosmopolitan framework that is more structural. However, because this thesis attempts to build an alternative cosmopolitanism from the bottom up, the critical cosmopolitan framework helps us to think about the ways in which the dominant structural injustice framework is unable to properly account for the rules and norms pertinent to debates about global justice. The main contribution this framework makes, then, is it presents an account of global justice that can better account both for neoliberal rules and norms and the concrete social relations they shape, as well as the structural injustices that are reproduced as a result. In so doing, this thesis not only aims to overcome the limitation that cosmopolitans fail to place the “individuals” their moral presuppositions appeal to in relation to global social structures. It also means that this thesis is able to supplement Young’s (2011) framework, which is insensitive to the ideational rules and norms that reproduce an array of global injustices.

The importance of developing a critical cosmopolitan alternative derives, in part, from how it characterises global social structures, noting that how they are reproduced will have implications for

what it is we ought to do about them. In particular, because my critical cosmopolitan framework accounts for the neoliberal rules and norms that shape agential action as well as the agential action itself, when it comes to structural justice, it does not settle simply for conducting reforms at the concrete level. This alternative framework allows this thesis (in Chapter VI) to reflect upon the importance of reforms to present concrete social relations as well as considering, in tandem, what it means to challenge the social abstractions that shape the neoliberal-capitalist totality.

In doing so, this means that the importance of attempts at making reforms to the present social structures is not downplayed, but my critical cosmopolitan framework provides insights into how we can challenge the broader social abstractions that reproduce structural injustices. The aim is that my critical cosmopolitanism will appease those who stress the importance of a “forward-looking” (Young, 2011; see also Kahn, 2013) approach to structural justice, whilst, at the same time, it appeases those who rightly point out that what is required is the wholesale transformation of the oppressive social structures and the emancipatory politics necessary to do so. Consequently, my framework is able to provide clearer insights into how, empirically speaking, oppressive social structures are reproduced across time and space as a prerequisite for considering, normatively speaking, what it is we ought to do about them.

Like every research project, however, there are limitations and areas of enquiry that have been overlooked at the expense of others. Beginning from the hypothesis that cosmopolitanism is too individualistic, and thus overlooks the structural nature of global injustices and inequalities, opens up a multitude of avenues that this research project could explore. There will be areas of underdevelopment that, had more space been granted, this research could have unpacked and problematised in more detail, some of which I return to in the conclusion of this thesis. The main omission, broadly speaking, I wish to justify beforehand is with regard to the types of injustices that this thesis elects to focus on. In particular, I focus, for the most part, on Iris Marion Young’s examples of sweatshop labour conditions and housing shortages (chapters III and IV), and, to a lesser extent, the consequences of austerity in affluent countries (Chapter V). These are what some might refer to as specifically “economic” case studies. If so, one could note this decision forgoes analysis, in greater detail, of those equally as

important “non-economic” sites of (structural) injustice (e.g. on account of gender, race, sexuality, ability, etc.)

The first point to note is that, despite a failure to develop, in as much detail, other sites of injustice pertaining to other axes of oppression, the distinction between “economic” and “noneconomic” should not be overstated. The broader contention throughout this thesis, as should become apparent, is that thinking of social relations as a totality asks the reader to consider the way in which a set of capitalist social relations, in particular, a neoliberal variant, shapes and conditions agential conduct. While the focus is on how this produces a wide range of global structural injustices, that is not to say that my overall framework is not pertinent to how a neoliberal-capitalist totality shapes and conditions those “non-economic” axes of oppression. Furthermore, whilst blind spots remain, there are clear attempts to grapple with this interrelated axis. For example, in Chapter II, there is a decolonial critique that is used, in part, to displace the liberal ontological and methodological commitments that have often sat outside of traditional “economic” assessments; in Chapter IV, Hegel’s concrete universalism is thought of in terms of its ability to consider the divergent “economic” and “noneconomic” axes of oppression that historically oppressed groups have experienced; as well as considering, in Chapter VI, the potential both feminist and ecological movements have to displace a neoliberal-capitalist totality, both of which are not explicitly “economic” or “non-economic” movements.

The second point to note is that there has been a tendency in recent decades within critical accounts to neglect capitalism and thus traditionally “economic” sites of analysis. Debates about justice and resistance have tended to neglect issues of capitalism and/or class in place of a commitment to issues such as gender and/or race. This is highlighted by Nancy Fraser and Rahel Jaeggi (2018), who note that Critical Theory – the school of thought both theorists are affiliated with, and the school of thought that this thesis is, in part, indebted to – has in recent decades neglected to discuss, and problematise, to the same degree, the role of capitalism, as a social system, and the modes of oppression it shapes and reproduces. This has seen the difference between Critical Theory and egalitarian liberalism all but eclipsed, with theorisation about capitalism replaced by a commitment to normative theory that

analysed the distribution of social goods but never went further to examine capitalist modes of production (Fraser and Jaeggi, 2018: 6).

In doing so, debates tended to “move beyond” economism and instead became centred on topics such as ‘race, gender, sexuality and identity’ (Jaeggi, 2018: 7). Yet, when it comes to debates about justice, including everyday informal debates, these “identity issues” are often viewed through the economised lens of neoliberalism, which focusses on “empowering” self-entrepreneurial individuals, *regardless* of their race or gender, in order to fend off competition from other atomised self-entrepreneurial agents. Again, making attempts to determine where the “economic/non-economic” begins and ends is a superfluous theoretical enquiry. Therefore, what is necessitated is an account of justice that is able to characterise the neoliberal-capitalist totality itself as a prerequisite to examining the “economic” and “noneconomic” sites of injustice that this totality shapes. Thus, this thesis aims to better understand how this neoliberal-capitalist totality came to be, and evolves across time and space, as well as considering *some* of the “economic” injustices that it reproduces. This does not preclude analysis of the way in which the totality shapes “non-economic” axes of oppression (e.g. race, gender, sexuality, ability, etc.), but instead attempts to redress the apparent imbalance in Critical Theory.

With this in mind, as is argued throughout this thesis, the critical cosmopolitan alternative seeks to transform, rather than reform, neoliberal-capitalist relations. That is to say, that this thesis attempts to diagnose the neoliberal variant of capitalism not because it is the neoliberal prefix alone that it wishes to do away with, but that, in order to transform present social structures, we must provide a precise conceptual examination of how they are reproduced. In so doing, this thesis shares Marx’s (1992: 209) contention that critical philosophy is ‘the self-clarification... of the struggles and wishes of the ages’. This critical cosmopolitan alternative, therefore, not only contributes to debates about cosmopolitanism, structural injustice, and neoliberalism; it also develops a novel cosmopolitan framework that can better, empirically speaking, account for how a neoliberal-capitalist totality evolves across time and space, the injustices it shapes and reproduces, and what we might do about it, normatively speaking.

Part I: Problematising cosmopolitanism

Chapter I: A parochial conception of global justice

The task of this chapter is to highlight how cosmopolitan thought fails to conduct a more meaningful analysis of global social structures. I aim to show that, at present, the focus is on constructing solutions that graft onto current economic relations and thus rely on their functionality, rather than considering the ways in which oppressive social structures might be transcended. To say that cosmopolitan thought fails to do something is a sweeping claim and one that I will spend this chapter attempting to evidence. That is because, cosmopolitanism is an abundant and diverse literature to which scholars from a range of traditions have contributed. What interests me in this chapter, however, are the dominant voices in cosmopolitan thought, mainly, but not restricted to, liberal cosmopolitanism. That is because these theorists are dominant within the contemporary, Anglophone cosmopolitan literature to such an extent that it is often assumed that to be cosmopolitan is to accept the categories, definitions, and assumptions that will be outlined in this chapter. To be a cosmopolitan often means that certain ontological assumptions deriving from this literature are ushered into one's analysis. If I can show that there are fundamental problems with cosmopolitanism's foundations, then this has implications for the applied cosmopolitan literature that will inevitably import its weaknesses. I am interested in providing a critical response to mainstream cosmopolitanism, so it makes sense in this chapter for me to present and review dominant voices in this literature to provide the leverage for me to present my alternative framework in subsequent chapters.

Questions about global justice leave open the possibility for a wide range of cosmopolitanisms that move beyond the limitations I hope to identify in this chapter. When thinking about offering a new way of approaching global justice, it is important to clarify what one means when we talk about justice. With the aim of grounding a critical cosmopolitanism, I begin with Nancy Fraser's (2009: 13) framework for distinguishing between the *what* and the *who* of justice. The *what* refers to the conception of justice in question and what it is that is at stake. It could be anything from distribution, recognition, representation (Fraser, 2009: 13) to restorative and punitive forms of justice. The *who* refers to who is included in this scheme of justice: is it the national citizens of a bounded political community, a community or group (e.g. a tribe, women, Christians), or all individuals on Earth? The possibilities of (global) justice are infinite but, before attempting to defend a certain conception of global justice, I wish to think about

contemporary cosmopolitanism and which conception of justice dominant voices in the literature have defended and tacitly reproduced.

Rather than begin by accepting the basic cosmopolitan sentiment that justice ought to be thought of in global terms, I attempt to begin by situating this chapter in what most people think of when we discuss cosmopolitanism. To this end, I will demonstrate how the dominant cosmopolitan literature relies on a distributive framing of global justice, namely, as the concern of *who is owed what and why* (Brown, 2012a). A commonplace understanding of how this definition may be applied is as follows (the liberal nationalist account): *who* – members of a nation-state; *what* – the distribution of wealth produced within this state by members who have the ability to pay; and *why* – because one has a duty to those who are members of the same political community on account of one’s shared cultural, linguistic, and national history. This framework is distributive because it begins by asking who is *owed* what from a particular scheme, reproducing the idea that what justice is, is a matter of ascertaining the just distribution of goods between atomised individuals.

I use this framework to outline the different strands of mainstream cosmopolitan thought at the same time as demonstrating how disagreement within the literature may differ on matters of who is owed what and why. The result is an understanding that this framework fails to create the space for a meaningful account of global social structures. Thus, it fails to unpack and problematise the underlying structural forces of domination, exploitation, and oppression that warrant the need for a cosmopolitan theory of justice.² Lastly, in order to be clear about my targets, this chapter will expend a large amount of space outlining what cosmopolitan literature I have in mind, both in order to introduce unfamiliar readers to this literature and to also demonstrate that the limitations identified in this chapter are not restricted to a handful of cosmopolitan theorists. I attempt by the conclusion of this chapter to show that

² In Chapter II, I problematise a distributive approach to global justice and demonstrate how it cannot surpass the limitations identified within this chapter before presenting an alternative approach. In this chapter, I wish only to evidence the failure of cosmopolitan thought to provide a meaningful structural account of global justice. This chapter aims only to evidence the lacuna in the literature before the next chapter begins to fill it.

the limitations and weaknesses of mainstream cosmopolitan thought are not aberrations but are central to its foundation.

This chapter is broken down into three main sections. The first section provides a brief outline of the conception of cosmopolitanism this thesis takes aim at. The second section will focus on moral cosmopolitanism, which concerns the moral justification for cosmopolitanism and what this moral commitment entails. I aim to demonstrate that for the mainstream literature it is a matter of agreeing that *who* ought to be included in a scheme of justice are transnational individuals. There is also broad agreement that *what* we mean by justice is distributive. For this reason, when it comes to the moral justification for cosmopolitanism, I argue that, despite some disagreement, we still observe a broad commitment to an approach that sees the global basic structure as skewed towards “developed peoples”, resulting in proposals that simply attempt to redress the imbalance – rather than unpack in more detail how global social structures reproduce a range of global injustices. Furthermore, I argue that reliance upon the global basic structure to remedy global injustices inevitably leads to the entrenchment, not the retrenchment, of the unjust global economic order.

The third section will turn its attention to the other side of the literature, often referred to as institutional cosmopolitanism, namely, questions of *how* moral cosmopolitanism might be realised. This literature asks, assuming one accepts moral cosmopolitanism’s precepts, what coercive institutional arrangement can bring about this cosmopolitan vision? As with moral cosmopolitanism, I argue that this literature also frames globalisation as something that is otherwise neutral that needs impartial global institutions in order to redress some of the injustices associated with it. The result is that there is a failure to consider the ways in which global institutions themselves reproduce forms of oppression, exploitation, and domination, as well as failing to examine the rules and norms that underwrite the practices of global institutions.

The starting point for contemporary cosmopolitanism

Cosmopolitans argue that individuals are all members of a global community and therefore justice ought not just to apply to the co-members of one's community, but also to those beyond borders. To what degree, and in what form, is a matter of contention within cosmopolitan thought, and will be examined in the next section. In order to map out and critically assess cosmopolitanism, this chapter will define cosmopolitanism in line with Thomas Pogge's (1992: 48-9) typology. The reason for choosing this typology is because it is a broadly accepted definition used by the scholars examined in this chapter. Thus, it is this way of thinking about cosmopolitanism that I will set about problematising in subsequent chapters. To begin, Thomas Pogge's (1992: 48-9; emphasis original) definition of cosmopolitanism is,

'First, *individualism*: the ultimate units of concern are human beings, or persons – rather than, say family lines, tribes, ethnic, cultural, or religious communities, nations, or states. The latter may be units of concern only indirectly, in virtue of their individual members or citizens. Second, *universality*: the status of ultimate unit of concern attaches to every living human being equally – not merely to some subset, such as men, aristocrats, Aryans, whites or Muslims. Third, *generality*: this special status has global force. Persons are ultimate units of concern for everyone – not only for compatriots, fellow religionists, or such like.'

The moral commitment to individualism highlights contemporary cosmopolitanism's indebtedness to liberalism, but also demonstrates the first move in beginning to contest the *who* of justice: it essentially states "if liberalism is about caring about how individuals fare, then we must place the individual above any group loyalties." Prior to this, it had been assumed that the *who* of justice was self-evidently the national citizenry of a bounded political community (Fraser, 2009: 13). Cosmopolitan interventions contested what was assumed to be a settled question when it came to justice: *who* should be included? This ignited debates between cosmopolitans and critics who were no longer free to assume that the *who* of justice was to be mapped onto a Westphalian model, but were mandated to justify why this ought to be the case (e.g. Miller, 1997; Blake, 2001; Nagel, 2005; Sangiovanni, 2008; Rawls, 1999). For the

most part, liberal theorists were forced to reflect upon which side of the line they were on – to globalise their (individualist) theories of justice to respond to the cosmopolitan critique or to remain wedded to a Westphalian conception of justice. What was not contested, however, was a conception of justice that broadly maps onto Rawls' (1971: 7) general framework: justice applies to the basic structure whose function is to distribute primary goods between atomised individuals.

The commitment to focussing on justifications for expanding the scope of justice was indeed understandable, given the fact that cosmopolitan arguments are often seen as counterintuitive to those who have never challenged their Westphalian assumptions. I aim to show that, in contesting the *who* of justice, cosmopolitans assumed that the *what* of justice was a continued commitment to individualist-distributive approach. This resulted in a brand of justice that failed to provide a structural analysis of the global injustices and instead focussed on *ex post* solutions that would at best redress the imbalance of the global basic structure and at worst further entrench its system and principles of domination, oppression, and exploitation.

The different strands of cosmopolitanism: who is owed what and why?

We established in the last section that cosmopolitanism thinks of individuals as the primary unit of moral concern. This opaque commitment has led to further clarification within this cosmopolitan literature as to what it means to promote a theory of justice that is committed to all individuals equally regardless of where they are located. One of the ways clarity is provided, as to *who* is included, and by what means, is distinguished by differentiating between *thick* and *thin cosmopolitanism*. On the one hand, *thick cosmopolitanism* gives 'equal weight to the claims of everyone which means they must either be directly universal in their scope, or if they apply only to a select group of people they must be secondary principles whose ultimate foundation is universal' (Miller, 1998: 166). *Thin cosmopolitanism*, on the other hand, asserts that 'we may owe certain kinds of treatment to all other human beings regardless of any relationship in which we owe to them while there are other kinds of treatment that we owe only to those to whom we are related in certain ways' (Miller, 1998: 167).

We can begin to see, then, that cosmopolitanism is framed as a matter of what transnational duties “we” (affluent Westerners) have towards those who are not co-members of a shared political community. Thin cosmopolitanism, then, allows special ties to one’s partner, family, colleagues, compatriots, and so forth, but remains generally supportive of principles of justice that are global in scope. When one’s interests ought to be weighed equally, and therefore universally, and when special ties might apply, often depends on the interests being weighed (Miller, 1998: 167-8). That is because thin cosmopolitans could hold that only one’s *vital interests*, such as water, food, shelter, and basic health provisions, for example, ought to be universally accessible, whereas *non-vital interests*, such as one’s access to the arts, could legitimately exclude certain individuals on the basis of one’s special duties to, say, compatriots (Miller, 1998: 167-8). For now, this distinction is merely clarifying what is meant when one generally determines *who* ought to be included in a scheme of (distributive) justice.

Once cosmopolitans have determined that justice ought to apply, generally speaking, to all individuals globally, they move to consider exactly what it is that should be distributed. Note that it is not that cosmopolitans consider *what* justice consists of more generally, beyond distribution; rather, they consider what it is exactly they think ought to be more equitably distributed between transnational individuals. In this sense, distribution is settled as the appropriate conception of justice *prior* to contesting what it is that ought to be distributed. The main “goods” up for grabs in this literature are resources, rights, opportunities, and/or capabilities. The first “good” concerns the ways in which the distribution of individual income, or wealth more generally, can help redress global injustices where some people have more than they need whilst others have less than they need (Barry, 2010; Pogge, 2002; Singer, 1972; 2010). What will become apparent in the next section is that a large part of the literature argues for the redistribution of resources in order to redress the inequality in wealth between individuals across the borders of rich and poor countries. The second “good” refers to the literature that considers the proper distribution of human rights that individuals, as the primary units of moral concern, are entitled to, and how the enforcement of these rights would improve the condition of millions of individuals currently subjected to dire conditions (e.g. Jones, 1999 & Shue 1996 & Pogge, 2007).

The third “good” concerns not simply the resources or rights that individuals possess, but focusses on the capabilities a person possesses to enact their life plans (Sen, 1999; Nussbaum, 2006). That is because greater access to resources in some contexts, for example, does not necessarily mean that someone will become more capable as a result. One example that can help us think about the reason the capabilities approach might be attractive is when one thinks about providing a bundle of resources for women in a certain community who face gendered forms of oppression. It is possible, in certain contexts, that, given the nature of the form of oppression, a greater bundle of resources will do little to improve women’s capabilities. The capabilities approach is able to capture how it might be, for instance, a combination of rights and resources that mean that women in a certain geo-political context are able to improve their capabilities. In Martha Nussbaum’s (2006: 70) words, the capabilities approach seeks to identify the ‘core human entitlements that should be respected and implemented by the governments of all nations, as a bare minimum of what respect for human dignity requires.’ The fourth “good” is the distribution of opportunity to try and equalise people’s life chances regardless of where they are born (Caney, 2001). Here, the focus is on equality of opportunities which often rely upon other distributive bundles of “goods” (resources, rights and/or capabilities) in order to redress the injustice in question.

I wish not to expend much time differentiating between the types of things that are being distributed because it does not make a difference to the broader argument I make in this chapter. Whether it be resources, rights, capabilities, or opportunities that one thinks of as the most salient in rectifying global injustices, there is no doubt that a distributive approach to cosmopolitanism will commit to a combination of any one of those goods anyway. For instance, it is hard to conceive of one’s capabilities being upheld without some claim to rights that also provide the resources needed to be able to enact one’s core entitlements. What I mean to say is that it is possible that there is not as much difference between these approaches as first appears.

In moving to the next part of the formula, contributions to the literature on *why* we ought to globalise justice are plentiful, with divergence centring on an agreement that a commitment to the individual taken to its logical conclusion means a commitment to all individuals globally in some meaningful

form. Moreover, contestation centres on why it is that an agreed conception of justice – the *what* – ought to be extrapolated to the global realm. This debate remains wedded to liberal frames of analysis, expanding on a conception of justice that has already been constructed along individualist-distributive lines. For example, Thomas Pogge (1992; 1994; 2001; 2002; 2007) develops a relational account of cosmopolitan justice that draws on the idea of negative duties. Our globalised world, Pogge (2007: 6) argues, is the site of a relational injustice that is imposed on a set of agents by another, more powerful, set of agents. Pogge (2007: 6) argues that ‘the affluent are harming the global poor’ and therefore this harm ‘triggers obligations to protect... victims and promote feasible reforms that would enhance their fulfilment.’ Elsewhere, Pogge (1992: 50) argues that, because this relationship is harmful, ‘one ought not to participate in an unjust institutional scheme (one that violates human rights) without making reasonable efforts to aid its victims and promote institutional reform’. Pogge (2002: 50) is clear that those who are victims of this unjust economic order ought to be compensated and those who benefit ought to make lasting institutional reforms.

Relational cosmopolitan accounts tend to align with the specificities of Rawls’ (1971) theory, accepting that justice is a matter of ensuring the basic structure functions in a way that fairly distributes goods between individuals. For relational cosmopolitans, the empirical conditions associated with the processes of economic integration mean that Rawls’ societal theory of justice is no longer tenable. They accept Rawls’ (1971: 7) theory of justice, but reject his assumption that societies ought to be thought of as closed-off. This includes accepting the original position as a sound method for adopting principles of justice – where hypothetical participants are placed behind the “veil of ignorance” and do not know certain facts about themselves that would skew their decision. According to Rawls, this would entail the adoption of extensive basic political rights and a commitment to the Difference Principle, which demands that any remaining inequalities of primary goods must be to the advantage of the least well-off (Rawls, 1971: 11, 52). What relational cosmopolitans reject is not the veil of ignorance, but, rather, its application to citizens of a bounded political community.³

³ Not all relational cosmopolitans augment Rawls’ principles of justice. Cohen and Sabel (2006), for example, challenge Nagel’s (2005) argument that socioeconomic justice ought to remain wedded to the

The justification for expanding Rawls theory of justice centres on noticing that where economic interaction is present ‘there is an institution in Rawls’ sense, i.e. a public system of rules defining rights and duties’ and therefore ‘the Difference Principle would apply to the world economic system taken as a whole as well as to particular societies within it’ (Scanlon, 1973: 1066). Similarly, Charles Beitz (1975: 362) agrees, suggesting that higher levels of economic interdependence undermine the soundness of Rawls’ societal basic structure based on states, yet is cautious about promoting a global Difference Principle for minimal levels of global economic integration. Beitz (1975: 381) argues that ‘there is a threshold of interdependence above which requirements such as a global Difference Principle are valid, but below which significantly weaker principles hold’. Both Scanlon and Beitz do not challenge Rawls’ basic conception of what justice is, rather, they reject that it ought to only apply to those within a specific political community. They make the case for extending the scope of justice beyond borders on the basis of the associative relationships that have been produced and sustained by economic integration that are said to reflect a now global basic structure. These arguments set the backdrop for relational arguments that maintain that Rawls’ original position ought to be globalised to include within it transnational individuals.

This is certainly the position of Thomas Pogge (1989: 247), who argues that Rawls’ societal original position should be extended to all individuals globally. One of the main justifications he provides for doing so, is that a commitment to individualism should not be bound by morally arbitrary political borders: ‘how can like inequalities arising internationally be a matter of moral indifference?’ (Pogge, 1989: 250). As a result of this seemingly fairer procedure, Pogge (1989: 254; see also Moellendorf, 2002: 13-4) argues that persons in a global original position would opt for economic inequalities being to the advantage of the least well-off globally. Other theorists follow in these footsteps by contending that it is morally arbitrary where one is born, noting that, because participants do not know what type of society they belong to under the veil of ignorance, the fear of belonging to a society where one is

state. They argue that economic interdependence engenders the expansion of the scope of justice without relying on Rawls’ procedural methods (Cohen and Sabel, 2006: 164-5). However, Rawls’ foundational assumptions about what justice is (distribution) and where it applies (the basic structure) persist, albeit now, on a global, rather than intra-state, basis.

subject to serious harms would motivate participants to adopt at least some global principles of justice that avoid this possibility (Richards, 1982: 290; Barry, 1973: 130). For relational theorists, the discussion is more about *who* ought to be included in a scheme of justice and what methods are sound for determining said scope, rather than questioning *what* it is exactly that is being extrapolated to all individuals globally.

Alternatively, other cosmopolitans justify the expansion of the scope of justice on non-relational grounds. Non-relational cosmopolitans argue that what one owes to others as a matter of justice ought to apply beyond borders by virtue of one's personhood, dignity, humanity, moral capacities, and other similar qualities – regardless of any association. That is not to say that non-relational cosmopolitans necessarily reject that there is a global order that is reproducing serious harms, and that the affluent are potentially perpetuating them (Buchanan, 2003: 61). For instance, Brian Barry (1982: 233) argues that there is an unjust economic order, but that economic global trade does 'not constitute a cooperative scheme of the relevant kind'; nevertheless, he also argues that cosmopolitan duties can (and should) be justified on non-relational grounds. What is important to note is that non-relational cosmopolitans argue that, *regardless of any association*, principles of justice ought to be globalised all the same (Buchanan, 2003: 61). On the whole, whether the degree of association exists on the global level or not is secondary; what is important for non-relational accounts is enforcing the commitment to individualism by extending distributive schemes to all individuals regardless of one's association.

Allen Buchanan (2003: 55-6) provides two reasons for supporting non-relational rather than relational cosmopolitanism. First, there are good moral justifications, on Kantian grounds, for thinking that individuals have *a priori* equal moral worth: they ought to be treated as having ends and not just as a means to someone else's ends (Buchanan, 2003: 55-6). Second, if it holds that all individuals are the primary unit of moral concern, as cosmopolitans claim, then to suggest that only co-members of a given institutional structure are relevant is morally inconsistent (Buchanan, 2003: 55-6). Simon Caney (2005: 111-3) agrees, by first rejecting Pogge's reliance on the negative duties affluent individuals have not to partake in upholding unjust institutions, before noting that we, first and foremost, have positive duties

on account of our shared humanity. The danger, for Caney (2005: 114), is that, by requiring evidence of causality between agents, relational cosmopolitanism cannot account for instances where there is ‘deprivation that stems not from our imposition on them of an unfair global economic system but from the oppression and injustice of their own government’.

One observation is that, on closer inspection, non-relational justifications cannot be detached from relational ones. The relational cosmopolitan can refute the soundness of Caney’s (2005: 114) claim on the grounds that, in a globalised world, there is a singular basic structure whereby even the actions of oppressive governments can be placed within a wider global context that implicates a wider range of actors than first appears. One example is provided by Pogge (2001: 17-8), who points out that it is premature to conclude that because bribery is present in third-world countries it is therefore an incident isolated to those countries in which it takes place. The system of bribes is sustained and legitimised by an institutional arrangement that allows Western companies not only to pay bribes but to exempt them from taxation (Pogge, 2001: 17-8). Similarly, many of the cultural practices that liberal theorists like Rawls (1999: 106) point to as holding back what her terms ‘burdened nations’ due to a lack of ‘know-how’ cannot be delinked from colonialism. For instance, Serene Khader (2017: 611) explains how the “cultural practice” of Sati in India – a Hindu practice in which women sacrifice themselves atop of their husband’s funeral pyre – proliferated as a result of British colonial force’s obsession with it. Similarly, practices such as forced marriage are often pointed to as examples of Afghan culture that “hold women back” without acknowledging that the conditions that increase the chances of this cultural practice are exacerbated by imperialist wars (Khader, 2019: 27). The point is that to attempt to differentiate between instances that are pertinent to debates about justice on the grounds that some are associative and others are not becomes increasingly difficult when imperialist and colonial history is better accounted for.

To clarify, the purpose of illustrating this point is to express how relational accounts are insufficient insofar as it is difficult to evidence the causality of affluent participants contributing to and sustaining an oppressive global system (Chandhoke, 2010: 72). That is not to say that no relation exists, but, rather, that evidencing it is difficult and can often thwart action aimed at redressing injustices. In contrast, for

non-relational justifications it appears impossible not to embed seemingly non-relational circumstances into a wider relational web. Take natural disasters, which appear to be the most non-relational example of human need that sits outside of associative relationships. A tsunami is thought not to be caused by human practice. However, such “natural” disasters cannot be said to be exclusively non-relational because the severity of weather events and the impact they have on certain communities is often dependent on factors that are, upon closer inspection, relational. For example, the impacts of Hurricane Katrina were more harmful to socio-economically deprived communities living in areas where public funding on infrastructure was relatively lower (Harvey, 2009: 215). The reason for this is, such instance of relative underfunding is a structural issue that is the result of many different decisions taken by a wide range of actors, which means that such events are quite the opposite of non-relational. This is increasingly true as extreme weather events are being traced to climate change and present social relations.⁴

Having reflected on the *who* is owed *what* and *why*, what is apparent is that a considerable amount of literature is concerned with matters of *who* and *why*. Given that most people continue to think about justice through Westphalian frames, the exclusivity of discussion on matters of *who* is somewhat understandable, since globalising the scope of justice was bound to require strong and persistent argumentation. Yet, when it comes to *what* exactly is *owed*, we can see that cosmopolitan thought quickly aligns with the social theories of justice it rejects on spatial grounds. Having outlined and problematised some of the basic disagreements with regard to *what* is being distributed and the justification (*why*), I wish now to focus on the types of proposals cosmopolitans put forward in order to enact matters of *who* is owed *what*, and *why*. It is important to note, then, that the disagreements outlined above take place within a broader commitment guiding this distributive formula. Therefore, in the following sections, I examine the limitations of the cosmopolitan proposals that derive from this way of approaching global justice. My argument is that the following proposals reflect symptom-based

⁴ In Chapter III, this thesis returns to these issues but not in the language of relational and non-relational, but in the language of social structures and how a wide range of human actions, which are often impossible to trace back to source, reproduce an array of structural injustices.

solutions that forgo a serious structural analysis of these injustices – an analysis that would capture how injustices are perpetuated, as a prerequisite to transforming those social structures, rather than merely grafting cosmopolitan solutions onto existing oppressive structures.

Ex post solutions to the symptoms of an unjust global order

I argue that cosmopolitans fail to critically unpack globalisation as a set of social forces (Harvey, 2009: 58-9), and, in doing so, opt only to graft their solutions to formal institutional structures rather than looking to ways to transcend globalisation as we know it.⁵ In addition, cosmopolitans fail to consider how oppressive social structures include arenas of exploitation, domination, and oppression beyond those that we might think of as the (global) basic structure. More so, attempts to extrapolate an individualist-distributive conception of justice to the global basic structure, I argue, relies upon the entrenchment, not retrenchment, of the social forces perpetuating contemporary forms of globalisation. I will analyse specific proposals, rather than more general theoretical principles regarding the need to think more globally. What I mean by proposals are those attempts to realise the individual-distributive principles underpinning cosmopolitanism. For example, as noted above, Thomas Pogge (2002: 50) suggests that the victims of an unjust economic order ought to be compensated. What I assess next is the specific concrete proposals cosmopolitans promote that, in this case, would ensure that victims are, in fact, properly compensated.

The proposals that Pogge promotes rely upon a certain framing of global justice that I have been unpacking above, namely, one where globalisation is seen as something that pertains, for the most part, to the global basic structure as understood as the coercive institutional mechanisms.⁶ However, what

⁵ For now, this is my central claim. In Chapter II, I focus on some of the ways that cosmopolitans' ontological assumptions and methodological approaches fail to capture many injustices that exist against the backdrop of formal equality and/or many injustices that persist even when formal institutions are utilised to remedy collective actions and problems consistent with global distributive justice.

⁶ One could argue that what one means by the basic structure is not shared by all theorists who use it. G.A Cohen (2008: Chapter III) notes that there is disagreement about what is contained within the basic structure. Moreover, there are also debates about what ought to be included, with feminist scholars noting that the basic structure ought to include the gendered division of labour and extend to familial

has yet to be considered is how this understanding is aligned with seeing globalisation, itself, as something that is not an inherently oppressive set of social relations: “interdependence” is ‘not bad as such... but it does require democratic centralization of decision making’ (Pogge, 1992: 66). To think about what types of principles of justice arise from this typification of globalisation, consider Pogge’s argument that efforts should be made to reform the global basic structure, and, if this is not possible, the victims of such a system should be compensated (Pogge, 2002: 50). My argument is not to suggest that it is wrong to say that the global basic structure is rigged towards powerful Western peoples. Indeed, there are multiple examples that buttress the soundness of this assertion. Rather, I am arguing that this approach fails to capture how the formation and the processes of globalisation, more generally, are the result of historical processes of domination and exploitation not the formation of well-meaning institutional apparatuses that have unfortunately gone bad (Forst, 2001: 166).⁷

Thomas Pogge

This diagnosis of globalisation lends itself to an understanding of global injustices as an institutional failure rather than as arising from the more varied and broader social structures in which these institutions are placed, but are not reducible to. What is ignored by such a diagnosis are other sites of justice, such as market relations, that are cast as neatly separable from the coercive basic structure, and thus the optimal approach is to think about how this (global) basic structure can regulate capitalist markets’ negative excesses. To understand what I mean, consider how Pogge’s main aim is for affluent nations to sacrifice one percent of their Gross National Product (GNP) with the aim of using these funds to eradicate poverty (Pogge, 2001: 14). Pogge proposes that nations pay a Global Resource Tax (GRT hereafter)⁸: nations would be required to pay if they wished to extract natural resources from the land

relations (e.g. Okin, 1989). I focus here on how the cosmopolitans I assess in this chapter think of the (global) basic structure as coercive institutional mechanisms (e.g. the state; global institutions like the UN, the IMF, the WTO, the World Bank).

⁷ I unpack this point in more detail in Section II, by highlighting how certain institutional cosmopolitan accounts frame globalisation as an otherwise neutral phenomenon that requires impartial institutions in order to curb its negative excesses.

⁸ Elsewhere, Pogge (1998: 501-31, 2002: 202-20) refers to the Global Resource Tax as the Global Resource Dividend. The criticism is pertinent to both his proposals.

within their borders (Pogge, 1994: 200). The problem with such proposals, however, is they rely on grafting solutions onto the very global forces that perpetuate the inequalities that cosmopolitan normative theory is concerned with. The redistribution of a percentage of GNP to eradicate poverty (Pogge, 2001: 14), although not insignificant, reflects a failure to analyse why rich nations are in a position to sacrifice a mere fraction of their wealth, and thus perpetuates accounts of global justice that fail to question both how historically wealth has accumulated so disproportionately across the globe and how this inequality is perpetuated.

Thomas Pogge's (1994: 212; emphasis added) following passage illustrates how the justification for the GRT fails to meaningfully take note of the global social structures:

‘Current inequalities are the cumulative result of decades and centuries in which the more-developed peoples used their advantages in capital and knowledge to expand these advantages ever further. *They show the power of long-term compounding rather than overwhelmingly powerful centrifugal tendencies of our global market system.* Even a rather small GRT may then be sufficient to continuously to balance *these ordinary centrifugal tendencies of market systems* enough to prevent the development of excessive inequalities and to maintain in equilibrium a rough global distributional profile that preserves global background justice.’

Firstly, by framing global inequalities as merely developed peoples ‘using their advantage in capital and knowledge’ (Pogge, 1994: 212) to the detriment of undeveloped peoples, it presents markets as neutral entities that one set of actors have stumbled upon, before using them to their own advantage. This fails to consider how market systems themselves have been designed in such a way that they are exploitative in that capitalist markets extract capital from dominated peoples. This includes the foreground of centuries of colonial practices that have since been reproduced and solidified to ensure the reproduction of the Western dominance, a dominance that Pogge points to as indicative of the need for cosmopolitan justice. In framing capitalist markets in this way, the implication is that global justice could be realised simply by virtue of ‘developed peoples’ using their advantage in ‘capital and

knowledge' to more cosmopolitan ends. This casts capitalist relations (or "the economy" more generally) as separate to human conduct (as a neutral entity in and of itself), and not as the product of social relations that have been shaped repeatedly throughout history in order to advantage certain groups at the expense of others. Such a diagnosis of global inequalities eclipses an analysis that considers capitalist market relations as systems of exploitation and domination in and of themselves, which would need to be radically transformed in order to avoid reproducing the global harms we see today. Unfortunately, the focus has instead been on grafting distributive proposals onto global institutional mechanisms, rather than expanding analysis to global oppressive structures that include institutional settings as well as other sites of injustice.

Secondly, presenting global inequalities as the result of 'ordinary centrifugal tendencies of market systems' (Pogge, 1994: 212; emphasis added), the factors that perpetuate global inequalities are distanced from the underlying principles of capitalist market systems. The global inequalities that market systems produce, are presented as natural and therefore as occurring regardless of transforming market relations. By saying that the inequalities caused by these market systems are 'ordinary', Pogge (1994: 212) occludes analysis of whether different economic structures would *ordinarily* produce similar outcomes. The market relations and the "ordinary" inequalities they produce are situated *prior* to the basic structure, and thus all a global justice of this kind can promote is reforming the international order in the form of regulating these market relations. By failing to consider how capitalist relations are themselves shaped and perpetuated by the global basic structure (and vice versa), the door is closed to a deeper analysis that contemplates how drastic inequalities form across borders and what might prevent them from not 'ordinarily' forming in this way.

In addition to casting global inequalities as ordinary, a third concern is that Pogge's proposal relies upon the entrenchment of the very global economic order that has been identified as producing a range of harms that violate cosmopolitan justice. Pogge's (1994: 212) GRT modifies the current market system, attempting to ensure that the negative excesses of a global basic structure are not reproduced. However, by failing to analyse what type of market system these modifications would apply to, it is difficult, if

not impossible, to ensure that these negative excesses are properly curtailed. For example, let us suppose that the guiding rules and norms of the current global order are trade and capital liberalisation, free movement of labour, and the privatisation of public goods and services. For argument's sake, let us also say that these features of the current order shape and perpetuate a range of global injustices. If so, Pogge (1994: 212) can, at best, hope to keep pace with economic forces that are exacerbating global inequalities, and, at worst, reproduce them. That is because the GRT is reliant upon the sale of resources and an economic order that is composed in a way that promotes the mining and sale of resources in order to generate the tax revenues in order to reduce inequality. Hence, Pogge's proposal is reliant upon the functionality of the very market system that has been identified as reproducing global inequalities that relies on the mining and sale of resources (and only the mining and sales of resources) before being in a position to actualise this redistributive proposal.

Similar concerns arise when assessing Brian Barry's (1998) proposals, which do not waiver despite his commitment to non-relational justification. He promotes international redistribution, stating 'the demands of cosmopolitanism would, I suggest, be best satisfied in a world in which rich people wherever they lived would be taxed for the benefit of poor people wherever they lived' (Barry, 1998: 153). Barry (1998: 154) argues, however, that this taxation will only be feasible when the redistribution of wealth between countries is well established and thus normalised. To establish this norm, he assesses alternatives to taxing individuals directly. To do so, he proposes that countries, providing they are wealthy enough, ought to sacrifice a percentage of their Gross National Product, asserting that, 'one percent is an amount that would scarcely be noticed, but it is vastly in excess of the amounts currently transferred and would make a large difference' (Barry, 1998: 154). Therefore, the same criticisms levelled against Pogge are transferable to Barry inasmuch as both scholars do little to unpack the need for redistributive principles; this is arguably more so in Barry's case, because, as a non-relational cosmopolitan, he makes less of an attempt to assess how global inequalities arise. In sum, a cosmopolitanism that first asks who is owed what and why lends itself to symptom-based solutions that do little to transform the broader social relations that brought them about.

Peter Singer

For other theorists, cosmopolitan solutions rest not on reforming the global structure (institutional reforms) but on what it would mean for affluent individuals to redistribute wealth across borders (interactive proposals). In his famous paper, *Famine, Affluence, and Morality*, Peter Singer (1972: 231) constructs a thought experiment: one is walking to work and notices a child drowning in a shallow pond, what should one do? For Singer (1972: 231), and importantly, for most people, the moral imperative is clear: one should wade into the water and save the child. Singer (1972: 231) equates the moral duty to save the child to one's moral duty to alleviate global inequalities in the form of donating to aid agencies. This duty falls to affluent individuals, defined as those living within wealthy countries, to donate a portion of their income until the point where 'giving more would cause oneself and one's dependents as much suffering as one would prevent' (Singer, 1972: 231). Singer's utilitarian account is non-relational as it is not concerned with our associative relationships, based rather upon one's ability to help. He notes that, 'neither our distance from a preventable evil nor the number of other people who, in respect to that evil, are in the same situation as we are, lessens our obligation to mitigate or prevent that evil' (Singer, 1972: 234). Given that Singer is clearly attempting to consider what affluent individuals owe to those who are suffering, it seems that to suggest that his account does not unpack, in enough detail, the structural nature of global injustices, would be to misrepresent the point of his contribution. Leaving this aside for one moment, it is important to first ask what it is about Singer's account of the good Samaritan that is disanalogous with extreme poverty.

In the same way that Singer's thought experiment fails to query how the child ended up in this situation, the duties Singer derives from this scenario fail to question why so many people are subject to serious harms. The thought experiment Singer (1972: 231) employs, therefore, fails to capture the nature of global inequalities, which are the result of complex historical forces (e.g. colonialism and imperialism) as well as the consequent power relations associated with contemporary globalisation. If Singer's (1972) experiment was marginally altered to be more reflective of global injustices, it would require a considerable increase in the number of ponds containing drowning children, thus demonstrating how

the work of the “saviour” is highly demanding, to the extent that we would likely think it was unfeasible (Kuper, 2002: 110). It seems reasonable to assert that, eventually, the Samaritan would begin to question why this scenario was being reproduced and what ought to be done about it at the structural level. In other words, it would address why there were so many drowning children in the first place. Consequently, if Singer’s (1972: 231) proposal was realised in the manner he intended, whilst some marginal improvements might, in theory, alleviate immediate suffering in the short term, the conditions that engender this suffering would remain largely unaltered.

Let us now respond to the claim that to include Singer’s account as an example of a failure to unpack global social structures is unjustified because his concern, after all, is how affluent individuals can fulfil transnational duties that go some way to improving the present situation. However, on closer inspection, Singer’s account cannot operate in a non-contextual vacuum. This is because what emerges is that “doing our bit” as individuals cannot be neatly disentangled from structural considerations, and thus cannot escape the broader limitations I have identified in this section. Leif Wenar (2011: 15) undermines the tenability of Singer’s proposal by arguing, based on a wealth of empirical research, that once aid funds are raised, expenditure often worsens a situation rather than improves it. This is because of a lack of resources and authority that NGOs possess (Singer’s main institutional delivery option for aid) to prevent funds from being funnelled away from development projects; instead, often buttressing criminals, warlords, autocrats, and so forth (Wenar, 2011: 15-20; Wenar et al., 2018).

In addition, the mere existence of NGOs attempting to funnel funds towards development projects often takes place against the backdrop of weakened (neoliberal) state institutions that lack democratic oversight. Furthermore, the empirical evidence suggests it is difficult to measure the effect one’s donation has, which undermines affluent people’s ability to make meaningful contributions, and thus fulfil the duties Singer assigns (Wenar, 2011: 20). In other words, we cannot *know* if we are “doing our bit” because the process of giving aid is opaque and it is difficult to evaluate its impact. The point is simply that we cannot “do our bit” in the way Singer suggests without needing to extrapolate analysis to global social structures. If giving aid not only fails to challenge the broader social structures

perpetuating global poverty, but also entrenches them, then analysis should be broadened away from the interactional to the structural level.

In this section, I have begun to unpack the problem with contemporary cosmopolitanism and its commitment to the *who is owed what and why* formula of understanding distributive justice (Brown, 2012a). I have argued that this framework results in an individualist-distributive approach to justice does little to disrupt oppressive social structures precisely because it only creates the space for *ex post* proposals that that graft onto this order and entrenches it further. My argument in what follows is that what is needed is an account of cosmopolitanism that shifts away from an individualist-distributive approach and extends beyond the formal global institutional setting. Other arenas of potential domination, exploitation and oppression, such as the marketplace, usually sit outside the cosmopolitan purview. What is warranted is an analysis both of the global institutional arena and other sites of injustice, like the marketplace, which includes a wider range of actors and processes, all of which are pertinent to global justice, but cannot be captured by seeing the subject of justice as limited to the global basic structure.

In addition, it has been noted that much of the debate within cosmopolitanism centres on justifying *who* should be included in the scope of justice. Drawing attention to this is not to say that matters of *who* to include are not of importance to debates about justice. Rather, the point is to note that this debate has occupied most of the contemporary cosmopolitan literature at the expense of considering *what* justice could be beyond an individualist-distributive approach consistent with *who is owed what and why* (Brown, 2012a). If social justice theorists assumed that the *who* of justice was the national citizenry (Fraser, 2009: 13), then cosmopolitans contest the *who* whilst assuming the *what* is a settled question. In the following chapters, I attempt to dislodge this way of theorising global justice in order to create the space to situate my critical alternative.

Hitherto, I have narrowed my analysis to moral cosmopolitanism, in particular, how normative duties align with the *who is owed what and why* (Brown, 2012a). I am yet to analyse institutional

cosmopolitanism: the coercive mechanisms required to enact moral cosmopolitanism. What should become apparent is that the institutional cosmopolitan literature aims to realise a pre-determined conception of *what* justice is by having already justified why it ought to apply to all individuals globally. That is not to say that all moral cosmopolitans agree on the institutional models that will realise their moral commitments; the institutional literature is a ‘family of answers’ (Barry, 2010: 100). What I aim to show is that, akin to the previous section, despite disagreement, this literature nevertheless agrees on an individualist-distributive conception of justice that contemplates what institutions are best placed to distribute resources, rights, capabilities, and/or opportunities globally. What, then, does the institutional literature mean for the *who is owed what*, and *why* framework we have been working with? I propose that we add *how* to this framework to examine the institutional literature in its own right. The purpose is to demonstrate that the current literature is prone to similar limitations as those identified above.⁹ Therefore, the *how* component refers to attempts to institutionalise *who is owed what*, and *why*.

Institutional cosmopolitanism

In attempting to think about how cosmopolitan principles might be actualised, cosmopolitans point to how the current system of separate states, the most powerful of whom rig the global economic order in their favour, cannot ensure that the negative excesses of globalisation are curbed to ensure that the most economically marginalised get their fair share of the pie. With this diagnosis in mind, a range of cosmopolitical institutions are promoted due to their ability to redress disparities in wealth, opportunities, and rights between individuals living in affluent countries and those living outside of them. In this section, I analyse these different institutional arrangements with the aim of demonstrating how this diagnosis fails to account for the historical social relations, and the rules and norms underpinning them, that reproduce a range of injustices that are not captured by appeals to reforming

⁹ It should be noted that matters of *how* do not necessarily refer to the institutional arrangements tasked with realising a pre-determined conception of the *what* and the *who* of justice. If we return to Nancy Fraser’s (2009: 34-6) framework: in her account, the *how* component refers to the contestation of the *what* and the *who* of justice, as well as contesting the limits of the democratic spaces in which this contestation takes place.

the global institutional order. I argue that the enactment of the types of proposals considered in the last section, as alluded to, will do little to fundamentally transform global social structures, and that, in particular, forms of domination and exploitation persist despite the formation of cosmopolitan democratic institutions.¹⁰

Two cosmopolitical variants I will now analyse are global government and world federalism. For Luis Cabrera (2004: 96) this takes the form of a ‘multi-level constitutional system’ with a ‘global executive branch’ with a ‘judicial branch and parliament’ where the ‘laws, rules and judgements made at the highest level are binding’. In order for moral cosmopolitanism to be realised, the thinking is that one ought to adopt effective institutional models that have the ability to curb the power of the state and realise cosmopolitan distributive justice (Cabrera, 2004: 71). For world federalists, states have more of an input as they comprise this proposed institutional model. Raffaele Marchetti (2008: 154) argues accordingly for a consequentialist account of global democracy, claiming that to ‘secure political empowerment...every political agent [should be able] to self-legislate on all aspects of his/her life’, which in turn ensures the ‘maximization of world well-being’. This would take the form of a ‘cosmo-federalism’ that consists of a ‘democratic union of states, according to which all political representatives would be directly elected to a law-making assembly by the people’ (Marchetti, 2011: 39-40). Under this model, states ‘would renounce a portion of their sovereignty and agree to a compulsory jurisdiction intended solely for a determined list of competencies on global issues’ (Marchetti, 2008: 164). Luke Ulas (2013: 44) has argued that under such models states would no longer enjoy absolute sovereignty over their affairs. Unlike Marchetti, Ulas (2013: 107) suggests that a benefit of world federalism is ‘that it entails no further curtailment of domestic state powers than is in any case demanded by moral cosmopolitan theory itself’; thus, leaving open the question regarding exactly which competencies would be reserved for a world federalism and which would be allowed to remain at state level.

¹⁰ It should be noted that this thesis will not dedicate much space to discussing the role of global institutional models hereafter. It is not that there is no role for democratising existent institutions and/or creating new ones in my account of justice. Rather, my main claim with regard to this literature is that it is unable to account for those injustices that sit outside formal institutional settings, as well as failing to account for the rules and norms that ungird institutional practice.

David Held (1995) and Daniele Archibugi's (2008) models call for a union of states that would cooperate and devise global policy across borders (Held, 1995: 273; Archibugi, 2008: 173; see also Caney, 2005: 161). Instead of democracy being globalised by extending the franchise to all individuals, Archibugi (2008: 178) advocates for national parliaments to elect representatives, whereas Held (1995: 273) supports an 'independent assembly of democratic peoples, directly elected by them and accountable to them', but argues that initially only democratic nations should be admitted. Alternatively, Archibugi (2008: 159) argues that admitting non-democratic states is a 'necessary evil' in order to overcome any foreseeable tension posed by exclusion. Both accounts propose the reformation of the United Nations (UN), whereby the General Assembly would house these elected officials and enable them to pass globally binding legislation (Archibugi, 2008: 173-8 & Held, 1995: 273).¹¹ Despite the differences between all the institutional models considered thus far, I will analyse them collectively as they share important features that are prone to the same limitation. The purpose of conducting an exegesis examination of the nuances between these institutional models is to illustrate the abundance of contributions to these debates that nevertheless remain committed to a parochial conception of justice.

The first point to note is that it is not incorrect to suggest that globalisation means that many of the world's inhabitants, especially those most negatively affected, do not have proper democratic recourse when it comes to curbing the negative excesses of globalisation. We might even say that this has always been the case and that contemporary cosmopolitans often present the debate as if these concerns only emerge in response to contemporary forms of globalisation. Regardless, seeing the role of global institutions as weighing up the interests of all individuals impartially, misses how global institutions may reproduce the particularities that many cosmopolitans argue are features of the Westphalian system. That is to say, there are no guarantees that the formation of these institutions will bring about

¹¹ There are also other models, such as Pogge's (2002: 178) multi-layered institutional framework that advocates, in less detail, for the creation of political units below and above the state level 'without one political unit being dominant and thus occupying the traditional role of the state'.

the distributive policies and principles that I argued in the last section fail to meaningfully transform global social structures.

Consider how both Held (1995: 254) and Cabrera (2004: 72) note that the European Union, as a supranational model, realises its capacity to distribute, in this case, resources, across the EU, and therefore so too can cosmopolitan institutions. What such claims ignore is that these models do not enact redistributive schemes simply because they have the mechanisms to do so. In this case, EU institutions were brought about as a consequence of Europe's post-war commitment to welfare liberalism, and not the other way round. It is true that once institutions have been established they can evolve; we can see this by thinking of the ways in which neoliberal reforms have altered EU institutions and the nature of the distributions that subsequently take place. Nevertheless, what would be required is analysis of the rules and norms undergirding proposed institutional models. Held (1995: 249) notes that there is a distinct difference between the welfarism present in Sweden and the US, but is unclear on what grounds the latter would be willing to cooperate in the kind of Keynesian distributive schemes, found in the former, which intervene in the economy to correct market failures in order to redistribute, more equitably, the wealth produced by capitalist societies. Peter Gowan's (2001: 92) point that liberal cosmopolitanism tends to exclude American hegemony is useful for thinking about the incongruity of the US suddenly utilising cosmopolitan institutions to act in ways that are in direct tension with the global institutions in which they formed to reproduce their hegemony (e.g. UN, the World Bank, the IMF, the WTO). For these cosmopolitans, it is an institutional fix that is required rather than a more fundamental analysis of why the global order operates in the manner it does.

I will now address a second criticism concerning the institutional literature. This concerns the aforementioned claim that the literature under examination presents globalisation as an otherwise neutral phenomenon. For instance, Held (1997: 261) thinks of globalisation as 'a world of overlapping communities of fate' whereby 'the trajectories of each and every country are more tightly entwined than ever before' (see also Archibugi, 2008: 53). Here, globalisation is said to denote *inter*-dependence in an *inter*-connected world, which implies an equality (or potential equality) between its participants.

Thus, globalisation is seen as a natural force that has somehow lost its way through the institutional power of Western states who have prioritised nationalistic particularism ahead of cosmopolitan impartiality. In doing so, the focus is on levelling the playing field rather than thinking about whether globalisation itself ought to be reframed in line with what Rainer Forst (2001: 166) suggests is a system of ‘coerced cooperation and dependency rather than interdependence’.

Without critically unpacking globalisation in more detail, it can be cast as a neutral phenomenon that is simply misused, which supports the need for institutional means to regulate/rectify this misuse. Consider how liberal accounts cast the state as a neutral arbiter that enforces everybody’s natural rights (e.g. Locke). Injustices are said to arise when one points out that certain rights did/do not extend to (e.g.) women, the working-class, LGBT persons, and racial minorities. It is not that the state is impartial, the argument goes, it is that it has failed to live up to its normative ideal as an impartial arbiter. In recasting this image, it is a case of seeing globalisation, like the state, less as a project of mutual benefit that lost its way but as a project of exploitation and domination that cannot be rectified simply by making changes to the way in which the current global order formally makes decisions. Moreover, if these institutions can be said to be impartial, institutional cosmopolitans fail to acknowledge that ideological forces could make use of these supranational mechanisms as a means to sustain the reproduction of global inequalities. Garrett Wallace Brown (2012b: 214) makes a related point when examining the need to constitutionalise international law, arguing that the new order could globalise ‘the very institutional arrangements that have led to the collective action problems of global crisis that currently dominate our headlines’. This is an important intervention and one that would need supplementation of the ideational rules and norms that could likewise be reproduced when constructing cosmopolitan institutions.¹²

¹² Later in this thesis, the focus will be on these ideological forces more so than the institutional arrangements themselves. Hence, I focus primarily on the former and merely make reference to this point for the time being.

The argument that supranational institutions cannot possibly be impartial is further consolidated by referring to Luis Cabrera's (2004: 82) argument that transfers¹³ are biased in the current system because of a self-interest inherent to the Westphalian order. That is because, contra to his model, there is 'no impartial judge to settle questions of appropriate transfers' (Cabrera, 2004: 82). This claim captures the two problems noted above. The first thing to note is that, as is repeated throughout this chapter, there is a failure to question why these transfers are warranted in the first place. The second is more fundamental to the claims made by the institutional cosmopolitans considered in this chapter. In particular, the impossibility of a distributive transfer that is impartial, free from certain forms of power and domination and ideological framing. For instance, the transfers of resources overseen by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank are distinctly different to the transfers overseen by Cuba as part of their commitment to medical internationalism. In the case of the former, the transfers of resources that are overseen by these institutions are neither impartial nor free from conditionality that helps to reimpose Western hegemony and cannot be simply seen as attempts to ameliorate global inequalities.

In the case of a cosmopolitan institutional arrangement in which transfers are mandated, there is an historical precedent to suggest that these transfers would never be conducted in a way that is impartial, however well-intended. Certain assumptions about what a just transfer is, how it ought to be paid, and what groups ought to be able to use these resources to what end are all political and inevitably ideological. On the point about ideology, Archibugi (2008: 142) notes that cosmopolitan institutions could take on various ideological forms in relation to redistributing, in this case, wealth, whether that be liberalism or socialism; yet he remains ambivalent towards which political economy would best address global inequalities. Furthermore, he notes that the 'neoliberal program has been under way for some years, although in the absence of any democratic accountability', going on to say 'one of the reasons why a significant part of today's world does not reap the benefits of the wealth generated elsewhere is that its voice is not heard' (Archibugi, 2008: 142). Whilst there is, of course, truth to this claim, it fails to appreciate the ways in which democracy is in tension with neoliberalism, and thus fails

¹³ Cabrera (2004: 82) does not specify exactly what transfers he has in mind, whether resources, capabilities, or rights. Nevertheless, the point made retains relevance.

to unpack the ways in which the latter applies an economic rationality to the detriment of democratic institutions (see Brown, 2015). What this means is that cosmopolitan institutional models have the potential to simply usher in more and more subjects to exploitative and oppressive institutional mechanisms. In so doing, institutional accounts focus on regulating whatever political and economic system is in operation rather than calling out the system in question itself.

What is illuminated by this discussion is that cosmopolitans should not remain ambivalent about the ideological assumptions that have the potential to undermine democracy and global justice of various iterations. Instead, what is necessitated is for a deeper understanding of the structural forces at play in our globalised world (Harvey, 2009: 58-9). Thus, many cosmopolitans have attempted to answer the *how* question by devising institutional models that respond to globalisation, without first better understanding the dominant social forces at play, thus failing to safeguard against their extrapolation at the global level.

Statist cosmopolitanism

Until now, my analysis has focussed on earlier proponents who provide institutional models that are said to be able to overcome the limitations of the Westphalian model. However, as Garrett Wallace Brown (2011: 53) points out, ‘when surveying the cosmopolitan literature’, however, ‘one is often struck by the ease with which the state is rendered morally and empirically otiose’. The remainder of this section, therefore, will focus on the statist cosmopolitan literature, which aims to respond to the ‘ambiguities about the role the state could play in creating a cosmopolitan condition’ (Brown, 2011: 53). In contrast to the models discussed above, *statist cosmopolitanism* maintains that, instead of the state being an obstacle, it could in fact be an agent of cosmopolitanism (Ypi, 2008, 2012; Beardsworth et al., 2019: 17 & Brown, 2011). Simon Caney (2008: 510-4) proposes ways the state can be utilised to meet the demands of cosmopolitan (distributive) justice. One method is for powerful states to cancel the debt owed by poor countries. Another is for these same countries to restructure global institutions such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank (Caney, 2008: 510-1). Moreover, for

Caney (2008: 512-3), because states act 'in our name', they feel pressured to ensure that they do not conduct themselves in a morally corrupt manner that would invoke shame amongst their citizenry.

I need not afford much space to noting that the solution to remedying global injustices, on this reading, runs into similar problems to those identified above. In particular, the powerful states Caney insists should reform global institutions are the same powerful states that constructed those institutions in the first place, and continue to run them in accordance to the rules and norms that have consistently reproduced their hegemony. What is necessitated is a more comprehensive analysis of the rules and norms that underpin the institutions the state is tasked with reforming, as well as the state itself, in order to think about the ways in which these institutions could be transformed or replaced. To suggest that all statist cosmopolitan accounts take this approach, however, would be to misrepresent Lea Ypi's work. Ypi (2012) develops a thoroughgoing account of how associative relationships found within states are useful for harnessing cosmopolitan aims. She argues that civic education and popular sovereignty are useful features of liberal democracies for achieving these aims (Ypi, 2012: 133). This is agitated for by a political avant-garde: a counter-movement that seeks to introduce and normalise cosmopolitan ideas amongst the masses (Ypi, 2012: 161).

Their task would be to 'illustrate how existing political institutions and state-based associative relations might be transformed in a way that reflects global justice imperatives' (Ypi, 2012: 172). It is important to note that Ypi's account focusses on how state institutions can be transformed, rather than expecting them to spontaneously conduct themselves in a way that is currently at odds with the rules and norms guiding state agency. By placing this process of transformation in the hands of the political avant-garde (i.e. bottom-up social movements), her account is able to overcome the criticism that will be considered in more detail in the following chapter – namely, that cosmopolitanism tends to develop theories of justice outside of democratic processes in accordance to ideal theories of justice. Nevertheless, statist cosmopolitan accounts, despite creating the space for bottom-up protest movements in Ypi's case, rely upon the apparatus of predominantly powerful states and less on other important factors such as the

way in which transnational movements can agitate outside of formal institutional settings, across borders, to challenge the ideational rules and norms that serve to oppress and dominate certain peoples.¹⁴

In sum, the purpose of this section was to demonstrate that the limitations of normative cosmopolitanism are reproduced when considering what institutional models could bring about cosmopolitan (distributive) justice. In particular, it was argued that casting globalisation and/or global institutions as otherwise neutral arbiters fails to capture the *raison d'être* of global institutions; as well as failing to capture the ideational rules and norms that guide them to act in ways that reproduce injustices. More specifically, it was argued that, whilst world federalist and inter-state models attempt to respond to the democratic deficit posed by globalisation, they make no attempts to reassure their critics that the ideological features of the current Westphalian order will not be reproduced at the global level in the name of cosmopolitanism. In addition, statist cosmopolitan models are prone to a similar problem, whereby the self-interestedness of states and the rules and norms underpinning their conduct are not properly taken into account.

Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to introduce the reader to the cosmopolitan literature at which this thesis takes aim, as well as begin to make some preliminary observations about gaps in this literature that might be addressed by a critical account of cosmopolitanism. In a sense, this chapter performed a critical reading of the cosmopolitan literature to identify certain points of departure that this thesis will take up in subsequent chapters. For this reason, this chapter has covered a lot of ground, with the aim of unpacking, with specificity, the literature the rest of this thesis will respond to. In addition, the aim has been to show that this literature, whilst varied, has a current running through each strand: a framework that limits the scope of *what* justice is to an individual-distributive understanding that nearly always

¹⁴ I return to these matters in Chapter VI.

concerns the failure of the current (global) basic structure; and, as such, aims for institutional modifications that do little to unpack oppressive global social structures. The broad themes that I have outlined in this chapter are as follows.

First, is that cosmopolitans tend to focus on *ex post* remedies to the symptoms of an unjust global system, rather than unpacking in more detail what globalisation is as a force and what can be done to transform its processes. In doing so, cosmopolitan solutions rely on the function of the very market relations in order to reform the global basic structure. This has the potential, as I aim to show in the following section, to continue to perpetuate systems of domination, oppression, and exploitation even when these reforms are realised. The second is that, for the most part, cosmopolitans think of globalisation – the global basic structure – as an otherwise neutral force that has been monopolised by self-interested powerful states. Hence, the solution is not to consider how global institutional mechanisms could be (and are) themselves sources of domination and exploitation, but to suggest that justice will flourish so long as the “right” principles are applied. What occurs is the separation of the capitalist relations and principles of justice tasked with regulating them, thus taking the former as natural. This fails to unpack in more detail how these relations function and perpetuate the injustices cosmopolitans are concerned with. In so doing, the ideational rules, norms, and assumptions that underpin the social practices that produce injustices currently sit outside the purview of cosmopolitanism.

Having introduced the cosmopolitan literature, in the next chapter, I attempt to unpack the ontological and methodological assumptions that led cosmopolitanism to this point. I do so in order to ground the claim that a critical cosmopolitan alternative cannot modify the current global justice framework but must try to deconstruct it and replace it with something new.

Chapter II: Rejecting the ideal of impartiality

‘Equality exists only in contrast to inequality, justice to injustice’ –

Frederick Engels (cited in Horkheimer, 1993: 37)

In this chapter, I attempt to locate the deeper ontological and methodological reasons as to why cosmopolitanism is unable to conduct a structural analysis of global injustice. I do so by outlining the ways a commitment to impartiality, as a normative ideal, ontologically casts the subjects of justice as atomised individuals severed from social structures. In particular, I aim to show that the ideal of impartiality focusses on concepts of justice, fairness, and equality without including their respective opposites at the heart of analysis. Whereas Engels was attentive to the dialectical conditioning of equality/inequality and justice/injustice, the ideal of impartiality professes to allow theorists to focus on equality, justice, and fairness *prior* to thinking about their antithetical counterpart. In this chapter, I respond to calls to conduct a structural analysis, grounding an approach to global justice that begins with global structural injustices as the starting point of a cosmopolitan normative theory.

Calling for the need to instigate a shift in the way we think about global justice within cosmopolitan thought is not a straightforward task. Like all interventions within longstanding debates, presenting a comprehensive analysis of the ontological and methodological limitations of cosmopolitanism is exacting. The literature is both abundant and spans a range of different theoretical traditions. In narrowing my enquiry, I focus on the way the ideal of impartiality has framed many of the debates surrounding global justice. In addition, cosmopolitanism is often cast as “radical” inasmuch as it turns Westphalian intuitions upside down. These “radical” interpretations suggest that a cosmopolitan ethic is unable to extend beyond those we share a political community with (Miller, 1997), if not that the current Westphalian order is an inappropriate site for justice (Nagel, 2005). It is tempting, therefore, to overstate the difference between social and global theories of justice on account of the scope of their moral commitments.¹⁵ What should become apparent in the remainder of this thesis, however, is that the differences between cosmopolitans and their critics largely wither away when one notes that they begin from the same set of ontological and methodological

¹⁵ Although some argue that, even when it comes to the scope of justice, cosmopolitans and their critics agree on more than they appear to on first reading (Blake, 2013; Tan, 2010).

assumptions. By intervening at this point in the cosmopolitan debate, I try to avoid the choice between two variants of an individualist ontology, one statist and one cosmopolitan. Instead, this chapter rejects this choice, remaining committed to a cosmopolitan scope of justice while rejecting the current theoretical framework upon which global justice currently rests. To make my case, I break my argument down into the following six sections.

The first section outlines what I am referring to as an individualist ontology and the ideal of impartiality, clarifying the distinction between ontology and normativity used throughout this chapter. In the second section, I distinguish between what I refer to as input and output impartiality; the former refers to the impartial procedures for adopting principles of justice, whereas the latter refers to the condition of impartiality that is said to arise when basic institutions are regulated by these principles. In the third section, I argue that, because input impartiality is based upon ontological assumptions about what constitutes an absence of impartiality, the ideal of impartiality that one strives towards will inevitably miss those sites of injustice that do not sit in direct opposition to the ideal of impartiality. In the second part of this section, I argue that, when considering the ideal of input impartiality, theorists overlook the transformation of political and economic background conditions; arguing that in order to remain pertinent such transformations ought to alter the content of justice one constructs. In the fourth section, I outline how the basic structure or political order regulated by output impartiality will continue to perpetuate injustices that are inevitably missed when constructing “ideal” principles of justice. I then turn my attention to coloniality and race to argue that the ideal of impartiality will inevitably perpetuate historical forms of exploitation, domination, and oppression. I conclude, in last section, that the ideal of impartiality fails on its own terms and ought to be rejected in favour of a *critical cosmopolitan approach* that places oppressive social structures at the heart of its analysis as a prerequisite for thinking about how to transcend them.

Ontological individualism and the ideal of impartiality

The relevance of the individual in cosmopolitanism was outlined in the previous chapter: individuals are the primary unit of moral concern, equally, and everywhere (Pogge, 1992: 48-9). Holding

individuals in this regard grounds cosmopolitanism's most basic arguments, such as the moral arbitrariness of where individuals are born and how such facts should not determine what one is entitled to as a matter of (distributive) justice (Beitz, 1983: 593; Pogge, 1989: 247; Moellendorf, 2002: 55-6; Richards, 1982; Caney, 2005: 123). The focus on the individual prior to any communal or national membership, then, for cosmopolitans, logically precedes expanding the scope of justice beyond borders. It would appear that if one rejects the cosmopolitan conception of individualism, as this chapter does, then one's argument would necessarily collapse into a Westphalian framework. However, the individualism this chapter is interested in, and will now outline, is underwritten by a broader commitment to impartiality as a normative ideal. This means that this chapter attempts to discredit ideal theory without shifting to nonideal theory, but, rather, towards a critical cosmopolitanism that is emancipatory and transformative.

The *ideal of impartiality* refers to a broad tendency within contemporary debates about justice, captured by Iris Marion Young (1990: 99-100), when she states that 'modern ethics establishes impartiality as the hallmark of moral reason. This conception of moral reason assumes that, in order for the agent to escape egoism and attain objectivity, he or she must adopt a universal point of view that is the same for all rational agents'. This relies upon the epistemological assumption that a universal truth exists "out there", outside of the agent's particular perspectives and experiences. This epistemological assumption lays the ground for a methodology that sees the condition of "impartiality" as normatively appealing for all agents across time and space, and thus as something political theory should show a pathway towards. The commitment to impartiality concerns the process of constructing principles, as well as ensuring that they are applied without discrimination to those sites considered appropriate to justice. Contemporary examples of the ideal of impartiality are traceable to the distinction made by John Rawls (1971: 8) between ideal and nonideal theory. The former asks us what an ideal society looks like, whereas the latter concerns the impediments to the realisation of this society and how we might circumvent them (Rawls, 1971: 8).¹⁶ The ideal of impartiality, then, refers to an approach to justice that

¹⁶ It could be noted that cosmopolitans do not approach global justice in idealised terms. In fact, we might want to say that contemporary cosmopolitanism exists in its current form precisely because it

casts impartiality as the ultimate normative ideal.

The problem with theorising this way is that ‘the attempt to adopt an impartial and universal perspective on reality leaves behind the particular perspectives from which it begins, and reconstructs them as mere appearances as opposed to the reality that objective reason apprehends’ (Young, 1990: 102). That is to say, a universal perspective is seen as attainable, as a singular “thing in itself”, rather than something that is unattainable precisely because particular perspectives reflect divergent experiences of social structures that position agents in relation to each other, and thus no singular universal perspective exists. The commitment to impartiality sees the exclusion of all instances of injustice that evidence the absence of impartiality, and, in doing so, fails to properly account for them. This means that, instead of taking divergent perspectives of social structures as pertinent to justice, they are instead reconstituted as blemishes, and thus as moral remainders that sit outside of proper normative enquiry.

What, then, are these particular perspectives and what relevance do they bear on the critique of the ideal of impartiality developed in the remainder of this chapter? The concept of impartiality as a social condition projects a normative image of a world in which each individual, regardless of how they relate to social structures, is treated in a manner that is equal and fair, and thus just. This notion of impartiality is intuitive to a common-sense understanding of justice: each individual ought to be treated fairly and equally in relation to all other individuals. This is a sentiment often instilled in children and is often said to be the guiding principle of a well-functioning criminal justice system, whereby each citizen has the right to demand to be treated impartially before the law. For instance, the right to a fair trial regardless of whether the defendant is a woman/man, a racial majority/minority, able/disabled, straight/LGBT, and/or upper-middle/working-class – and so on.

challenges certain ideal assumptions. Indeed, we can see how cosmopolitans (e.g. Pogge, 1994 & Beitz, 2000 & Caney, 2002) reject Rawls’ (1971: 8) ideal assumption that societies can, and should, be thought of as closed-off political units. However, this apparent aberration from ideal theory within cosmopolitan thought takes place within the contours of a broader commitment to the ideal of impartiality. What I attempt to make apparent in this chapter is that the ideal of impartiality remains pertinent to cosmopolitan frameworks as much as it does to Westphalian frameworks, and therefore, imports the same weaknesses.

The ideal of impartiality is, therefore, an ethical essentialism that purports to be able to meaningfully apply ideal principles of justice to each individual recipient universally, without concern for their structural relation within the wider web of historical social relations. That is not to say that distinctions cannot be drawn between *who* is included and excluded in the domain of impartiality – i.e. a Westphalian conception of justice whereby impartiality ought to apply to all individual citizens within a given political community, compared to cosmopolitanism, whereby the interests of individuals, globally speaking, should be impartially evaluated. Nevertheless, in both cases, the problem arises when one attempts, as ideal theorists do, to begin one’s analysis from a normative condition in which impartiality is said to be present: a condition based upon a parochial conception of what the absence of impartiality looks like. That is because, if the presence of impartiality reflects a condition of justice, then the absence of impartiality must be said to represent a condition of injustice. Hence, as Engel’s quote at the outset of this chapter demonstrates, the condition of justice (i.e. impartiality) cannot be determined by detaching itself from injustice; or, rather, the ideal condition of justice cannot be properly conceptualised without reference to the injustice it is attempting to correct.

What is more, the ideal of impartiality rests upon a conception of justice that tends to focus on formal institutional settings – i.e. the basic structure (see: Rawls, 1971: 7-8). What occurs is an omission of the types of injustices that are more implicit and often exist against the backdrop of formal equality, existing in the vacuums that formal rights and equalities inevitably fail to fill. In doing so, as one’s theory outlines the normative ideal of impartiality, it will inevitably fail to account, and thus correct, the types of injustices that are not antithetically contrasted with the “impartial” perspective that constitutes the ideal. Because the ideal of impartiality is defined as the absence of certain injustices, ideal theory cannot be conducted on its own terms because the first thing it must do is consider what the absence of injustice (i.e. impartiality) looks like in order to present an “ideal” projection to move towards. Instead of opening up discussion about these injustices, and how they emerge against certain conditions, as a prerequisite to correcting them, ideal theory instead obscures this process and begins from the assumption that the constructed ideal remains germane across all time and space.

In what follows, I attempt to demonstrate how the shortcomings of the ideal of impartiality are commonplace in the global justice literature. This justifies the need to shift to an alternative approach that creates the space to reflect upon a broader range of injustices, as well as reflecting on the sites and spaces in which they play out, in order to consider how these injustices are reproduced *prior* to discussions of how we might change the current order of things. In Section VI of this chapter, I will outline how my critical cosmopolitan approach is distinct from what we might call a Rawlsian nonideal approach, which is often cast as a necessary step towards ideal theory rather than an attempt to transcend the ideal/nonideal distinction. Before proceeding, I wish to clarify the distinction between ontology and normativity. The reason for doing so is because, as Charles Mills (2005: 179; 2015: 15) rightly points out, the objection to arguments that take on the ideal of impartiality tends to rest upon noting that proponents of this ideal do not claim that impartiality *does* exist, but that it *ought* to. If this objection holds, then the argument presented in this chapter could be said to be erroneously criticising the ideal of impartiality on ontological grounds when the ideal is itself a normative benchmark.

In general terms, ontology concerns *what is*; meaning one will make certain claims and assumptions about the social world, its reality, and social existence in relation to it. In contrast, normativity concerns the world *as it ought to be*. With this in mind, it could be said that, in referring to the ideal of impartiality, I am presenting a somewhat misguided view of the limitations contained within contemporary accounts of justice – e.g. cosmopolitans do not claim that conditions of impartiality *are* present but that they *ought* to be. In these terms, normative theory merely concerns examining which principles of justice move us towards this ideal. It could be said, then, that to speak of ontology in the arena of normative theorisation misses an important distinction between ontology and normativity: establishing the *what ought to be* is not the same as making claims about *what is*. However, one's conception of the normative will necessarily be based upon certain ontological assumptions about *what is*.

On this topic, Charles Mills (2005: 168; see also 2015: 15) notes, 'moral theory deals with the normative, but it cannot avoid some characterization of the human beings who make up the society, and whose interactions with one another are its subject'. Thus, the normative and the ontological are not as

distinct as they perhaps first appear, and, importantly, making certain claims about ontological assumptions cannot be circumvented by counter claims that point out that one is working in the realm of normativity. Consider how, if one's social ontology casts the ideal of impartiality as the normative benchmark theories of justice ought to strive towards, then underpinning such normative assertions are ontological claims about what constitutes impartiality and what constitutes its absence. Moreover, because the ideal casts a vision of society, and, in the case of cosmopolitanism, the world, as comprising atomised individuals, then the normative appeals it makes will inevitably fail to place individuals within structural relations and will consequently fail to account for the range of injustices these relations reproduce (Mills, 2005: 168). In what follows, I argue that, because the ideal is reliant on the absence of impartiality, even if the ideal was realised on its own terms, it would continue to overlook a range of ways in which oppressive social structures continue to exploit, oppress, and dominate beyond those that are captured by framing justice in terms of the basic structure. The aim of this chapter is to create the space to place subjects in relation to the social structures they produce and are shaped by. To help demonstrate this limitation, I differentiate between two types of impartiality that I will now unpack and problematise

Input and output impartiality

Input impartiality refers to the hypothetical procedures for adopting principles of justice that are themselves supposed to ensure a condition of impartiality within which fair principles of justice can be adopted. The purpose of discussing input impartiality is to consider how justice is framed in accordance to certain ontological assumptions regarding the impartial as well as its absence. That is to say, input impartiality is said to do away with all those forms of injustice that occlude impartial principles of justice being properly constructed. For example, Rawls (1971: 118) constructs principles of justice from behind the veil of ignorance, a condition of impartiality that attempts to 'nullify the effects of specific contingencies which put men at odds and tempt them to exploit social and natural circumstances to their own advantage'. Under such conditions, an individual participant does not know 'his place in society,

his class, position or social status; nor does he know his fortune in the distribution of natural assets and abilities, his intelligence and strength, and the like' (Rawls, 1971: 118). This hypothetical condition, as noted in the previous chapter, has been replicated by self-proclaimed Rawlsian cosmopolitans who globalise the original position to ensure it applies to all individuals globally (e.g. Pogge, 1989: 247 & Mollendorf, 2002).

Similarly, Brian Barry's (1995: 7-8) 'principles of justice that satisfy its conditions are impartial because they capture a certain kind of equality: all those affected have to be able to feel that they have done as reasonably well as they had hoped to'. He continues in a similar vein to Rawls, excluding from his framework 'special privilege based on grounds that cannot be made freely acceptable to others' such as 'claims to advantage based on, for example, high birth, ethnicity or race' (Barry, 1995: 8). He globalises this approach by considering, in line with Thomas Scanlon, what cosmopolitan principles of justice would be adopted on the basis that they could not be reasonably rejected by those subject to them (Barry, 1998). Similarly, Ronald Dworkin's (2002) luck egalitarianism attempts to correct instances of "bad luck" beyond an individual's control. To do so, Dworkin (2002) constructs a hypothetical insurance scheme where individuals are able to purchase insurance to safeguard against the onset of bad luck. Dworkin (2002: 347) casts bad luck in terms of 'what might be thought to be matters of identity as well as accidents that happen once identity is fixed, and the situation and properties of one's parents or relatives are as much a matter of luck, in that sense, as one's physical powers'. It is, then, upon the rectification of such instances of bad luck and social injustices that Dworkin's vision of a fairer society is premised.¹⁷

Despite differences, there is a consistency in attempting to construct input conditions of impartiality that safeguard against the instances of "partiality" identified – e.g. social and natural contingencies, ethnicity, race, and individuated bad luck (and so on). In terms of where they play out, however, it is the basic institutions of society that are said to fail to realise a condition of impartiality, as it is they who

¹⁷ It is based upon this logic that cosmopolitan Cécile Fabre (2005) extends Dworkin's luck egalitarianism beyond borders.

are tasked with rectifying this. For Rawls (1971: 6-7), the ‘subject of justice is the basic structure of society, or more exactly, the way in which the major social institutions distribute fundamental rights and duties and determine the division of advantages from social cooperation’, and ‘the basic structure is the primary subject of justice because its effects are so profound and present from the start’. Similarly, Barry’s (1995) cosmopolitan argument for impartiality is based upon a distinction between first-order and second-order impartiality. The former relates to ‘behaving impartially’, which ‘here means not being motivated by private consideration’, whilst the latter concerns ‘forming the basis of free agreement among people seeking agreement on reasonable terms’ (Barry, 1995: 11). Barry (1995: 11) asks, ‘what would rules and principles capable of attracting general agreement require in the way of impartial behaviour?’ Like Rawls, Barry (1995) is convinced that the best approach is one that constructs principles of justice that would bring about impartiality. As noted by Charles Mills (2008: 1387), for liberals, the ‘equal personhood of individuals’ is brought about by the establishment of an ‘impartial authority’. Hence, to rectify the forms of “partiality” noted above, ideal theorists argue that institutions meet a condition of output impartiality when the principles of justice, themselves constructed under conditions of input impartiality, are realised. I will now outline output impartiality in more detail.

Output impartiality, as noted, concerns the principles of justice and how implementing them is said to ensure that institutions act impartially. For Rawls (1971: 53), the condition of output impartiality is said to exist when the basic structure is regulated by his two principles of justice. These distributive principles, on account of being constructed under fair terms of agreement, are argued to be able to overcome certain disadvantages. For instance, Ronald Dworkin (2002: 345-6) argues that the realisation of his principles means that forms of class and racial discrimination would wither away: ‘if equality of resources were realized, then class would disappear, at least over time. If proper civil rights laws were enacted and enforced, the influence of prejudice on employment would wane.’¹⁸ The ideal of

¹⁸ I reject arguments that suggest we can transcend class by better distributing the social goods produced by capitalist markets. In sections III and IV, I aim to show that injustices concerning class, race, and gender (and so on) persist under the types of distributive models Dworkin (2002) endorses. At this point, I am interested only in an approach to justice that thinks the realisation of certain “impartial”

impartiality thinks of impartiality as the enforcement of impartial principles of justice in and by coercive institutions, like the state and transnational institutions. For cosmopolitans, it should be noted, the condition of output impartiality is often cited as lacking, not simply because ideal cosmopolitan principles of justice have not been realised, but because the cosmopolitan institutions required to enact them do not currently exist (see Marchetti, 2008 & Archibugi, 2008 & Held, 1995 & Pogge, 2002 & Cabrera, 2004).

Whilst cosmopolitans disagree about the appropriate global institutional framework to overcome this problem, they are in broad agreement that the realisation of such institutions would provide the coercive means to realise cosmopolitan aims. As far as output impartiality is concerned, it is often argued that, if the right global institutions exist to enact cosmopolitan principles, then such institutions will, at the very least, move us towards a condition of output impartiality. For example, in making the case for a global government, Luis Cabrera (2004: 46) argues that the reason that the equal personhood of all individuals is not realisable is because there 'is not an impartial judge to settle questions of appropriate transfers'. Cosmopolitan output impartiality is therefore two pronged: moral and institutional. Having identified two types of impartiality that are present within the literature, in what follows, I argue that, because input impartiality is based upon a parochial conception of what constitutes impartiality and its absence, the output ideal that is projected continues to overlook a range of different instances of injustice that this conception of impartiality fails to capture. Hence, even if the ideal principles of justice were realised, certain structural injustices would persist in this ideal arrangement. What this points to is the need to shift our way of thinking about global justice away from the ideal of impartiality and ideal theory more broadly.

principles and distributive schemes could ever bring about a condition of impartiality.

The limitations of input impartiality

The first limitation I wish to draw attention to concerns matters of race, gender, class, disability (and so on). The basic assumption is that, if these have historically been sources of injustice, then any meaningful ideal conception of justice will not include them in its analysis, given that an ideal could not possibly project a world in which these injustices persist. How we get to this ideal is said not to be the role of ideal theory and thus it need not concern itself with these considerations (see Rawls, 1971 & Simmons, 2010 & Sangiovanni, 2008 c.f. Farrelly, 2007 & Mills, 2005 & Young 1990: Chapter IV). For Iris Marion Young (1990: 112-6) and Charles Mills (2005: 172), this means ideal theory is ideological because it universalises the particular viewpoints of dominant groups who are relatively privileged within social structures – i.e. white, straight, upper/middle-class, predominantly men, who dominate the literature. This viewpoint is of an atomised individual enacting their life plans, against the backdrop of an impartial authority. This very image is reflective of a dominant group's ontological understanding of how one navigates the social world.

The image of an atomised individual pursuing their life goals is a culturally middle/upper-class view of the social world (Wolff, 1977: 137). It is an image of individuals as detached from social structures and the way in which those disadvantaged by them are often not afforded the space (and means) to contemplate their ambitions in the same way; but are instead faced with the constant reality of having the immediate difficulties of navigating oppressive social structures. Hence, this image is one that most reflects the general experience of dominant group members who universalise a self-image of relative structural privilege. As a result, the ideal of impartiality is based upon the absence of impartiality as understood by dominant group members and their underlying ontological assumptions. Framing justice in this way is based upon the idea of moving disadvantaged individuals towards a view of the world that reflects the dominant standpoint. It could just be the case that members of dominant groups seek to imagine the difficulties posed by not having the resources and means to realise one's ambitions. But, in doing so, less reflection occurs on the cultural hegemony of thinking about ambition in these terms, if

not an outright refusal to better understand the everyday experiences of historically oppressed groups and the lived plight of navigating oppressive social structures.

To outline the limitations that derive from framing justice in this way, I rely exclusively on the principle of equality of opportunity. That is not to suggest that similar trends do not emerge when considering other ideal principles of justice. The attempt to move from a condition of inequality of opportunity to one of equal opportunity features heavily in contemporary debates about justice. What this consists of is theorists considering what it means not to have opportunities, as understood as economic opportunities to better place oneself in an unequal hierarchy. Thus, the opportunities, and the vision of impartiality this frames, are based upon a dominant group's perspective of what constitutes an opportunity worth equalising. The focus is on the more apparent ways in which opportunities are not equalised by formal institutions comprising the basic structure, such as the lack of educational opportunities available to individuals on account of race, class, high birth, and so on, and the effect this has on attaining prestigious jobs (see Dworkin, 2002: 347 & Rawls, 1971: 63). These types of opportunities are those that many of the theorists who dominate the literature have benefitted from, and, as such, are easy to identify as the types of opportunities that are thought to be worth equalising. However, what is ignored are the ways in which social structures continue to advantage and disadvantage people in ways that, upon first inspection, are not always obvious to those they do not affect. Despite this, the principle of equality of opportunity is universalised as if to suggest it is both necessary and sufficient regardless of different experiences across group membership. Yet, relying on examples of a certain group's experience in relation to equality of opportunity casts doubt on this overriding logic.

By framing opportunities in terms of the access to prestigious jobs and education, we are met with an example of the type of injustice that is overlooked by appeals to this ideal. Consider the requisite cultural capital one is expected to master both in obtaining jobs and flourishing within them. One's accent, appearance, and/or general demeanour is often rendered unprofessional when it sits outside of the cultural norms associated with the dominant group. To take one example, many Black employees

(usually within Western liberal democracies) have attempted to bring to light the pressure they are placed under at work to conform to white standards of professionalism that are often difficult, if not impossible, for black employees to adhere (see Johnson et al., 2017). Not only does the principle of equality fail to ask why opportunities that result in the types of goods that theorists assume to be desirable (e.g. decent pay and prestigious status) are in fact desirable, it also overlooks the particular perspectives that theorists belonging to privileged social groups will tend to ignore.

Without concerted efforts to understand the everyday experiences of historically oppressed groups, the space to reflect upon the complex ways in which social structures operate is eclipsed. What this example evinces is that, whilst equality of opportunity postures as an impartial principle insofar as everybody's opportunities are weighted impartially, this normative principle rests upon certain ontological assumptions about what an opportunity is and what equalising it looks like. This occludes further analysis into, say, the justness of capitalist social relations and the inequalities perpetuated by them, and whether this should be the target rather than attempting to equalise one's opportunities from within this structure. In particular, liberal social structures are considered the norm, and thus, in replicating these ideas within normative theory, the space is closed when it comes to discussions about ways in which social structures could be transformed, if not altered, to the benefit of historically oppressed groups.

In the global context, cosmopolitans adopt the same approach. The ideal set of circumstances tends to consist of promoting principles of justice that would enable poorer individuals beyond borders to "catch up" and realise a life that resembles that of a Western dominant group perspective (e.g. Pogge, 1994 & Barry, 1998). To continue with the example of opportunities, Simon Caney (2001) extends Rawls' fair equal opportunity principle to the global realm, attempting to ascertain the ways of levelling the playing field between individuals regardless of the political community to which they belong. For Caney (2001: 115), 'the core intuition, then, maintains that persons should not face worse opportunities in life because of the community of communities they come from'. The types of opportunities that Caney (2001: 113) believes ought to be equalised globally, are the likes of 'positions such as jobs or places at educational

institutions'. In thinking of opportunities in this way, the liberal Western viewpoint is accepted, without question, as the baseline and thus the ideal to which others ought to move towards.

This is regardless of the ways in which global social structures continue to oppress, exploit, and dominate historically oppressed groups. It overlooks the various structural oppressions that the subjects of Caney's argument are faced with and instead attempts to equalise opportunities without considering broader social relations and their relevance. Consider the incongruity of placing members of a community that, say, tend to a small parcel of land in the "Global South", a way of life that is constantly under threat from global-capitalist structures, on a spectrum that evaluates their opportunities against those of a middle-class teenager in Cambridgeshire. In doing so, subjects are severed from global social structures before attempts are made to move everybody towards a Western liberal baseline; a baseline that is not subjected to any critical assessment of its own.

It should also be said that the ideal/nonideal distinction leaves no space for critical assessment of the ontological assumptions that, seemingly, render equality of opportunities the only feasible option in a global capitalist system. That is because the role of ideal theory is to determine 'a perfectly just society' (Rawls, 1971: 8) and it is not the role of nonideal theory to reflect upon the ontological shortcomings of this ideal. The role of nonideal theory is to determine how to circumvent the impediments that are said to stand in the way of reaching this pre-determined ideal. This means that, if one observes that a certain principle of justice has not been realised at all, it points to the need to continue to find ways to move towards this ideal. If one observes that the ideal of equality of opportunity has broadly been observed, then debate about the ontological assumptions underpinning such an ideal is foreclosed. Under such conditions, because the input impartiality is founded upon a set of ontological assumptions about what constitutes impartiality, moving towards the ideal will, at best, only correct those injustices that are factored into this ideal. At worst, as we have seen with global equality of opportunities, it will further entrench a system in which individuals are placed in competition with each other for opportunities to "make it" in a highly competitive global capitalist system. Similar limitations emerge when we consider the broader social, political, and economic background conditions that are ignored

when “impartial” principles of justice are being constructed, as will be discussed in the next section.

Background conditions

In this section, I reintroduce the social, political, and economic background conditions that are omitted from attempts to construct impartial principles of justice. In general, what is tacitly assumed by the theories under consideration is that the only principles of justice that are up for grabs are those that concern the sound distribution of social goods between individuals (Young, 1990: Chapter I & Fraser, 2009: 3). For Rawls (1971: 4; emphasis added), distributive justice *is* justice: ‘these principles are the principles of social justice: they provide a way of assigning rights and duties in the basic institutions of society and they define the appropriate *distribution* of the benefits and burdens of social cooperation’. The result is a conception of impartiality that is framed against the ontological assumption that justice is a matter of rectifying the maldistribution of social goods created by capitalist markets and later rectified by social institutions.

The concern for justice as distribution is reflective of theorists operating within what Nancy Fraser (2005) refers to as the *Keynesian-Westphalian frame*, whereby justice was assumed to be matters of interventionist distribution wedded to a Westphalian scope of justice. In contrast, Iris Marion Young (1990: 18) has referred to a similar proclivity as the *distributive paradigm*, which ‘assumes a single model of all analyses of justice: all situations in which justice is at issue are analogous to the situation of persons dividing a stock of goods and comparing the size of the portions individuals have’. Framing debates about justice in distributive terms is compatible with the ideal of impartiality to the extent that, if principles of justice are said to be constructed under impartial conditions, then one need not situate individuals within wider social structures and can focus instead on considering what the most just distribution of social goods is. These assumptions, however, are of course not simply the result of abstract theorisation about what the ideal of impartiality ought to look like. Rather, they reflect the broader assumptions pertaining to the political epoch within which hypothetical procedures for adopting

principles of justice derive (Young, 1981: 291-2). The ideal of impartiality asks us to believe that the principles of justice adopted by Rawls were not reflective of the Keynesian-Westphalian era in which they were derived and with which they are consistent. Or, that they can be justified notwithstanding historical, anthropological, and geographic conditions, and apply universally across all time and space (Harvey, 2009).

With regard to background conditions, the main problem with this notion of justice deriving from the broader social, political, and economic Keynesian era lies with casting distributive principles of justice as ideal. Doing so presents them as not only relevant, but constant across time and space, even when the underlying rules and norms attributable to a given set of background conditions have shifted. Despite changes, the Keynesian frame remains dominant as far as the content of justice is concerned. For Rawls (1971), theorisation about justice came from a time in which the Keynesian vision was relatively still intact; his theory of justice sought to extend social democracy to an American society that had not realised the liberal welfarism present in Europe. By the time Dworkin (2002: 320) justifies his hypothetical insurance scheme, neoliberal reforms to American society are well underway. Dworkin (2002: 320; emphasis original) reflects on Bill Clinton's 1996 welfare reform act, pondering that, 'it was said that as a nation we spend far too much on welfare', which 'is mysterious as an independent claim: it makes little sense unless we are given some explanation of how much a nation *should* spend on its poor'. Dworkin's (2002) call for distributive justice takes place against a political time in which the principles of Keynesian welfarism were unravelling and falling prey to austerity, privatisation, fiscal conservatism, and the pervasive logic of market mechanisms entering more spheres of social life – associated with what many commentators have referred to as neoliberalism (Harvey, 2005 & Brown, 2015 & Peck, 2010).¹⁹

What Dworkin's analysis does is apply a Keynesian lens through which debates about appropriate

¹⁹ The remaining chapters of this thesis will unpack and analyse the relevance of neoliberalism to global justice in much more detail. For now, I wish only to make the claim that background conditions are relevant to theories of justice.

welfare spending are undertaken without considering how a neoliberal rationality has undermined the tenability of such debates, in particular, by rendering it necessary to reflect on the appropriate place of markets within social life and how these factors are pertinent to debates about justice.²⁰ The fact that distributive accounts defend a Keynesian conception of justice is not wrong per se; the problem emerges that, because the approaches for determining the sound principles of justice are cast as ideal, they are framed as concerning the regulation of a just society, rather than as preferable in any given time and space. In doing so, theorists posit that ideal principles of justice are universal in scope and thus remain relevant when applied across time and space. As noted in the previous chapter, justice is framed in accordance to the assumption that the ideal of global justice is the rectification of the maldistribution of social goods beyond borders; meaning cosmopolitans drop the Westphalian side of the Keynesian-Westphalian frame without considering how Keynesianism has since been deconstructed. Consequently, cosmopolitans import the same problems as social theories of justice identified hitherto.

Like at the societal level, the global background conditions, albeit in uneven and complex ways, have shifted towards a neoliberal rationality that includes, but is not restricted to, trade liberalisation, privatisation (/market rationality) of public services, and austerity measures – the processes that have, across borders, shaped the injustices that cosmopolitans are interested in. However, because the hypothetical procedures for adopting (distributive) principles of justice are said to be impartial and thus capable of producing a universal conception of justice, the principles adopted that derive from the Keynesian era are renewed and thus assumed to be pertinent to responding to current challenges, regardless of the change in global background conditions. For this reason, in order to reflect upon the pertinence of altering background conditions, one must at least consider whether they point to the need to reframe the content of justice in accordance to an evolving world. It is the purpose of Chapter IV to

²⁰ In Chapter IV, I present a detailed discussion about what neoliberalism refers to, arguing that it should be thought of as a rationality that, when adhered to, alters material conditions. In so doing, we see that the Keynesian justice theories, that the likes of Dworkin call for, cannot successfully graft onto background conditions in which a neoliberal rationality persists. This means that his principles of justice could well be actualised, only to be neoliberalised in ways that produce unwanted outcomes. The point is simply that a more detailed analysis of the historical processes that have moved away from Keynesianism is needed in order for calls for its return to remain pertinent.

attempt to make sense of global structural background conditions and reflect upon the conception of justice capable of ameliorating the injustices observed across borders. For now, I turn to the final limitation addressed in this chapter, which concerns the condition of output impartiality that is argued to exist under conditions of an institutional framework governed by ideal (distributive) principles of justice.

The limitations of output impartiality

In the previous section, I considered the ontological assumptions underpinning what one means by impartiality. This section will focus more on the application of the principles themselves and the sites of justice in which this would play out. My argument is that the ideal of impartiality produces a distributive brand of justice. This means that all injustices that sit outside of the sites of justice that distributive principles apply to will inevitably fail to meet a condition of impartiality. In the final stages of this section, I make the case that the ideal of impartiality has historically masked forms of racial oppression and domination that mean that a commitment to the ideal overlooks this history – when, in fact, it should be a central part of any account of global justice. Providing a comprehensive examination of all of the ways in which the ideal of impartiality misses certain injustices is an impossible task. Hence, the purpose of this section is more modest: to note some of the main ways that the condition of impartiality brought about by the realisation of ideal principles of justice *still* omits the central role social structures play – so much so that we ought to rely upon alternative approaches.

The ideal of impartiality, as alluded to, lends itself to seeing justice as the determination of the ‘distribution of the advantages and disadvantages of social cooperation’ (Rawls, 1971: 4). In so doing, the focus on distribution cannot be said to illustrate theorists paying scant attention to other forms of justice, say, to narrow their enquiry to distributive matters whilst acknowledging the importance of other concerns. More accurately, the ideal of impartiality thinks of distribution as justice and vice versa. One may point out, however, that the ideal of impartiality and the particular liberal framework it is

indebted to is not the only place one will find the dominance of distributive approaches to justice. For example, Young (1990: 17 e.g. Nell & O'Neill, 1980 & Nielsan, 1979) notes how, 'even explicitly socialist or Marxist discussions of justice often fall under the distributive paradigm'. With this in mind, what I intend to make clear is that, whilst there is a disproportionate amount of time afforded to matters of distribution across a range of different traditions, the ideal of impartiality is, as such, that it renders justice as a matter of distribution. This means it is possible for other traditions to expend a disproportionate amount of time discussing matters of distribution without it, unlike the ideal of impartiality, being an inevitable consequence of theorising in this way. When it comes to the ideal of impartiality, I make the stronger claim that it has particular features that render justice as tautological to distribution. What is it about the ideal of impartiality that presents distribution as if it is a sufficient concern when it comes to matters of justice?

The reason distribution appears sufficient is because the ideal rests upon the idea of an impartial authority that ought to treat everybody equally (Mills, 2008: 1381) and less on other sites of justice (e.g. marketplaces and households) (Valentini, 2011: 136-7). If one's starting point is an impartial authority that treats everybody the same and does not unpack the economy or marketplaces at the point of production, then considering one's just share of social goods is the next logical step of an account of justice constructed in this way.²¹ That is to say, if liberal accounts of justice accept capitalist relations as the starting point of justice, then the role of an impartial authority is simply to protect property rights and everybody's basic freedoms. In doing so, matters of justice become little more than considering said authority's role in distributing social goods and rights between all equalised individuals.

²¹ One could argue that to separate a formal authority, whether partial or not, and the economy, in this way, is not something that is possible let alone historically accurate. David Graber (2014: 44) argues that to speak of "the economy" as something that is separate to the state is a relation that has historically never existed. The idea, contained in Adam Smith's work, that the economy is something that has certain natural functions that the state, in his case, ought not to intervene in, is something that can be seen throughout the body of political economy Smith's work informed (Graeber, 2014: 44). That said, the liberal approach to justice I am analysing situates authority as opposite to that of the economy, before reflecting upon the just intervention said authority should (or should not) undertake. In other words, I focus on the way in which the ideal of impartiality frames the relationship between the economy and the state as a prerequisite to outlining its limitations, rather than reflecting more deeply on whether this is a nonstarter.

Thinking in distributive terms is so ubiquitous that it spills over into areas of justice that are not exclusively concerned with material goods. What we see as a consequence, therefore, is a distributive lexicon applied to a range of nonmaterial goods it is not clear we can distribute at all. Despite distributive justice tending to be an economic concern (Chandhoke, 2010: 172 & Fraser, 2009: 4), when applied to nonmaterial goods like rights, power, and opportunities, it tends to misrepresent them (Young, 1990: 31). Distributive justice renders such nonmaterial goods as *things* that can be distributed between individuals (Young, 1990: 31). The implication is that the concept of power can be distributed between those in possession of it and those not in possession of it, casting power as something external to human relations that can be detached and later distributed. Moreover, thinking about the distribution of power makes more sense when one begins from an impartial authority and the mechanisms it has for exerting power as well as holding it to account. Similarly, when one notes that global institutions like the IMF and the World Bank ensure that the decision-making process favours powerful countries in the form of preferential voting rights, a language of distribution suffices to redress these numerical imbalances. However, expressing nonmaterial goods in distributive terms serves to overlook how the exertion of power is relational (Young, 1990: 31), which, in turn, relies upon a concept of an impartial institutional arrangement that oversees the “distribution” of power from the former to the latter, and never how power is exerted by these institutions themselves. In doing so, distributive theorists omit the ways in which power is exercised in all the roles that constitute formal institutional practice – e.g. prison wardens, lawyers, judges, parole officers, and so on (Young, 1990: 31).

This is in addition to the ways in which agential power is exerted beyond formal sites of justice in, say, the household, markets, and the workplace. The implications of this omission are perhaps best reflected in the institutional cosmopolitan literature. Attempts to democratise the global order tend either to consider how to democratise existent institutions (e.g. Archibugi, 2008 & Held, 1995) or create new ones (e.g. Cabrera, 2004 & Marchetti, 2008 & Ulas, 2013 & Pogge, 2002: Chapter VII). Once power has been “redistributed” by the proposed formal institutions, there are no attempts to analyse the ways in which power continues to be exerted in informal settings. As before, the implication is that, if the right institutions enact the right principles, power can be thought of as redistributed to correct the

maldistribution of an identified shortfall. It is even less clear how to “redistribute” power in less formal sites of justice in spite of their relevance to discussions about global justice. What this illuminates is that an output condition of impartiality is unfeasible because the ideal relies on a conception of justice that only applies to formal sites of justice. In doing so, it misses the ways in which injustices persist in all those contexts that are not contained in the concern for redressing democratic imbalances within formal institutional settings.

Let us consider the ways in which injustices persist in informal sites of justice when formal institutions *do* commit to principles that could be said to be consistent with global distributive justice. Commonplace is when these proposals are implemented they graft onto complex historical and geographical conditions on the ground that idealised principles of justice could never properly map onto (Harvey, 2009). Global distributive justice applies to social contexts that have historically consisted of structural oppression, and thus ignores the way in which harmful power dynamics may be exacerbated when enacting global distributive principles. For example, some of the cosmopolitan literature focusses on environmental distributive justice; in particular, remedial climate change responsibilities that aim to help individuals across borders mitigate and/or adapt to the negative excesses of ecological degradation (e.g. Caney, 2010 & Page, 2011). To do so, they argue for the *Polluter Pays Principle*, which posits that those responsible for climate change – i.e. the polluter – ought to “pay” to mitigate, or adapt to, the negative excesses of climate change (Caney, 2010 & Page, 2011). These accounts support the enforcement of a system of carbon offset permits that polluters must purchase to offset their carbon footprint; the capital raised goes towards communal projects in the Global South, such as planting trees that act as carbon sinks (Caney, 2010: 221 & Singer, 2002: 46-8 & Page, 2011). However, in assuming that distributive climate justice reflects a condition that moves us towards some ideal, environmental cosmopolitans overlook how these schemes tend to reproduce historical forms of structural oppression of those marginalised groups.

To take just one example, many of the offset markets are drawn up along communal lands that, in many cases, are tended to by female members of the community (Agrawal, 1992, 2009; Khadka et al., 2014;

Boyd, 2002). Despite the communal practices of female members being conducive to sound conservation practice (Khadka et al., 2014: 198), the communal land is transformed into a market entity, which, in many cases, renders this a masculine space that women are subsequently excluded from (Khadka, et al., 2014: 202). This reinforces the concept of land as a market entity that was entrenched during colonialism. For instance, in India, colonisation transformed forests from communal areas (used predominantly by women for the collection of timber) to areas of delineated parcels for capitalist exploitation (Agrawal, 2009: 128-31). The purpose of presenting this case is to demonstrate how a distributive model often focusses on trying to empower oppressed groups regardless of where their plight occurs. Yet, expressing this in an economic lexicon of distributing material and nonmaterial goods often exacerbates forms of oppression found in more informal sites of injustice that inevitably sit outside strides towards an ideal of impartiality.

In sum, distributive principles constructed under conditions of input impartiality cannot move towards a condition of global impartiality once active because they apply to historically complex anthropological and geographical conditions deriving from colonial and imperialist practices that perpetuate hierarchies. This example points to the way in which an ideal of impartiality, and ideal theory more generally, cannot account for and thus cannot meaningfully provide a theoretical framework for a history that has been far from ideal. Interestingly, in opening the door to nonidealised theorisation only inasmuch as the scope of justice is concerned, cosmopolitans discuss the actualisation of approaches to justice that derive from a commitment to input impartiality, which we have seen cannot place the historical and geographical context to which they apply. I will now turn to a much deeper analysis of the way in which ideal theories of justice reproduce the coloniality that is present in the example considered above.

The ideal of impartiality as coloniality

The above examples are about how output impartiality fails when its policies are enacted on the ground. This points to the need for a much deeper analysis of the processes that produce complex geographical

relations that predate, yet shape, the theoretical timeline I am working within – namely, within the parameters of a political theory defined by Rawls (1971: 8) between ideal and nonideal theory. Pertinent though this timeframe is to contemporary debates about cosmopolitanism, in this section I suggest that it is equally as useful to place Rawls, and the cosmopolitan literature his theory gave rise to, within the broader tradition of Social Contract Theory. I do so not because cosmopolitans necessarily work from within this tradition, but because this tradition provides a good example of the tension between an idealised political theory, on one hand, and a history of domination, oppression, and exploitation on the other. In particular, I focus on the way in which an idealised social contract leaves out the historical development of what Charles Mills (1997) calls the *Racial Contract*.²² This contract attempts to bring into view the historical forms of racial domination and oppression that more accurately describe the social contract of modernity as it actually developed.

The Racial Contract is similar to the social contract in form: it considers the moral codes and norms that legitimise and regulate modern societies; it is both descriptive – how things are – and normative – how things ought to be (Mills, 1997: 10-1). Whereas the social contract is said to be an agreement by all individuals in the state of nature, the Racial Contract highlights the discriminatory code that positions whites as dominant to subordinated non-whites (Mills, 1997: 11). Thus, one cannot understand the position of whites and non-whites without contrasting it with the position of their dialectical opposites; the latter are objects rather than subjects of the agreement (Mills, 1997: 12). The imagery of the social contract is one in which ‘raceless “men”’ are transformed ‘from denizens of the state of nature into social creatures who are politically obligated to a neutral state’ (Mills, 1997: 12). This idea of impartiality continues in Rawls’ assertion that society should (and can possibly) be described as a ‘cooperative venture for mutual advantage’ (Rawls, 1971: 4), thus obscuring America’s history of racial domination and the broader colonial foundations it relies upon (Mills, 2008: 1387).

²² I reference the Racial Contract not because other “contracts” or forms of exploitation, domination, and oppression are not pertinent to this thesis (e.g. gender, class). I simply refer to race because Mills provides a useful framework for thinking about what idealised political theory obscures, and, in doing so, reinforces oppressive historical relations.

Whereas the social contract is said to apply to all men equally, the Racial Contract relies upon a global application in which the state of nature is cast as pre-socialised, barbaric, ‘childlike’, and thus ‘implies the denial that a society already existed; the creation of society requires the intervention of white men, who are thereby positioned as already sociopolitical beings’ (Mills, 1997: 13). The enforcement of the Racial Contract, therefore, relies upon invidious norms when it comes to space and the subjects it spatialises (Mills, 1997: Chapter II). The prospective colonised space, for example, is cast in the Lockean sense as not-yet-utilised in such a way to ‘render it morally open for seizure, expropriation, settlement, development – in a word, *peopling*’ (Mills, 1997: 49; emphasis original). The discriminatory code of the Racial Contract creates an illusion of impartiality that masks the non-neutrality of the state and power as well as the racial norms of hierarchy and oppression.

Tempting though it may be to suggest that the Racial Contract illustrates an aberration from the idealised social contract, Mills (1997) argues that it is central to social contract theory itself. The Kantian move towards a concept of equality before the law referred to persons, but only ‘*white persons* (and really only white males) who have been able to take this for granted, for whom it can be an unexciting truism’ (Mills, 1997: 56; italics original). If the social contract remains the basis by which liberal governments are legitimised and with which everyone will comply, then the Racial Contract continues to create a hierarchical contract between whites and non-whites. This move shapes the social contract as a universal contract that (ideally) extends to all human beings equally, whereas the Racial Contract meant that ‘*nonwhite subpersonhood is enshrined simultaneously with white personhood*’ (Mills, 1997: 56; italics original).

Rather than the social contract outlining ‘the ideal that people tried to live up to by which they occasionally (as with all ideals) fell short of, we should say frankly that for whites the Racial Contract represented the *ideal*, and what that involved is not a deviation from the (fictive) norm but *adherence* to the actual norm’ (Mills, 1997: 56-7; italics original). Thus, the impartialised social contract was not an attempt to alter the Racial Contract, but a discriminatory code presenting the illusion of impartiality that masks the non-impartiality of the state and power as well as the racial norms of hierarchy and

oppression. The shift from seeing racism as a footnote (Mills, 1997: 56) cannot account for how social contract theories were not constructed outside of a racialised context but were bound up in it. We have Kant's (cited in Eze, 1995: 215) description of Native Americans as uneducable due to being 'lazy' and Africans who can be educated but only to be servants; Hobbes' (1996: 13) description of 'the savage people in many places of America' that live in the 'brutish manner' that provides "evidence" of a state of war that legitimises the absolute sovereignty that follows; and Locke's enactment of his political theory in the form of co-authoring the *Fundamental Constitutions* of the Carolina colony that legally upheld the practice of slavery (Armitage, 2004: 603)²³. In each case, the justification of the social contract is, upon closer inspection, grounded in racial terms that are central to its conception.

The history of the Racial Contract goes beyond the specific principles of justice considered in the previous section, to a history of modernity itself and the colonialism and imperialism that were central to its development. In order to reflect upon the relevance of all this to cosmopolitanism, in the remainder of this sub-section, I wish to consider how it is not simply the case that ideal theory tends not to take this racialised history seriously, but that it cannot possibly account for it from within its methodological framework. I argue that approaching political theory in ideal terms means grafting ideal principles of justice to colonial and imperialist practices that it will inevitably fail to correct. To avoid confusion about the relevance of colonialism and imperialism today, I distinguish between colonialism and colonality. The former refers to the domination and exploitation that were practised during colonial rule, which included colonality as an epistemology that eclipsed certain forms of knowledge. Colonality seeks to engulf: 'rather than being appreciated as different forms of knowledge based on different cosmovisions, these knowledges are locked in a hierarchical relationship' (Dunford, 2017:

²³ It should be noted that Locke's application of his political theory to colonial practice was something that shaped his political theory itself, as the codification of state constitutions was conducted simultaneously with the authoring of the Second Treatise (Armitage, 2004: 602). Moreover, racial distinctions are littered throughout the Second Treatise – e.g. 'when an American and an Indian' encounter each other 'in the Woods of America... they are perfectly in a state of Nature' (Locke, 2016: 9) – evincing that Locke's colonial conception of property was central to his political theory (Armitage, 2004: 603-4). Extrapolated from this colonial context is an abstract concern that natural rights apply to "all men", knowing full well that by all he referred to those who he considered non-barbaric, "civilised" men (and he meant men).

386). Importantly, coloniality as an epistemology has outlived colonialism and continues to reproduce hierarchical power relations (Dunford, 2017: 384-5).²⁴ What we can see, therefore, is a cosmopolitanism that attempts to apply idealised universal principles of justice across time and space without paying attention to how Western knowledge forms sublate non-Western cosmovisions, and, in doing so, ushers subjects into oppressive and exploitative global social structures (Dunford, 2017: 384-6).

For our purposes, the point is to note that when an ideal cosmopolitan universalism comes to be it fails to account for the geographical conditions that derive from colonialism, and thus reproduces coloniality. Consider how the contemporary cosmopolitan literature I am interested in is indebted to Kantian ethics; *Perpetual Peace* is considered foundational to cosmopolitan ethos. In this text, Kant constructs an ideal state of affairs, to respond to the nonideal conditions before him, in order to bring about global peace. Thus, whilst *Perpetual Peace* can be thought of as a nonideal text (i.e. matters of remedying conflicts), the ideals are abstracted from the conditions in which they would apply once settled. Kant's proposals (2006: 68-71) are what many contemporary observers would see as bold steps in this direction: e.g. 'no independently existing state (irrespective of whether it is large or small) shall be able to be acquired by another state through inheritance, exchange, purchase, or gift'; 'standing armies (*miles perpetuus*) shall gradually be abolished entirely'; "'no state shall forcibly interfere in the constitution and government of another state' (Kant, 2006: 68-71). Although concerned with the separation of states, unlike the Westphalian model, Kant's model looks outwards to other (not yet formed) republics and considers the grounds for a cosmopolitan *modus vivendi*. The three central pillars said to make this possible are: 'the civil constitution of every state shall be republican'; 'international right shall be based on the federalism

²⁴ We can also see coloniality reproduced within certain "liberation" movements that perpetuate a distinction between "us" and "them". An example of this is what Françoise Vergès (2021) refers to as a *civilisational feminism* that sees Westerner women as the saviours of "the rest". Cultural practices that take place in non-Western spaces (e.g. adolescent marriage) are pointed to as examples of women's oppression that are holding them back from idealised Western norms and expectations; rendering the subjects of this feminism as in need of assistance in helping them "catch up" (Vergès, 2021; Khader, 2019: Chapter I). Omitted from analysis, as mentioned in Chapter I, is that these practices are shaped, and often exacerbated, by colonial and imperialist practices (Khader, 2019: Chapter I).

of free states; cosmopolitan right shall be limited to the conditions of universal hospitality' (Kant, 2006: 74-85).

Contemporary cosmopolitanism is heavily indebted to this Kantian rationality, and many conclude that similar proposals retain pertinence in attempts to dislodge the Westphalian order. But what such ideal projections ignore is the colonial history in which they were constructed and onto which they will inevitably be grafted. This means that Kant's proposals apply to conditions that have been shaped by a coloniality that they would be expected to graft onto. For example, consider Michael Shapiro's (1998: 701) point that, 'because Kant's moral map enclosed states as abstract 'societies of men', he lacked a sensitivity to peoples and nations that were not organised in the form of states'. Hence, there is a failure to recognise those "nations" or peoples that are not organised into separate state structures (Harvey, 2009: 109).²⁵ For example, "India" was not a unified nation-state prior to British colonial rule so attempts to administer its politics today reproduce a 'grid of uniform Euclidean space imposed cartographically upon a far more complicated space' (Harvey, 2009: 49). The point is that ideal conceptions of justice are said to be constructed outside of the context within which they are said to apply, and thus graft onto a far more complex historical and geographical condition which cannot possibly be severed from their colonial past and present.

The retort to my argument is to point out that Kant's (2006: 82-5) cosmopolitanism was explicitly anti-colonial, which is expressed in *Perpetual Peace* when outlining his right to hospitality, where he argues that anybody roaming the Earth can rightfully claim to reside there, providing they see themselves only as a visitor and respect the laws of the republic in which they find themselves. This is said to safeguard against 'the inhospitable behavior of the civilised states in our part of the world, especially the commercial ones, the injustice that the latter show when visiting foreign lands and peoples... takes on terrifying proportions... and the whole litany of evils that weigh upon the human species' (Kant, 2006:

²⁵ This is also true of communitarian theories that fail to consider how 'places and localised ways of life are relationally constructed by a variety in intersecting socio-ecological processes occurring at quite different spatio-temporal scales' (Harvey, 2009: 112).

82). But again, the promotion of separate republics and a universal principle of hospitality to help establish a system of peaceful commerce, followed by a cosmopolitan constitution, will inevitably usher in a certain political order when grafted onto colonial-capitalist contours and thus graft asymmetric power relations onto complex geo-political spaces.

Moreover, despite attempts to appeal to an ideal that sees all individuals bearing the same rights as each other, only certain subjects of the global Racial Contract will be in a position to discharge this right, a right which we can imagine, in practice, entitles the hierarchical subjects of the Racial Contract to insist on an ethos of hospitality that cannot (and would) not be reciprocated when racial hierarchies are taken into consideration. Likewise, whilst the right to hospitality attempts to establish mutual consent between the visitor and the visited, these arrangements are prone to being viewed through a colonial lens in which hierarchical subjects sublimate the knowledge of subordinated members of the Racial Contract. Hence, despite the best intentions of the right to hospitality, and Kant's *Perpetual Peace* generally, it is vulnerable, as is the cosmopolitan ethics indebted to it, to reproducing coloniality.

Towards a critical cosmopolitan alternative

This thesis rejects an ideal approach to justice on the grounds that it closes the door to further analysis of the ontological assumptions underpinning what is said to constitute justice. To reopen this door, I propose a critical cosmopolitan approach that begins with assessing the importance of global injustices, by attempting to characterise how they are reproduced, *before* considering how we might respond to them. To ground this critical cosmopolitan alternative, I refer to the work of Bonnie Honig (1993) and her distinction between *virtù* and *virtue* politics. A virtue politics refers to those 'theories that displace conflict, identify politics with administration and treat juridical settlement as the task of politics and political theory' and claim that 'their favored institutions fit and express the identities or the formations of subjects' (Honig, 1993: 2-3). Ideal theory is consistent with a virtue understanding of politics inasmuch as it attempts to settle, once and for all, debates about the "correct" principles of justice that apply across all time and space. In response, I propose a more virtù-minded approach, which argues

‘that every politics has its remainders, that resistances are engendered by every settlement, even by those that are relatively enabling or empowering’ (Honig, 1993: 3). To avoid closing the door to reassessing conceptions of justice that upon reflection are not pertinent to social relations, such a virtù-minded approach sees ‘politics as a disruptive practice that resists the consolidations and closures of administrative and juridical settlement for the sake of perpetuity of political contest’ (Honig, 1993: 2).

This virtù approach does not shy away from contestation but sees it as the *raison d’être* of politics; it is inevitable.²⁶ A more virtù-minded approach is able to overcome the need to keep reassessing the ideals to ensure that certain injustices are not perpetuated once realised, as it sees politics and justice as inevitably producing remainders that must first be theorised before rectification can take place. Moreover, whilst this critical cosmopolitan approach rests upon its own ontological assumptions about the necessary starting point of normative theory (social structures), it attempts to reflect upon ontological assumptions themselves by creating the space to constantly reassess them, rather than close the door to further contestation as ideal theory does. It does not exclusively rely upon specific political settlements in the formal sense, but rather sees justice as a perpetual process of contestation to which no final principles of justice should regulate conduct across all time and space.

Therefore, my approach avoids attempting simply to reform the current paradigm both ideationally and institutionally. Instead, my alternative leaves the possibility of transcending oppressive global social structures on the table. I do not return to considering what this might look like until Chapter VI, where I outline some of the potentialities certain struggles and transnational movements possess to transcend oppressive social structures. The purpose of waiting until then is because, as noted, it is important to first examine in more detail how injustices arise and are reproduced across time and space. Moreover,

²⁶ Although Honig (1993: Chapter VII) defends a *virtù* conception of politics on account that it does not close the door to contestation and disruption, in the final chapter of her book, she makes the more nuanced case for a virtù-virtue dialectic. In redressing the displacement of politics within political theory, she wishes not to set virtù politics on a path of contestation absent of settlement: ‘politics consists of practices of settlement and unsettlement, of disruption and administration, of extraordinary events or foundings and mundane maintenances. It consists of the forces that decide undecidabilities and of those that resist those decisions at the same time.’ (Honig, 1993: 205). I return to this distinction again in Chapter VI when this thesis reflects on how to agitate to transform oppressive social structures.

it is important to note that it would be a mistake to conclude that, because this chapter has argued against the ideal of impartiality, and ideal theorisation more broadly, that this is a defence of nonideal theory. What I mean by nonideal theory here is understood, as Rawls (1971: 7-8) does, as determining how to circumvent injustices on the way to reaching a pre-established ideal. Therefore, my approach is not the antithesis of the ideal theory that this chapter has rejected; it is not an attempt to consider how we might get to the ideal of impartiality. In grounding an alternative, I attempt to move away from the ideal/nonideal dichotomy.

My approach can transcend this dichotomy precisely because it is not an inversion of ideal theory but instead adopts a *virtù* mindset. It therefore does not view “nonideal conditions” as inconveniences to realising an ideal condition. That is because, like with the Racial Contract, those injustices that are seen as reflective of the nonideal are viewed as aberrations; as inconveniences that once overcome can place us back on the path to a just society (Mills, 1997: 56). This thesis rejects the view that the injustices that can be said to pertain to nonideal theory are in any way an aberration from an ideal; rather, it sees those “nonideal conditions”, in particular, oppressive global social structures, as central to reflecting upon what normative theory demands of us. This differs from an ideal which sees nonideal theory as a distraction or a means to the end of reforming an otherwise just basic structure, rather than unpacking a wider array of social relations and considering how to transcend oppressive social structures. Therefore, I think my alternative framework derives from Critical Theory inasmuch as it locates emancipatory potential contained within present conditions. This means that injustices are transformed from an inconvenience we must strive to circumvent on the way to the ideal, to examining oppressive social relations that themselves contain potential for a *virtù* politics that shapes the normative horizon we should agitate for. As Herbert Marcuse (1991: 231-2) attests, ‘critical thought strives to define the irrational character of the established rationality’ but does so by attempting ‘to define the tendencies which cause this rationality to generate its own transformation’. Hence, global social structures are placed at the centre of analysis as a prerequisite to determining a transformative structural justice.

Conclusion

My argument above has made a range of interventions into the debate about the ideal of impartiality (and ideal theory) as a methodological approach to accounts of social and global justice. The first two points concern how input impartiality professes to safeguard against certain biases and injustices when constructing principles of justice, when, in fact, this method actually forecloses analysis of the ways in which certain injustices are not only reintroduced once the principles in question become active, but also neglect those injustices that do not antithetically contrast with an imagined ideal of impartiality. The second point was that the ideal of impartiality is said to be able to construct principles that are relevant across all time and space on account of their input impartiality, but, upon further inspection, they cannot escape the background conditions against which they are constructed. The changes to these background conditions thus render principles of justice ungermane to ongoing social relations.

The usual retort to such claims is that ideal theory need not bog itself down in actual social conditions; rather, its role is to shine a light on what a just society would look like. After all, overlooking injustices in the “nonideal” is precisely what ideal theory demands. However, as argued, the impossibility of the ideal of impartiality is illustrated when we realise it is a parochial conception of the ideal, which will inevitably overlook a range of experienced injustices and sites in which they play out. In order to overcome this problem, ideal theorists are presented with the choice of evaluating their ontological assumptions, consisting of an attempt to expand the scope of analysis as to what constitutes an injustice, or, alternatively, remain wedded to striving for an ideal of impartiality that fails to correct those injustices not antithetically opposite to their conception of the ideal. If one adopts the former, a conception of the ideal will transparently rely upon expanding on what constitutes injustice and thus what justice looks in contrast, as the Engels quote at the outset of this chapter demonstrates. Thus, ideal theory fails on its own terms because the only way it can correct certain injustices is if it reflects upon what constitutes injustice as part of what constitutes the ideal, which relies on theorisation at the “nonideal” level anyway.

The next stage of my argument introduced output impartiality: the realisation of impartiality when principles that are themselves impartial are said to apply. In this case, if it is true that output impartiality will fail to correct a range of injustices, even when realised on its own terms, then it undermines the tenability of the ideal that the ideal of impartiality strives for. I attempted to evince this by showing how distributive principles of justice were unable to bring about conditions of impartiality because, when actualised, they are grafted onto, in the case examined, gendered relations that cannot be ameliorated by distributive modes of justice. Finally, I argued that output impartiality must to be placed in a broader colonial history than is currently the case when surveying contemporary debates about global justice. It was shown that idealised social contract theory was, upon closer inspection, a Racial Contract that perpetuates (often implicitly) a discriminatory contract based on domination. The purpose of doing so was to demonstrate that an idealised cosmopolitan justice will necessarily reproduce coloniality by failing to take account of colonial history and instead globalising justice to abstracted “individuals”, without acknowledgement of how doing so repurposes forms of domination that derive from this history.

In the next chapter, I focus specifically on redressing the absence of an analysis of global social structures within cosmopolitan thought, as noted in Chapter I. I have used Chapter II to demonstrate that conventional approaches to cosmopolitanism will not suffice. Thus, rather than accepting the general framework of cosmopolitan thought, I attempt to mystify the social abstractions that guide widespread agential action and reproduce oppressive global social structures across borders. In essence, my critical cosmopolitan approach is committed to characterising the global social structures that provide a concrete context to otherwise abstracted “individuals” that cosmopolitans fail to place in relation to social structures more generally. Rather than committing to an idealist approach that makes ‘no reference whatsoever to any historical moment’ (Horkheimer, 1993: 17), this thesis places individuals in relation to oppressive social structures as the starting point of a critical cosmopolitan approach. I will now turn my attention to Chapter III, which introduces the concept of structural injustice and unpacks and problematises the dominant structural injustice framework.

Chapter III: Towards a critical cosmopolitan structural injustice framework

The purpose of Part I of this thesis is to attempt to demonstrate how the global justice literature, in particular cosmopolitanism, has failed to provide a meaningful account of structural injustice. That is to say, cosmopolitans overlook the structural element of how injustices occur, are reproduced, and therefore how they ought to be challenged. In order to make this case, I must first outline in greater detail what this thesis is referring to when the terms social structures and structural injustice are employed. To do so, I will analyse the work of Iris Marion Young (2004; 2006; 2011), whose structural injustice framework, I argue, better captures how injustices arise and are reproduced in contrast to the cosmopolitan literature. For this reason, Young's account is better suited to examine how we ought to go about remedying injustice. However, Young's framework largely focusses on the way in which individuated conduct, when aggregated, produces structural injustice. Alternatively, I argue that her account is incomplete and needs to be supplemented with a more detailed analysis of the abstract rules and norms that shape oppressive social structures.

This chapter does not dispute that Young (2011: 52) is correct when she states that structural injustices are the result of aggregated action. Instead, it argues that her framework overlooks the pertinence of how certain rules and norms shape this action itself. In doing so, Young's structural injustice framework fails to typify the rules and norms relevant to reproducing structural injustice. To simplify, I argue that Young's (2011) account focusses on agency – the widespread uncoordinated human conduct that helps produce and perpetuate injustices – at the expense of the abstract – the rules and norms that agential conduct occurs in relation to.

To make this case, this chapter is divided into four sections. In Section I, Young's structural injustice framework is presented, before I argue in Section II that it is an appropriate model for analysing and remedying global structural injustices when contrasted with the cosmopolitan literature examined in chapters I and II. In Section III, in order to adopt it into my approach, I argue that Young's structural injustice framework needs to be supplemented to include a more thorough analysis of rules and norms. I refer to Young's sweatshop factories case study to demonstrate how these conditions can only be understood if one also examines how the powerful possess what I call *norm-shaping agency* to

perpetuate the norms that the agential action that produces structural injustices occurs in accordance to. Section IV moves beyond norm-shaping agency to the rules and norms themselves, and considers how they can provide meaningful context to structural injustices, before briefly reflecting upon what my intervention means when it comes to doing something about injustice. I conclude that reflection upon rules and norms must go further than this chapter, and focus not just on the role powerful actors play, but also on typifying the rules and norms that produce the types of structural injustices that motivate this thesis. With regard to the latter, I tentatively introduce how conceptualising neoliberalism is important to understanding how these structural injustices came to be and are reproduced, something that is examined in much more detail in Chapter IV.

Iris Marion Young's structural injustice framework

To introduce her structural injustice framework, Iris Marion Young (2011: 43-4) tells the story of Sandy, a hypothetical citizen of the United States, who, through no fault of her own, is on the brink of becoming homeless. How did this happen? Sandy's building is purchased by a developer who decides to convert her flat into luxury living spaces, thus resulting in an impending eviction date (Young, 2011: 43). When searching for a new property that is suitable for her children and for her to get to work, Sandy is alarmed by the cost of rent for suitable flats; eventually settling on a flat that is below the standard she had hoped for (Young, 2011: 43). Sandy later learns that the lease on her preferred prospective property requires her to pay three months' rent in advance, an expense she cannot afford as she has already spent her savings on a down payment for a car that she needs to get to and from work (Young, 2011: 43-4). For Young (2011: 44), Sandy's situation is reflective of a 'kind of moral wrong... which is distinct from wrongs traceable to specific individual actions or policies'. That is because Sandy's situation is not the result of one particular policy or action by a particular actor or set of actors, but a complex web of uncoordinated conduct that when aggregated renders Sandy on the brink of homelessness (Young, 2011: 44). With Sandy's fate in mind, Young (2011: 53) develops an understanding of social structures that consists of four broad features, which I will now outline.

First, structures often take the form of ‘institutional and social rules’ that are ‘stubbornly objective and difficult-to-change’, ‘some are legal rules... others are more implicit rules that people follow through habit’ (Young, 2011: 55). This first feature relies on Jean-Paul Sartre’s (1976: 191-3) concept of *practico-inert*: historically, human agency moulds the material conditions of our lives that then imprint onto the social world, that, in turn, is imprinted upon again (and so on and so on) (Young, 2011: 54). Using the example of the steam engine, Sartre (1976: 192) notes how when Watt “invented” the steam engine he was, in fact, only innovating precisely because his achievement relied upon the past human conduct that got him to that point. Isaac Newton’s phrase “if I have seen further it is by standing on the shoulders of Giants” somewhat captures *practico-inert* guiding sentiment, although in the case of the breakthroughs that gave the world the steam engine, they relied on the labour of those who could hardly be thought of as giants. To put it into Sartre’s (1976: 192-3) words, he notes,

‘The fundamental exigency determined similar exigencies in other sectors: it was negatively totalising, as inert matter must be. At the same time it produced exigency-man; that is, new generations, or certain groups within them, interiorised, as their own exigencies, the diffuse exigencies of materiality which previous generations had lived as their limits. The inventor is a technician who makes himself into an exigency-man, an inessential mediation between present materiality and the future it demands (*exige*). A man who invents a steam-engine must himself be a steam-engine, as an inert ensemble of known principles relating to it; he must himself be the lack of a sufficiently powerful pump, as the old, but still real, exigency of the mine, and the future objectification of past praxis in a realisation which demands realisation through the future.’

Young (2011: 54) is interested in the institutional and social rules ‘whose material consequences we experience were performed a long time in the past’. In the case of Sandy, her fate is not sealed purely by the actions of today, but by many policies and actions that predate her present circumstance. Moreover, on such reading, the aggregation of widespread agency means social structures reproduce a range of structural injustices.

Second, one's social position within a structure is important in understanding how it functions. The social position of one agent in relation to all others is important in understanding how people relate to social structures (Young, 2011: 57) This is informed by the work of Peter Blau and Pierre Bourdieu; the latter of which explains social structures in terms of a field upon which different social positions are located in relation to all others (Young, 2011: 57). For instance, the social position of a worker and the capitalist reflect distinct social positions, which, in turn, determine the ways in which structures both enable and restrain different actors situated in relation to them (Young, 2011: 52-8).

Third, social structures are produced by human action and are thus not exogenous from said action (Young, 2011: 59-62). This feature of Young's framework is predicated on Anthony Giddens' (1979 & 1984: 24-5) structuration theory. Giddens (1984: 25) outlines the relationship between agents and structures, the latter of which refers to systems that reproduce relations between agents and collectives. However, 'social systems in which structure is recursively implicated, on the contrary, comprise the situated activities of human agents, reproduced across time and space' (Giddens, 1984: 25). Therefore, for Giddens (1984: 25; 174), structures are not simply constraints inflicted upon humans and their conduct, as is often assumed, but are shaped by human conduct itself.

Fourth, is the idea of the intended action of atomised agents that, once aggregated, produce an unintended unjust outcome (Young, 2011: 62-4). On such a reading, Sandy's story reflects the 'unintended but unjust consequences of the actions of millions of differently positioned individuals... usually acting on normal and accepted rules and drawing on the resources normally available to people in those positions' (Young, 2011: 64). This aspect of Young's (2011: 10) framework is also aligned with Giddens' (1984: 10) theory on the 'composition effect': 'an outcome of an aggregate of acts... each of which is intentionally carried out. But the eventual outcome is neither intended nor desired by anyone'.

With these four features in mind, Young (2011: 52) provides the closest we will come to a definition of what structural injustice means on her account:

‘Structural injustice, then, exists when social processes put large groups of persons under systematic threat of domination or deprivation of the means to develop and exercise their capacities, at the same time that these processes enable others to dominate or to have a wide range of opportunities for developing and exercising capacities available to them. Structural injustice is a kind of moral wrong distinct from the wrongful action of an individual agent or the repressive policies of a state. Structural injustice occurs as a consequence of many individuals and institutions acting to pursue their particular goals and interests, for the most part within the limits of accepted rules and norms.’

Understanding social structures this way, Young develops what she calls *the social connection model*: all agents connected to a structural injustice, who in some way bring it about, share responsibility to collectivise and redress the injustice in question (Young, 2011: 95). The social connection model aims to provide an alternative to what Young calls the liability model: remedial responsibility is assigned on the basis of evidencing a causal link, to the degree of liability, between the perpetrator and the moral harm they bring about. That is to say, an agent is not only causally linked, but is also liable: their actions were not only intentional but were the primary reason the harm occurred. The social connection model, however, does not deny causality, but argues that it falls short of meeting the liability threshold precisely because structural injustices are the unintentional consequence of thousands of intentional actions across time and space (Young, 2011: 97-9). It is, therefore, not possible to blame agents for the outcome, unlike in cases of liability, because structural injustices ‘have no isolatable perpetrator, but rather result from the participation of millions of people in institutions and practices that result in harms’ (Young, 2004: 377).

The liability model is predicated on the assumption that actions that bring about injustices deviate from an acceptable standard, and therefore liability can reasonably be apportioned (Young, 2011: 107-8). In the case of me assaulting somebody on the bus on the way to work, I am liable and therefore blameworthy because I have deviated from an attainable moral standard not to harm others. Conversely, structural injustices are brought about by the aggregation of thousands of unintentional acts that in and

of themselves do not represent an aberration. In fact, they are often acts that are considered normal (Young, 2011: 108). For example, the act of driving to work in the morning produces CO₂ that contributes to adverse climate change. In this case, one's actions are normal and acceptable, and, importantly, are not the sole causation of the unwanted outcome. If the liability model is useful for thinking about those instances where somebody has deviated from an accepted norm, the social connection model is able to capture the types of actions that are often considered normal, but nevertheless, when aggregated, produce structural harms (Young, 2011: 48). What we can see is that one's understanding of how injustices arise is inextricably linked to how we ought to remedy them. If someone adopts the liability model, then they will strive to blame an individual or small set of actors for a particular unjust outcome. Similarly, although the social connection model differs from the liability model, it still has the purpose of attempting to demonstrate who is responsible for bringing structural injustices about, but instead apportions the responsibility collectively (Young, 2011: 109-10).²⁷

Young refers to sweatshop working conditions to bring her social connection model to life. She outlines how consumers of sweatshop goods in more affluent countries, such as the US and those in Europe, are connected to the global structural injustice of sweatshop working conditions; say, because they demand these products or they partake in practices and institutions that help produce these conditions (Young, 2011: Chapter V; 2004, 2006). In terms of the conditions themselves, Young (2004: 366) notes how sweatshop bosses 'enforce a six-day working week, and forced overtime is common'. Moreover, 'women workers often suffer sexual harassment or verbal abuse. Workers who protest their exploitation or attempt to organize unions are typically intimidated, beaten, or fired' (Young, 2004: 366). If many millions of people, including Westerners, are connected to these injustices, on account of Young's (2011: 95) social connection model, then they ought to make collective efforts to remedy them along with those who are likewise connected (including victims). Young's (2011: 95; see also 2006: 114)

²⁷ Matters of remedying structural injustices in the form of pursuing structural justice will be discussed in Chapter VI. The purpose of Chapter III is to focus on how structural injustices are thought to be produced and sustained.

social connection model seeks not to blame those who are connected, yet insists ‘that all those who contribute by their actions to structural processes with some unjust outcomes share responsibility for the injustice’. The main thing to note for our purposes here, however, is that sweatshop working conditions arise as a result of many actions of thousands of agents across borders. In what ways, then, is Young’s structural injustice framework preferential for capturing the types of injustices that cosmopolitans are interested in?

Defending Young’s hypothesis

There are four main reasons that demonstrate the preference of theorising about injustice in line with Young’s framework when compared to the cosmopolitan literature analysed in Chapter I. First is that many of the cosmopolitan accounts examined adopt the liability model when it comes to diagnosing global injustices. In doing so, these accounts import the weaknesses that Young gives us the tools to identify. Recall that it was argued that many cosmopolitans do not seek to transcend oppressive social structures, but instead insist that reforms and minor modifications are sufficient. This might take the form of A compensating B for global injustice X on the basis that X is the result of A’s actions. Consider Pogge’s (2002) central argument: developed peoples have a negative duty not to impose an unjust economic order on developing peoples, which can be offset by compensating victims and/or striving to make institutional reforms. This diagnosis is expressed in a language of liability because it places developed peoples as responsible for imposing a global basic structure that produces certain harms. In particular, Pogge (1994: 212) notes how global injustices ‘show the power of long-term compounding rather than overwhelmingly powerful centrifugal tendencies of our global market system’. The long-term compounding of power is cast ‘as a discrete, bounded event that breaks away from the ongoing normal flow’ (Young (2006: 120), and therefore it can be sufficiently corrected in the form of A being held liable for B’s condition and thus rectifying it in the form of redistributing resources (Pogge, 1994: 212; 2002).

Alternatively, Young's (2006: 120) framework is 'derived from understanding the mediated connection that agents have to structural injustices' and 'does not evaluate harm that deviates from the normal and the acceptable; rather, it often brings into question precisely the background conditions that ascriptions of blame or fault assume as normal'. This brings to the fore the limitation identified in Chapter I: Pogge (1994: 212) casts the inequalities produced by the global economic order as ordinary, and thus only requiring corrective proposals to rectify seismic imbalances in the global economic order. What is not brought into question is, why are these inequalities seen as ordinary and what are the background conditions that render them as such? Moreover, the connection that agents have to structural injustices cannot be reduced to A inflicting an injustice on B in the form of liability, because connection includes a much wider array of actors that reproduce conditions that bring about structural injustices, including those who are harmed most by them. This includes the actions of consumers, producers, lawmakers, institutions, individuals (and many more), all of whom cannot (and therefore should not) be held liable for structural harms, but are nevertheless relevant if we are to understand how global structural injustices arise and are reproduced. Therefore, Young's structural injustice framework paves the way for analysing a wider range of social systems and structures that do not necessarily appear to be acting in a way that deviates from some standard or norm and are thus not as easily identifiable. This means we can retain the pertinence of how a global economic order is currently rigged, but also expand our analysis to those sites of justice (e.g. marketplaces and households) to include everyday actions of individuals that are no less pertinent.

The second and related benefit is that a cosmopolitan liability model fails to challenge the background conditions that necessitate transnational transfers, and, as alluded to, is predicated on a power dynamic that fails to render the recipients of transfers as moral agents in their own right (Chandhoke, 2010: 80). That is to say, rendering Westerners as liable for the harms some non-Westerners are subjected to produces a kind of saviourism and coloniality that sees the former as "saviours" of the latter, denying the latter their agency in the process. Young's (2011: 95; 2006: 129) structural injustice framework is able to mitigate this limitation because it is based on a connection to structural injustice, so it also includes those who are subject to them. This means it places an added degree of agency on those who

are victims of structural injustices because their interests are ‘most acutely at stake’ (Young, 2011: 113). That is not to say Young’s (2011: 145) model is exclusively victim-led, but her model creates the space to lessen the possibility of rendering the subjects of global justice as passive bystanders – a space in which collectivising with victims and expressing solidarity takes place without ever acting on behalf of victims without their input.

In what follows, what should become clear is that Young’s structural injustice framework does little to examine the ideational rules and norms that underwrite agential action and how they can be prescriptive. Nevertheless, Young’s structural injustice framework is better situated to ensure that those connected insofar as they are victims play an active role in the remedial work and are not simply passive recipients of cosmopolitan distributive transfers. Thus, it goes some way to alleviating harmful post-/colonial narratives and power dynamics pertaining to affluent Westerners “coming to the rescue of the global needy”. Alternatively, Young’s model provides the potential for assessing ways of enhancing the agency of those subjected to structural injustice to determine the means and the manner by which to challenge exploitative and oppressive structures, before calling for assistance from those well situated to be able to bring about lasting structural changes.

The second benefit shines light on a third (methodological) benefit: it aligns more so with the critical cosmopolitan method inasmuch as it begins with global structural injustices and then considers how they arise and what we ought to do about them. In so doing, it starts from structural injustices and considers one’s connection as a sufficient moral justification for doing something about them. This means it avoids getting bogged down in Rawlsian debates about the extensiveness of the global basic structure and whether it warrants the expansion of the scope of justice. It begins instead from a wide array of social processes and considers their pertinence to reproducing structural injustices prior to thinking about what to do about them. This is important because, as was noted in Chapter II, a parochial focus on constructing an “impartial” global basic structure will necessarily perpetuate and overlook a range of persistent injustices and the sites in which they play out. Rather, Young’s model accounts for all those actions that aggregate to produce a structural injustice, regardless of where they take place, not

just those that take place in sites of justice that are pertinent to the (global) basic structure. Thus, the social connection model places at the heart of its analysis how individuals fare, but is structural inasmuch as it places individuals and collectives in relation to the social structures they both shape and are shaped by.

A fourth point is that Young's social connection model helps avoid a situation where agents shirk responsibility for injustices that they are only partially responsible for, and, as such, falls short of the liability threshold. That is because, to say that somebody is liable for something is to say that they could have acted otherwise, and, in doing so, would have seriously altered the outcome if not avoided it entirely. As a result, liability has a significantly higher threshold for discharging remedial agential responsibility precisely because if liability cannot be evidenced, by default, no responsibility can be accepted for a moral harm. This is especially true of past injustices, where responsible agents cannot alter their causal contribution to a particular harm retrospectively. This can be evidenced by analysing David Miller's (2007: 241) criticism of Thomas Pogge's assertion that global injustices are caused by an unjust global order. Miller (2007: 241) points out that Malaysia gained its independence from Britain in the same year as Ghana, yet the former has outpaced the latter in terms of development. Miller (2007: 251) concludes from this that, in order to assign remedial responsibility, one needs to provide evidence that colonialism's 'overall impact on the development of societies in which it occurred was negative', going on to say that 'this would be a hard task to accomplish'.

Miller's argument relies on the singular metric of economic development that he assumes to be universally desirable, as well as overlooking distinct historical, geographical, and anthropological conditions between the countries in question. Furthermore, Malaysia's perceived economic success does nothing to downplay the injustices that stem from colonial rule; to say that a country has overcome a negative past injustice is not to say that it must not have been a negative all along. Nevertheless, what is important here is that the liability model makes it difficult to evidence how much responsibility, in this case, ought to be attributed to Britain. This difficulty is likely to result in a situation where agents do not take any responsibility for most structural injustices because it is not clear, at least not in an

evidential sense, that the overall impact of someone's conduct had a negative impact. We cannot possibly compartmentalise colonialism from the outcomes observed both in Malaysia *and* Ghana in the way Miller assumes we can. When liability is the framework that theorists use, we are forced to employ a scientific epistemology of cause and effect that cannot be easily applied to complex processes like colonialism and its continued influence in shaping the contemporary world. Young's (2011: 95) social connection model makes it possible to overcome this exacting task and asserts that all those connected have a responsibility to correct the oppressive global structures that continue to disadvantage post-colonial countries²⁸. Note that, in doing so, the degree to which agents ought to remedy a harm is not, unlike in Miller's case, determined by the degree of liability for causing that harm.

The social connection model, therefore, gets us closer to avoiding a situation in which agents reify social structures inasmuch as they accept that nothing can be done about them because doing so is "just too complicated". However, so far the focus has been on Young's social connection model, the primary aim of which is to demonstrate one's connection to an injustice for the purpose of collectivising to do something about it. What remains unpacked in lesser detail, both by Young and my analysis of her account so far, is structural injustices themselves. Little has been said about whether her understanding of how they arise is sufficient enough to shift our focus to matters of what to do about injustices, or whether we need to unpack structural injustices in more detail. I opt for the latter and, in the following section, demonstrate how Young's structural injustice framework focusses more on the concrete ways in which injustices are reproduced and less on the ideational rules and norms that shape the action that ultimately reproduces a range of injustices.²⁹

²⁸ Here, I leave open what this responsibility would look like. To my mind, it would be important that a coloniality is not reproduced and that the recipients in question dictate what discharging this responsibility would look like.

²⁹ I refer here to Young's structural injustice framework, and not her social connection model, precisely because I seek to spend more time unpacking what social structures are and how they arise before outlining in more detail what this means for doing something about them. Young's structural injustice framework refers to her understanding of social structures as well as her social connection model, and is thus more encompassing and accurate for the critique that follows.

Addressing limitations: introducing norm-shaping agency

The first thing to note is that Young does not differentiate between behaviour that helps to shape rules and norms and the actions that conform to certain rules and norms. For clarity, it is not that Young (2011: 55-64) does not acknowledge that institutional rules serve to constrain and facilitate certain agential actions, but that there is no distinction between actions relating to how these rules and norms came to be, and those actions that take place in accordance to these rules and norms. It could be said that this is because rules and norms are inextricably linked to the action that plays out in accordance to them and to try and disentangle them is impossible. Indeed, rules and norms only gain their meaning when behaviours occur in their image. However, that is not to say that it is not worthwhile to differentiate between action that creates new rules and norms and action which follows in its footsteps. If we analyse Young's (1990) earlier work, we see a focus on the type of injustices in which the distinction between actions producing norms and action that acts in accordance to them becomes blurred. In contrast, I argue that when it comes to injustices like sweatshop working conditions this distinction is not so blurred, and, as such, it is worthwhile reflecting upon the actors that possess the agency to shape the rules and norms that widespread agential action occurs in accordance to. To do so, I will now provide a brief review of Young's earlier work and its pertinence to present considerations.

If we look at Young's earlier work, we can see that, when it comes to informal sites of justice, it makes more sense to think of actions as what make a rules and norms pertinent. To demonstrate what I mean, I reflect upon her earlier work in *Justice and the Politics of Difference* (1990) and situate it in conversation with her later work *Responsibility for Justice* (2011). Young's (1990: 150-2) earlier work stresses the importance of the rules and norms that shape agential action when it comes to behaviour that takes place in informal sites of justice. To contrast, formal sites of justice are what most accounts tend to appeal to – e.g. parliaments, courts, social institutions like education, social services, probation, etc. These appeals have seen historically marginalised groups struggle for formal recognition that comes in the form of laws that, say, extend voting rights, equalise pay rights, and ensure everyone can stand

in elections, etc.³⁰ With this in mind, Young (1990: Chapter II and Chapter V) rightly points out that formal sites are unable to capture the rules and norms that persist in informal settings, and take place against the backdrop of formal equality and legal rights. Young (1990: 148) outlines how informal sites of injustices arise beyond ‘official laws and policies’, taking the form of ‘conventional practices of everyday interaction and evaluation’ – in particular, ‘interactive habits, unconscious assumptions and stereotypes’ that result in ‘group related feelings of nervousness or aversion’ (Young, 1990: 148).

This could take the form of members of the dominant social group expressing suspicion of racial minorities consisting of young men in groups encountered on the streets at night. It could also take the form of the treatment of female employees who experience crude jokes or the male gaze from male employees, all of which takes place against the backdrop of formal equality. If these injustices arise out of ‘assumptions and reactions of well-meaning people in ordinary interactions’, then ‘getting rid of the rules or making some new laws’ is insufficient for overcoming a wide range of informal injustices (Young, 1990: 41). That is because oppressive behaviours relevant to informal settings ‘are systematically reproduced *in* major economic, political, and cultural institutions’ (Young, 1990: 41; emphasis added). Therefore, regardless of whether these actions of the dominant group are intended or not, if they ‘reproduce the oppression of some groups, then they should be judged unjust, and therefore should be changed’ (Young, 1990: 150). The first step is for individuals to be made aware of the consequences of their (albeit often unintentional) actions, as a precursor to changing their habits (Young, 1990: 152).

This approach to informal sites of justice is similar to the one adopted when it comes to global social structures explored in her later work (Young, 1990: 150-2) – for example, when Young (1990: 150) calls for accounts of justice to break away from accounts that only focus on ‘discursively conscious and intended action.’ On the following page, are traces of an early commitment to a structural justice that

³⁰ Many of the cosmopolitan accounts considered in Chapter I, rest upon the assumption that the appropriate site of justice is a formal institutional setting. In order to make formal sites of justice more just, the focus tends to be on altering the formal principles, rules, and laws governing major institutional conduct (e.g. Rawls, 1971; Pogge, 2002; Barry, 1998).

does not centre on blame: ‘it is inappropriate to blame people for actions they are unaware of and do not intend’ (Young (1990: 151). Like in her later account of structural injustice that attempts to move away from liability, Young (1990: 151) concludes that ‘people and institutions nevertheless can and should be held responsible for unconscious and unintended behaviour, actions, or attributes that contribute to oppression’. In order to avoid such instances of (informal sites of) injustice from arising, then, we, as a society, are tasked with evaluating the norms that shape conduct in order to challenge them head on. The purpose of drawing attention to Young’s earlier work, is to suggest that eclipsing the space between actions, and the rules and norms said actions validate, is not available to us when it comes to structural injustices like sweatshop working conditions.

The difference between the two types of injustices is as follows. In the case of the unintended consequences of often subtle everyday behaviour, it is the case that the harmful act begins with one individual (or small set of), and ends with another individual (or small set of). Therefore, in order for an injustice not to take place, what needed to occur was for the perpetrator to behave in a way that adheres to alternative norms, and in so doing, avoids reproducing certain, albeit sometimes subtle, behaviours; as Young (1990: 151) calls for. As Gerald Cohen (2008: 142) asserts, ‘expectations determine behaviour, behaviour determines expectations, which determines behaviour, and so on’. This means that if the behaviour in question is changed then the rules and norms this behaviour perpetuated will likewise wither away as they are co-constitutive.

Conversely, the type of the structural injustices Young (2004; 2006; 2011) is interested in (e.g. sweatshops), is produced when thousands, if not millions, of actors each partake in an (often different) act that when aggregated, *and only when aggregated*, produces an injustice like sweatshop working conditions. That said, the difference is that in the latter case, unlike the former, if an individual or small set of individuals alter their behaviour it would do little to alter the outcome. In the former case, what is required is for more reflection on one’s actions and how they treat other people interactionally, whereas the latter is a more institutionally framed concern that considers how we transcend seemingly more enmeshed social structures. The point is that, in the first case, the norm is legitimised only when

dominant group members act in a way that gives meaning to a particular norm, whereas, in the latter case, the norm shapes a divergence of widespread action that no one set of actors is responsible for producing a particular outcome. That is to say, in the latter case, it will continue to exist even if certain parties causally linked to a structural injustice change their behaviour, say, not to purchase an item of clothing because, in the case of sweatshops and other similar structural injustices, the juggernaut rumbles on regardless. This means that to transcend oppressive social structures we must unpack and critically examine the ideational rules and norms that shape and are shaped by agential action.

It should be stated that identifying this difference is not to suggest that only the latter injustice (e.g. sweatshops) constitutes a structural injustice, whereas the former (e.g. racial aversions) do not. In the former case, what makes it a structural injustice is that it is a repeated experience that members of the group in question experience multiple times in their lifetime. In other words, in order for it to feel like a particularly structural injustice and not a once-in-a-lifetime injustice that deviates from the norm, it relies upon thousands, if not millions, of other actors acting in similar ways. This aggregated action is what makes it a norm that ought to be questioned, and, whilst we should still hold people accountable for their actions, a structural analysis focusses on the norms and the actions they shape and tries to intervene at this level. One might express this in terms of saying that gendered microaggressions are not reflective of “a few bad apples”, but a deeper social issue that relies upon self-reflection about what constitutes normal behaviour. The distinction between interactive and institutional here is only useful in thinking about the role of rules and norms because structural injustices are reproduced at both inter-relational levels.

In addition, whilst formal and informal sites of justice provide a useful distinction, they cannot be neatly disentangled from each other. For example, aversion and unintentional behaviours that are framed through a racialised lens cannot be detached from a broader history of racist modes of institutional deprivation and oppression; in many cases, the latter emboldens people to behave in ways consistent with the former. My point was simply that to eclipse the space between actions and the norms that they reproduce is not available to us when confronting structural injustices like sweatshop labour conditions.

In response, I focus on the ways in which the rules and norms that shape this agential action came to be, as a prerequisite to thinking about what we ought to do about it. To do so, I now turn my attention to the role the ideational rules and norms played in bringing about sweatshop working conditions as a prerequisite for making sense of the aggregated action that continues to reproduce them.

To reflect on what it means to pay greater attention to the distinction between actions that produce rules and norms and actions that act in accordance to them, I introduce the concept of *norm-shaping agency*. Norm-shaping agency relates to an attempt to determine, in a given context, who bears a significant level of agency to shape rules and norms insofar as it shapes human conduct by a wide range of actors, and thus produces structural injustices. I am not suggesting, however, that agents who possess norm-shaping agency in one context do so in all other contexts in which structural injustices have been said to arise. I am suggesting the rules and norms that shape the conduct in which Young (2011) is interested can only be brought about by a certain type of powerful actor that has the agency within present social structures to do so.³¹ As far as structural injustices akin to sweatshop working conditions are concerned, I attempt to show that Young (2011: 52) endorses an account of social structures that fails to distinguish between the aggregation of uncoordinated action that many of us partake in that consequently produces structural injustices and those decisions by the powerful that set certain rules and norms on a path that shapes this uncoordinated action. To illustrate the importance of this distinction, I examine how the rules and norms that saw sweatshops proliferate came to be.

Although it is true that no singular event is the root cause of sweatshop injustices, there are identifiable moments that are far-reaching in forging the ongoing rules and norms paradigm, and thus the architecture that injustices take place within. If so, then powerful agents who possess the norm-shaping agency to alter the rules and norms are different from the ordinary citizens whose actions take place in accordance to these rules and norms. I will now attempt to evidence how this is the case.

³¹ In Section VI of this chapter, I engage in a more thorough debate about different sites of justice that I will largely overlook for the time being.

The Bretton Woods institutions provide a useful insight into the way in which powerful actors, backed by states and supported by multinational corporations, play a role in setting the wider agential parameters. These parameters have widespread and far-reaching implications for agential conduct in a range of different contexts across the globe. These institutions, whose wide support for trade liberalisation, markets and economic growth, help to *produce the rules and norms that the widespread action that reproduces structural injustices occurs in accordance to*. To evidence this, the role these institutions play in creating the conditions of sweatshop conditions will briefly be outlined.

Denis Arnold and Norman Bowie (2003: 225) present one of the pivotal factors that facilitated the proliferation of sweatshop factories:

‘Encouraged by international organizations such as The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, developing nations established "free trade zones" to encourage foreign investment via tax incentives and a minimal regulatory environment. In the 1980s the availability of international financing allowed entrepreneurs to set up production facilities in developing economies in order to meet the growing demand by MNEs [Multi National Enterprises] for offshore production.’

In this case, we can identify those who shaped the rules and norms to be major global actors in the form of supranational institutions, states, and multinational enterprises whose combined actions entrenched sweatshop factories and the working conditions that ensued. Whilst no singular party can be identified as liable, these agents can be identified as possessing norm-shaping agency at important historical junctures – in this case, in the form of tax incentives and a minimal regulatory environment. The aggregation of uncoordinated action, say, of purchasing sweatshop clothing, then, remains traceable to millions of ordinary agents, but cannot be said to have shaped, *at least not in the same way*, the rules and norms to which this conduct occurs in relation.

It could be said that the argument advanced thus far misses the point: those who have been identified as possessing norm-shaping agency are already part of the wider causal web that Young identifies, and thus there is no need to distinguish between the conduct in the manner presented above. For Young (2006: 113), my argument is potentially problematic: ‘defining structures in terms of the rules and resources brought to actions and interactions, however, makes the emergence of structures sound too much like the product of individual and intentional action’.³² In the following sentence, Young (2006: 113) states that ‘the concept of social structures must also include conditions under which actors act, a collective outcome of action which is often impressed onto the physical environment’. If, however, the ‘conditions under which actors act’ arise out of the ‘collective outcome of action which is often impressed onto the physical environment’, then there is no distinction between the type of collective outcome of action that systemically impresses on the physical environment and the action that *sustains* said physical environment once formed. Furthermore, asserting that ‘few theorists of social structures deny that individual actors produce them’, Young (2011: 59-60) shifts the focus to the connection we all have with global social structures. Without denying this fact, what is lost in the process is a focus on those who possess the agency to shape the rules and norms as well as the action that occurs in relation to it.

In addition, Young’s (2011) analysis centres on aggregated action, and, in doing so, severs this action from the broader social structures in which it takes place and which have rendered such action normal. In doing so, the social structures themselves remain largely underexamined. To demonstrate what I mean, consider the example of climate change. Young’s (2011) social connection model enables us to think of climate change as something that arises from the aggregated action of many agents across time and space that produces a range of ecological harms. Whilst this is not incorrect per se, this analysis invertedly aligns with a diagnosis consistent with what many refer to as the *Anthropocene*: the drastic increases in temperature and the adverse weather effects they produce are not in keeping with Earth’s

³² The problem with framing structures as intentional is if an agent is said to have acted intentionally, at which point a structural injustice framework collapses into the liability model, thus importing the limitations identified in Section I.

normal fluctuations; rather, the increases are caused by human activity. Although true, what is omitted is providing more context to which this human activity (i.e. aggregated action) takes place, which, in the case of climate change, has seen environmental commentators (e.g. Moore, 2017, 2018) reframe the ecological crisis by referring to it as the *Capitalocene*, in an attempt to analyse the role capitalist relations play in perpetuating the ecological crisis. Consequently, we are able reframe the human action producing climate change by noting that it can only be made sense of if we also make sense of the broader capitalist totality in which agential action takes place. This does not dismiss Young's (2011) analysis outright, but, rather, attempts to augment it. In doing so, what will arise is an ontological shift in what it is we mean by social structures and the injustices they produce (examined in Chapter IV), which will inevitably alter what it is we should do, normatively speaking, when it comes to doing something about them (examined in Chapter VI).

Where do we go from here? One possibility is that this thesis dedicates more space to outlining the implications of norm-shaping agency, determining who possesses it as a prerequisite to identifying who stands in the way of structural justice. However, having created a distinction between actions that produce rules and norms and action that sustains them, I wish to focus on critically examining the rules and norms themselves in order to better capture the broader social structures that agential action takes place in accordance to. I do so to suggest that, to challenge present rules and norms that have already been formed and reproduced as an ideational common sense, we must take a different approach to structural injustice that I will outline in the remainder of this thesis. Hence, in the next section, I attempt, broadly speaking, to outline the benefits of introducing neoliberalism to the equation to better capture the rules and norms that underpin the global capitalist structures and the structural injustices they reproduce.

The benefits of making sense of neoliberal rules and norms

In the next chapter, I argue that neoliberal rules and norms frame the global social structures this thesis is interested in.³³ Despite being an overused term, I aim to demonstrate how thinking about what neoliberalism is, and how it shapes social structures, provides a meaningful contribution to the debate. The purpose of this present discussion is, generally speaking, to attempt to demonstrate the benefit of typifying rules and norms. To do so, let us return to the case of Sandy, the hypothetical US citizen who is on the brink of homelessness that Young (2011: 43-44) relies upon the ground her framework. It is important to specify the paradigmatic assumptions and ideological forces that situate Sandy's condition into a wider temporal and spatial social context. Young notes that, 'while many other parts of the advanced industrial world have more active policies to remedy shortages of affordable housing, there are nevertheless many people in situations similar to Sandy's in many industrial societies' (Young, 2011: 45). A similar assertion is made when Young (2011: 169) discusses moves away from welfare state provisions in industrial nations, acknowledging that 'these capacities have been seriously eroding in the last thirty years, to a large degree because powerful private corporate interests argue that such strong states inhabit growth'. In both cases, the broader context within which these capacities have been eroded is acknowledged, but Young nevertheless falls short of a meaningful analysis of why this is the case and how it came to be. In doing so, there is a lack of examination of the neoliberal turn that has

³³ It could certainly be said that there are more rules and norms that shape behaviours that bring about structural injustices than specifically neoliberal ones. After all, the types of rules and norms that shape, say, subtle forms of everyday racial oppression pre-date neoliberalism and derive from other historical mores and coercive actions. This is certainly true. However, the first point to note is that I am attempting to redress the omission in Young's (2011) later work that rules and norms are not unpacked in any detail, and therefore thinking about some of the pertinent norms that shape the injustices her book is concerned with is my primary focus. The second point is that, in the following chapters, I make the case for what I call a neoliberal-capitalist totality that comprises a myriad of social relations that are shaped by a neoliberal rationality, and, in turn, reproduce the rationality itself. Hence, historical injustices, like racism, pre-date neoliberalism but are shaped by this broader rationality in ways that cannot be neatly disentangled. We might not want to say that the only rules and norms that are important are neoliberal ones, but we might want to say that they shape many aspects of contemporary life and help reproduce capitalism as a social order and this shapes the lives of many millions of people across borders, both formally and informally. Therefore, we can make a valuable contribution to the global justice and structural injustice literature by focussing primarily on neoliberalism and its relationship to pertinent structural injustices.

brought about these commonalities in many different contexts and what it means for transcending social structures, and therefore, her social connection model more broadly.

As true as Young's analysis is, it fails to capture the broader ideational forces at play, how they gained control of the narrative and became hegemonic. The outcome of failing to provide a more detailed analysis of the context Sandy finds herself in is to tacitly accept the rules and norms that shape her fate, and instead focus on the human action that brought them about. In so doing, such an account of structural injustice falls prey to reification inasmuch as focusing on the widespread agential action casts injustices as an inevitable consequence of aggregated action despite individuated instances of good intention. Instead, if it is true that rules and norms shape this agential behaviour, and different rules and norms would produce different outcomes, then it is important to provide ideational context to the historical period in which these structural injustices are reproduced. By locating Sandy's circumstance in its wider political and economic ideational epoch, when assessing structural injustices, one is able to make sense of the social forces underpinning her fate.

What I wish to draw attention to for the remainder of this section is that changing the way we look at structural injustices has implications for what we ought to do about them. I simply make note of these implications here, before undertaking a more substantial attempt to overcome them in Chapter VI. For Young (2004: 379), as noted in Section II, the purpose of identifying structural injustices is so we can collectivise to make them more just. Although her calls to action remain vague, her general argument is that all those connected to global structural injustices share a responsibility to collectivise, and this takes its most concrete form when calling for sweatshop workers to unionise (Young, 2004: 388). There is a possibility that, if an account of structural injustice is not attentive to present rules and norms, it will do little to disrupt the broader rationality that has produced the conditions we are interested in remedying. That is to say, that we end up being too accepting of global social structures to the extent that we all but reify them. That is because we will focus on the agential form in which injustices are

produced and less on the historical conditions that brought them about and how we can agitate in a transformative direction.³⁴

Consider Elizabeth Kahn's (2018; see also 2013) case for structural human rights, which relies on Young's (2011) structural injustice framework. Her argument centres on the human right to just and favourable working conditions that many would agree is violated when confronted with the realities of sweatshop working conditions (Kahn, 2018). Kahn (2018) argues that we need a structural understanding of this human right in order to improve on accounts that have traditionally been framed in accordance to the liability model. The pertinent part of her argument is that a range of actors are remedially responsible (e.g. employers, governments and individuals, etc.) to uphold just and favourable working conditions because it does not make sense to defend an individual claim to this human right (Kahn, 2018: 6). That is because employers who are themselves struggling in a competitive environment, as a result of attempting to uphold this human right, would often be required not to employ workers because they can only afford to do so, economically speaking, under conditions that are unjust and unfavourable (Kahn, 2018: 6).

In response, Kahn (2019: 8-10) argues for actualising this human right structurally, and gradually, by calling upon government and transnational agencies to help create the conditions and policies that will, over time, see this human right upheld without sacrificing economic development. Without challenging the broader call for a more structural understanding of human rights, I instead draw attention to how focussing, almost exclusively, on the agential action that produces structural injustices inadvertently accepts the broader social relations that engender the tension that Kahn's (2018) paper sets out to resolve – namely, between economic competition and the pressure this places on actualising favourable working conditions given that employment is, for most of the workers in question, their only hope of escaping poverty. In this instance, the holding back of a human right is conceivably warranted precisely because the broader economic context that renders the choice between competition or human rights is cast as

³⁴ I will return to this tension in Chapter VI.

the starting point of moral enquiry. Although concerned with the important issue of how to improve the conditions of workers who are currently exploited, such accounts have a tendency to focus more on the aggregated agential action that produces structural injustices. This comes at the expense of examining how the neoliberal-capitalist rules and norms create conditions that make it perceivable that the only option is to strive for just and favourable working conditions against the accepted backdrop of intense economic competition; thus accepting the broader neoliberal social structures as the starting point of structural justice.

In addition, what accounts that rely on Young's structural injustice framework neglect is how neoliberal rules and norms alter material conditions in such a way that appeals to structural justice are often undermined. For example, Kahn (2018: 10) argues that, if governing agents are strengthened, to give one example, it can protect 'employers from the downward pressure on wages and conditions and thus allows them to pay their workers more while maintaining profitability'. Yet, attempts to strengthen government agents, in order to hold corporations to account, must first work out how to overcome the neoliberalisation of the state itself. In particular, the state's purpose is increasingly constructed as producing competitive market conditions that are mutually exclusive to holding sweatshop working factories to account. Furthermore, there is a failure to reflect upon how competition itself is a neoliberal principle that renders governments, corporations and individuals competitive, and, therefore overlooks attempts to challenge the broader rules and norms that condition relations in such a way that places employment at odds with human rights. My point is that, by not shifting our focus to the rules and norms that shape social structures, we rely on methods of amelioration that fail to fully capture the conditions we are tasked with remedying.

In the following chapters, my aim will be to try to unpack in more detail the way in which oppressive social structures are produced, both ideationally and concretely, and the relationship between the two. This is the first step towards demonstrating that if we better understand how social structures are reproduced, empirically speaking, we are better positioned to determine what we ought to do about them, normatively speaking.

Conclusion

This chapter has sought to make the case for a structural injustice framework that is founded on the work of Iris Marion Young. To do so, it critically engaged with Young's structural injustice framework, and, whilst broadly accepting it, identified the shortcoming of its failure to meaningfully analyse specific rules and norms. In addition, what became apparent is that Young's omission resulted in a conflation between action that produce the rules and norms (that others conform to), and the action that itself produces structural injustices. In response, I introduced the concept of norm-shaping agency to denote those agents that, whilst they cannot be limited to a small set of agents, can be differentiated from ordinary individuals going about their daily lives. Not only was the negative case against this element of Young's structural injustice framework made, but an abridged positive case that outlined the benefits of theorising in this norm-shaping agency manner. These broadly include the ability to characterise the rules and norms that widespread structural injustice occurs in accordance to, which is beneficial to overcoming the rules and norms in question. In the final section, I tentatively unpacked the ways in which adopting my approach is useful for making sense of structural injustices, which Part II of this thesis expands further.

I first re-analysed Sandy's circumstance to show that being on the brink of homelessness cannot be made sense of simply by referring to the aggregated action that brought it about. Second, I considered how this omission matters when it comes to doing something about structural injustices; arguing that focussing on agential action leaves us in a position whereby we are too accepting of social structures, and thus the injustices they produce.

This chapter concludes the first part of this thesis. As outlined in the Introduction, the purpose of Part I was to, first, identify a lacuna in the literature, and, second, to provide this thesis with the theoretical backdrop and approaches to global injustices in order to present a meaningful response. Lastly, in the final section of this chapter, I began to introduce terms relating to neoliberalism (e.g. competition; totality). These were introduced here in an attempt to carve open a space for following chapters to

unpack these terms and their pertinence in more detail. As a result, Part II will respond to the shortcomings identified thus far and develop, as well as apply, my critical cosmopolitan alternative. The thesis now turns to Chapter IV, which begins the process of explaining the role neoliberalism plays in the proliferation of the kinds of structural injustices (e.g. sweatshop working conditions and housing shortages) that this thesis is interested in.

Part II: Introducing a critical cosmopolitanism

Chapter IV: The neoliberal-capitalist totality: the abstract-concrete dialectic of social structures

Part I of this thesis served two purposes. First, to reject an individualist cosmopolitanism that is unable to capture the pertinence of structural injustices, thus rendering it unable to meaningfully alter them. Second, it challenged a structural injustice framework that is too reliant upon aggregated individual conduct in relation to rules and norms. That is to say, it focussed on the mechanics of how aggregated action produces structural harms and not the ideational context that gives rise to these aggregated actions. In this vein, Part II attempts to respond to these problems and reflects upon the best theoretical concepts for developing a framework fit for responding to the shortcomings in cosmopolitan justice as outlined in Part I. In doing so, I settle on a distinction between the abstract and the concrete in order to be in a position to capture how rules and norms arise, come to be shaped (the abstract), and the social relations they derive from and in turn shape (the concrete).

To get there, I first rely on Hegel's distinction between the *abstract universal* and the *concrete universal*, before arguing that the latter enables this thesis to accommodate the differences in how individuals are situated in relation to social structures. That is because the concrete not only creates the space for understanding totality (or rather understanding totalising social systems) but also factors into the universal itself the different individual experiences of dominant social structures depending on where one is placed in relation to them. One key result of this is that it can overcome many of the limitations identified in Chapter II.

From this baseline, the thesis then turns attention to what I call Marx's abstract-concrete dialectic. This method, I argue, is useful for thinking about the ways in which abstractions – which can be thought of as rules and norms that derive from concrete social relations – come to shape and mould agential action that produces structural injustices. For this reason, whilst reliant upon Hegel's concrete universalism and its relationship to the concept of totality, it is actually Marx's abstract-concrete dialectic that most informs the critical cosmopolitanism argued for in this thesis. Namely, I make the case that, by analysing social abstractions, my analysis is able to situate structural processes within historical relations, as well as examine the role abstractions play in producing structural injustices. I argue, it clearly underpins key

prerequisites for thinking about how we seek to remedy oppressive social structures that will be outlined in Chapter VI.

This chapter is divided into the following sections. The first section turns its attention to the question: ‘what is neoliberalism?’ The wide use of this term means that there are multiple competing understandings that have penetrated everyday vernaculars. The ubiquity of the term means that we must clarify exactly what this thesis is referring to when referring to neoliberal abstractions. I argue that neoliberalism should be thought of as a rationality, but, unlike the Foucauldian grammar from which my analysis derives, more attention needs to be paid to the ways in which it impacts concrete social relations. In the second section, I present key passages from Hegel’s (2010) *Science of Logic*, where he outlines the distinction between the *abstract universal* and the *concrete universal*, as well as the concept of *totality*. I do so not only to present the etymology of the abstract-concrete dialectic, but also to ground how the concrete universal is useful for moving beyond the individualist ontology cosmopolitanism is indebted to. I argue that it does so because the concrete universal contains within it different components that make up a totality; my account of structural injustice has the capacity to accommodate the different experiences of negotiating and navigating global social structures depending on where one is placed in relation to all others. This means that my account is able to capture the totalising nature of global social structures whilst understanding the difference in experiences of these structures based on different anthropological, geographical, and historical individual and collective viewpoints.

In the third section, I turn to what I refer to as Marx’s (1973 & 2013) abstract-concrete dialectic, which moves beyond Hegel’s universalism insofar as Marx locates it in historical processes. Namely, how capitalist abstractions derive from concrete social relations, before gaining hegemony, and, in doing so, reproducing the concrete social relations across time and space. Hence, this is why I refer to Marx’s method as the abstract-concrete dialectic: the abstract derives from the concrete, gains legitimacy, and shapes the concrete, which, in turn, shapes the abstract in a process of perpetual dialectic oscillation. Finally, in the fourth section, I attempt to neoliberalise the abstract-concrete by placing the neoliberal rationality on the abstract side of the dialectic, and the materialist world this rationality forges on the

other side. In doing so, I update Marx's analysis by developing a framework for understanding how the neoliberal-capitalist totality alters across time and space and the structural injustices it reproduces. However, my analysis differs from Marx in that I argue that neoliberal abstractions do not derive from concrete social relations as such, but the successful narration/contestation of concrete social relations, which ultimately allows abstractions to become hegemonic and proceed to shape concrete social relations thereafter.

What is neoliberalism?

In this section, I attempt to provide clarity on what I mean when I refer to neoliberalism. In the previous chapter, I alluded to neoliberal rules and norms that have shaped the global structural landscape. Given the importance I placed on determining what these rules and norms are, the first section of this chapter provides clarity on what I mean by the term, before applying it to my global social structure framework in subsequent sections. It should be said that the term neoliberalism is quite often used through the lens of the liability model: instead of thinking of neoliberalism as denoting a certain set of social relations, the onset of certain observable structural transformations is traced back to "neoliberalism" as a phenomenon and/or entity; a *thing* in itself. For example, when someone bemoans that they are now expected to pay for their dental care, medical prescriptions, and/or university tuition fees, they will often refer to "neoliberalism" as the cause of these unjust changes. Not only are these references vague, they often serve the purpose of reifying neoliberalism inasmuch as they cast "it" as a phenomenon outside of human social relations. This means neoliberalism is often naturalised and narrated as "just the way it is these days". This section will reflect upon how neoliberalism's shaping of global social structures is a concept used to describe a certain set of social relations and not some natural consequence of late capitalism.

There have been recent attempts to note that neoliberalism is a term so overused that it fails to be a useful analytical tool (Venugopal, 2015; Gans-Morse, 2009; Watkins, 2010). To evidence this, commentators note how a simple search on Google Scholar for the term neoliberalism returns thousands

of results that apply to a wide range of phenomena (Venugopal, 2015; Gans-Morse, 2009). To the frustration of these commentators, reference to neoliberalism often occurs without any prior attempt to define what is meant by it other than using it as a pejorative term (Venugopal, 2015; Gans-Morse, 2009) – a term that is, as mentioned, so often used to explain away many of today’s injustices. The concern is that everything becomes neoliberalism and neoliberalism becomes everything.

Despite this worry, there is a danger that commentators become fixated on exactly what neoliberalism is to the extent that they adopt a universal definition that is said to apply across all time and space. On one side of the spectrum, if neoliberalism refers, say, to the policies observed in the US and UK since the elections of Reagan and Thatcher respectively, it would follow, then, that any deviation from this understanding of neoliberalism could sit outside its definitional boundaries. On the other side, if neoliberalism is not outlined at all but used as a shorthand that assumes prior knowledge from the reader, then it is possible that it becomes everything and everything becomes it.

To try and wade in on the complexity of this definitional task, I refer to the two dominant understandings found in the critical literature, which can be broadly construed as those theories that comprise “the left” within political thought. The first of these understandings is David Harvey’s (2005) neo-Marxist analysis of neoliberalism, which will be contrasted with Michel Foucault’s (2008) reading. The purpose of contrasting the etymology of these two main strands is to help examine what both approaches have to offer whilst avoiding the temptation to trace neoliberalism back to a particular set of agents and/or a particular set of policies. This is important because, in attempting to shift our focus away from the widespread agential action that brings about structural injustices towards the rules and norms framing them, I do not wish to collapse back into a language of liability. Moreover, if, as is often the case, one adopts one of these understandings at the expense of the other, they tend to talk past each other and miss the different sites in which neoliberalism takes hold and which it continues to affect.

Therefore, my aim here is not to attempt to provide a universal working definition of neoliberalism; whatever neoliberalism is, and whatever it is not, it is used to describe social relations that have evolved

across time and space. Furthermore, it is tempting to focus on where neoliberalism derives from, especially if one accepts that neoliberalism is an economic paradigm that can be pointed to by reference to the policies and actions that emerge after recent reforms to the state (Watkins, 2010: 7 & Harvey, 2005). In so doing, it is easy for analysis to fall into the language of liability: set of policies x marks the neoliberal turn, these policies created outcome y; therefore, neoliberalism is to blame for these outcomes. This is important for thinking about structural injustices, namely, because, when I speak of neoliberal rules and norms, I do not mean to suggest that they are responsible for the injustice in question. Indeed, many structural injustices predate the turn to neoliberalism. What I do mean to say, however, is that neoliberal rules and norms are increasingly ubiquitous, and, as such, neoliberalism frames and shapes, as well as engenders, a whole range of structural injustices, including those Young is interested in. Thus, it is important to consider how these rules and norms come to be and how they frame oppressive social structures.

A first reading is consistent with an “economic” understanding of neoliberalism, which is grounded by neo-Marxist scholar David Harvey (2005). For him, neoliberalism is a hyper-capitalist ideology actioned by a ruling class who were increasingly alarmed about the diminishing rate of profits, so much so, ‘the upper class had to move decisively if they were to protect themselves from political and economic annihilation’ (Harvey, 2005: 15). Harvey (2005: 19) argues that what has dominated the neoliberal turn is ‘a political project’ that has strived ‘to re-establish the conditions for capital accumulation and restore the power of economic elites’ rather than seeing it as ‘a utopian project to realize a theoretical design to the reorganization of international capitalism’. Harvey is a Marxist, insofar as he is interested in how neoliberalism engenders a range of contradictions; he is a *neo*-Marxist insofar as he refers to how a neoliberal common-sense grafts onto these contradictions. Hence, he notes how ‘the theoretical utopianism of neoliberal argument has... primarily worked as a system of justification and legitimation for whatever needed to be done’ to achieve the goal of re-establishing a scheme of unfettered capital accumulation (Harvey, 2005: 19). In so doing, there is an incongruous tension between what the neoliberal promise is and what it actually delivers. That is why, ‘when

neoliberal principles clash with the need to restore or sustain elite power, then the principles are either abandoned or become so twisted as to be unrecognisable' (Harvey, 2005: 19).

On Harvey's (2005) reading, the neoliberal state's role is a coercive mechanism that is used to ensure the new dawn of capital dispossession is undertaken and sustained. When talking about the founding figures of neoliberalism, Harvey (2005: 5) asserts that they 'were threatened not only by fascism, dictatorships, and communism, but by all forms of state intervention that substituted collective judgements for those of individuals free to choose'. For Harvey, then, neoliberals are sceptical of state intervention that is collectivist, but not necessarily state intervention that is cast as benefitting individual choice. This is true to the extent that, when the possibility that the neoliberal project will derail, 'faced with social movements that seek collective interventions... the neoliberal state is itself forced to intervene, sometimes repressively, thus denying the very freedoms it is supposed to uphold' (Harvey, 2005: 69). Thus, we can see the contradiction between the neoliberal promise and the neoliberal reality.

The use of the word 'forced' here tells us that Harvey (2005: 69) thinks of the neoliberal state as one that intervenes only when it has to; its ideological baseline is thereby one of non-intervention. A state that feels forced to intervene speaks to neoliberalism as a set of principles where aberrations occur only when absolutely necessary. Even if there are numerous examples of state intervention by neoliberal institutions, the point remains, on this reading, that interventions take the form of meeting the goal of moving towards more extensive exercises of capital accumulation. When this is the case, one can point to the contradiction of neoliberalism, which professes to be minimal in state intervention, but, upon closer inspection, actually is interventionist when, and only when, it has to maintain fruitful market conditions. Likewise, the neoliberal state must intervene to ensure that the conditions are set for markets to flourish: 'if there are to be interventions these should work through market mechanisms (via tax impositions or incentives, trading rights of pollutants, and the like)' (Harvey, 2005: 67-8). On this reading, the role of the state in neoliberal theory, projects a utopian-libertarian vision that in practice is very interventionist.

Let us now turn to the Foucauldian alternative that sees neoliberalism less as a set of economic processes and more as a governing rationality. For Foucault (2008: 30), what predated neoliberalism was a liberal rationality that asserts that the economy ‘must be left to function with the least possible intervention precisely so that it can both formulate its truth and propose it to governmental practice as rule and norm’. In contrast, neoliberalism, for Foucault (2008: 94-5), marks the inversion of this relationship between state and economy: ‘it is an internal reorganization that, once again, does not ask the state what freedom it will leave to the economy, but asks the economy how its freedom can have a state-creating function and role’. Framing the role of the neoliberal state as situated outside of the market (as Harvey does), makes less sense on this reading, when the state is itself organised in accordance to the rationality of political economy. Harvey notes that the neoliberal state, and presumably any capitalist variant, creates the conditions for capitalist accumulation to flourish. In so doing, Harvey accepts the previous liberal narrative that the economy is something separable to the market and the state can intervene (or not) within its spheres.

On the Foucauldian reading, the neoliberal state is able to differentiate itself from a state that interferes in the economy – whether it be in the form of the Soviet Union to the East or the Keynesian market corrections in the West – by eclipsing the perceived distance between the state and the market. This allowed, Foucault (2008: 116) argues, for neoliberal proponents to suggest that all seemingly exogenous state interventions in the economy are oppressive, resulting in ‘sweeping up events in the Soviet Union and the USA, concentration camps and social security records, into the same critique’. The neoliberal response was to construct a state that is purified by market principles. It is less a case of considering what role, if any, the state has in intervening in the market, and more a case of considering the eclipsing of the inter-relation between the state and market, so much so, it is just as possible to reflect upon the intervention of the market in the state.

Considering what role the state has to intervene in the market sees the state as prior and/or dominant when it comes to its sovereignty to intervene in markets. Whilst this is not wrong per se, Foucault’s analysis asks us to think more about the way in which the state requires the market in order to reproduce

itself. Therefore, if one accepts neoliberalism to be an inversion of a liberal rationality that predated it, constructing a state that overlaps with market principles is no longer in contradiction to a state that continues to “intervene” in the economy. This is a prerequisite for being able to say that it is not just the case that the state *is* part of the composition of the economy and the economy is part of the composition of state, but that, as far as neoliberalism is concerned, normatively speaking, both align along market rationalities.

Having conceptualised this state-market dynamic, Foucault (2008: 118) notes how neoliberalism marks the transition from exchange to competition as the driving principle of a market society. A neoliberal state that derives its purpose from the political economy, then, commits itself to creating the conditions for competition to flourish (Foucault, 2008: 120). In contrast, under a laissez-faire model that sees competition as organising the market, thinking of the market as defined either by exchange or competition is to think of the market ‘as a sort of given nature, something produced spontaneously which the state must respect precisely inasmuch as it is a natural datum’ (Foucault, 2008: 120). Thus, the neoliberal rationality of competition is something that ‘can both formulate its truth and propose it to governmental practice as rule and norm’ (Foucault, 2008: 30). In this inversion, ‘competition is not the result of a natural interplay of appetites, instincts, behaviour, and so on’, but rather, ‘competition as an essential economic logic will only appear and produce its effects under certain conditions which have to be carefully and artificially constructed’ (Foucault, 2008: 120). The shift in how competition is viewed sees the neoliberal state constructing competition, and, in doing so, eclipsing the perceived space between the state as a set of coercive tools, on the one hand, and an economy, on the other hand, that is no longer thought of as a separate entity that the state can intervene in exogenously.³⁵

³⁵ It is important to note that it is not about whether “the economy” really is a natural entity or something that has to be produced; what is important for Foucault (2008: 121) is the shift itself and what its historical implications are. I follow the same logic in order to analyse the implications of those who see the economy as something the state should or should not intervene in.

Crucially, for Foucault (2008: 226) this neoliberal rationality forms a subject who is governed by a *homo oeconomicus*: ‘entrepreneur of himself, being for himself his own capital, being for himself his own producer, being himself the source of earnings’ (Foucault, 2008: 226). Instead of the hierarchical relationship between the producer who owns the means of production and purchases the labour power of workers, employees are increasingly cast as atomised income streams that are in direct competition with each other to secure income (Foucault, 2008: 224-6). This inter-competition plays out in a wider set of spaces that have traditionally sat outside “the workplace”. One can see this in a “gig economy” that consists of taxi drivers, food and parcel delivery drivers, and Amazon factory workers who are not defined as employees but self-employed workers who compete for funding streams. They are said to be autonomous workers who benefit from the “flexibility” bestowed by technological advancements, thus obscuring from view the oppressive relationship between the owners of the means of production and employees.

In addition to traditionally economic relations, the neoliberal rationality permeates facets of social life from which market principles were traditionally inoculated. This creeping rationality produces a *homo oeconomicus* that seeks to produce an ‘economic analysis of elements which had previously totally escaped it’ (Foucault, 2008: 226). As Wendy Brown (2015: 21) notes, ‘neoliberalism is a distinctive mode of reason, of the production of subjects, a “conduct of conduct”, and a scheme of valuation...’, as well as a more generalized practice of “economizing” spheres and activities heretofore governed by other tables of value’. In accordance to such a rationality, the individual derives their meaning and worth in relation to their human capital and their ability to set themselves apart from other *homo oeconomicus* agents (Foucault, 2008: 229). For example, personal investment in one’s education as a prerequisite to self-betterment evaluated in terms of one’s ability to thrive in the job market and secure the best possible income stream (Foucault, 2008: 229), rather than, say, the intrinsic value of education and the human flourishing it produces in and of itself. Therefore, neoliberalism on the Foucauldian

reading is a more encompassing rationality that increasingly frames and shapes the social world in a distinctively market register.³⁶

If we take a step back from these distinctions and return to the failure of commentators to define neoliberalism considered at the outset of this chapter, we notice how one of the central claims of this literature is that it has evolved so much from its inception that it has even come to occupy contradictory, and thus meaningless, positions (Boas and Gans-Morse, 2009; Venugopal, 2015). The salient example of this evolution draws on the comparison between neoliberalism *a la* its ordo-liberal origins – that actually sought a “social market economy”, cast as a compromise between laissez-faire economics and Keynesian intervention – and neoliberalism *a la* the Chicago School in America, committed to a market fundamentalism, that was associated with Pinochet, which saw the birth of neoliberalism as a pejorative term (Boas and Gans-Morse, 2009 & Venugopal, 2015).

Consider how one commentator notes that the ‘Freiburg Ordoliberalism school, the Mont Pelerin Society, the work of Fredrich Hayek and the counter-Keynesian economics of the Chicago School’ somehow becomes the antithesis of ‘the early 1980s neoliberalism’ which ‘came to describe the wave of market deregulation, privatisation and welfare-state withdrawal that swept the first, second and third worlds’ (Venugopal, 2015: 168). If one understands neoliberalism as a rationality, however, the different historical iterations of neoliberalism are representative of different interpretations and actualisations of this broader rationality. The differences that are observed between different neoliberal contexts are less aberrations and more the diverse actualisations of a broader rationality that regulates

³⁶ It should be said that *homo oeconomicus* is different from “economic man” in the sense of a labourer who has no choice but to sell their labour to capitalists in order to subsist. Instead, it refers to the phenomenon of someone seeing themselves as a self-maximising economic agent, and importantly, this increasingly takes place outside of physical spaces that were traditionally thought of as the workplace in which one’s labour was sold. This can be seen by the commitment people often have to updating their LinkedIn profile to ensure that every possible tool for evaluating their human capital is available for all to see. It extends to arenas of life that do not necessarily relate to work, such as on social media, where users strive to compete with each other for the most likes (Brown, 2015: 21).

the state and individual conduct in accordance to a market ethos. If so, what, then, are the implications of theorising in terms of a neoliberal rationality when compared to more of a materialist reading?

If we cast neoliberalism as a specific set of historical principles, then we will be left questioning the usefulness of using the term. That is because this means that we are tasked with choosing which historical moment we think neoliberalism constitutes. Is it the ordo-liberal moment, the Chicago school, the Pinochet regime, Thatcherism-Reaganomics, or the post-2008 financial crash? If we are elected to choose, then it is tempting to pick a certain era that we feel is most reflective of neoliberalism at the expense of others. What becomes equally tempting is to suggest that neoliberalism, as a concept, is futile because all one needs to do is to evidence the distinct difference between its emergence and its divergent applications thereafter. The thinking is: what good is a term that is said to capture both the UK Labour Party's economic policies from 1997-2010 and the reforms of Pinochet's violent restructuring of Chile's social institutions? The answer is that thinking of neoliberalism as bearing a specific definition can be overcome by seeing it as a broader rationality that reflects both the central inversion of recasting the state as constituted along the lines of social market principles and the subjects these processes construct as a result. Indeed, the reconstruction of the state in order to meet this rationality took very different forms across time and space. Therefore, it is not to say that these differences are not important, but that an over-reliance on them results in thinking of neoliberalism as a distinct set of policies or actions rather than an ontological frame through which human agency, and the material conditions it produces, legitimises the frame itself.

By implication, I am particularly interested in how a difference in views about what neoliberalism is alters how we might challenge and resist it. If it is a set of economic policies that arose after, say, the election of Margaret Thatcher, then to overcome neoliberalism is simply to overturn these policies in favour of, say, seemingly more Keynesian ones. However, because on this reading neoliberalism is understood in resoundingly material economic terms, what constitutes an alternative to neoliberalism is also expressed in economic terms. In other words, the Keynesian era that preceded the neoliberal reforms is often cast as an alternative to the economic paradigm, thus transforming economic policy is

both necessary and sufficient in cementing a neoliberal alternative. Because neoliberalism is cast as an economic phenomenon that governs a market place separate to an, albeit accommodating, state, the alternative to neoliberalism can reasonably be thought of as willing for the state to interfere to correct market failures. What is overlooked when we think about neoliberalism as a rationality is how this market rationality can continue to apply when there is a Keynesian commitment to providing an extensive welfare state and public services. Importantly, which reading of neoliberalism one adopts will alter the legitimate set of options available when it comes to resisting and transcending it.

With this in mind, I aim to demonstrate that we can shift our focus to thinking about neoliberalism in terms of a rationality without necessarily losing sight of the material conditions in which adherence to this rationality produces. That is to say, we can think of neoliberalism as a governing rationality in accordance with the Foucauldian reading, whilst at the same time not losing sight of the material conditions that adherence to this rationality reproduces. The market rationalities of self-entrepreneurialism, competition, and benchmarking, for example, have played a role in shaping the types of paradigmatic changes that a more material understanding would point to as an example of neoliberalism (examined in more detail in Section IV). That said, there has often been a propensity for proponents from each camp to speak past each other. Wendy Larner (2000: 14) notes how the literature on governmentality has often ‘not paid a great deal of attention to the politics surrounding specific programmes and policies’. We can see this when Wendy Brown (2015: 201) asserts that ‘the primary focus of her account’ has been on ‘the grammar and terms of this [neoliberal] rationality and on the mechanisms of its dissemination interpolative power’. Focussing on this rationality means that there was less of a focus on those things Brown (2015: 201) recognises as creating the material conditions for a neoliberal rationality to function: ‘concrete policies that dismantle social infrastructure, privatise public goods, deregulate commerce, [and] destroy social solidarities’.

In what follows, I fuse the materialist and Foucauldian readings of neoliberalism and apply them to a theoretical framework that attempts to place equal weight on both the rules and norms (i.e. the abstract) and the widespread agential action they shape (i.e. the concrete) by positioning them on either side of

what I call the abstract-concrete dialectic. This is in order to overcome the limitation identified in the previous chapter that noted that seeing structural injustices as the result of widespread agential action neglects to examine the broader ideational context in which this action plays out. Having clarified what this thesis means by neoliberalism, we are now in a better position to explicate an alternative structural injustice framework that is, unlike in Young's (2011) account, sensitive to neoliberal rules and norms *as well as* the widespread agential action they inform. I begin the explication of this alternative framework by introducing Hegel's concept of totality.

Hegel's abstract and concrete universalism

In this and the following two sections, I rely on the work of Hegel and Marx to provide a theoretical framework for thinking about how a neoliberal rationality shapes the material conditions that produce structural injustices. In this section, I will discuss the usefulness of Hegel's distinction between *abstract universalism* and *concrete universalism* for addressing the limitations identified in Chapter II. There, I stressed the importance of accounting for those forms of oppression, exploitation, and domination that are not separable from, but not reducible to, distributive frameworks. I will also outline how the concrete universal is useful for thinking about the different components that make up the whole, by introducing Hegel's concept of *totality*. I will argue that Hegel's concrete universalism is able to capture the universality of a broader (neoliberal-capitalist) totality that produces a range of structural injustices, whilst at the same time allowing for reflection on the divergent experiences of these social structures across time and space. This analysis is applicable both to more "economic" forms of oppression and to the economisation of more facets of social life that were traditionally thought of as incongruous to a market register. This remains true despite the fact that my analysis will, for the most part, remain committed to structural injustices that take place in what we might call "economic" sites of justice.

I begin by introducing Hegel's dialectical distinction between *abstract universality* and *concrete universality*. To unpack these concepts, I introduce part of Hegel's metaphysical system, but, in order to make it more applicable, I present examples that are more aligned with the themes of structural

injustice. In the most basic terms, the abstract universal refers to a singular feature of the concept in question, and thus overlooks all those other particular features of this concept; the abstract universal can be thought of as a partial definition. In Hegel's words (2010: 519; italics original), the abstract universal is:

‘not to be regarded as the mere discarding of a sensuous material which does not suffer in the process any impairment of reality; it is rather the sublation and reduction of that material as mere *appearance* to the *essential*, which is manifested only *in the concept*.’

In focussing here only on the senses, one does not merely disregard *all* sensuous material, but reduces the thing in question down to its singular essential component; a partial definition. That is to say, it is not a matter of simply overlooking other sensuous material, but, rather, extrapolating one particular part of the material and making it the universal. For example, take Hegel's (2010: 559) analogy of a rose: ‘the proposition “the rose is fragrant”, the predicate expresses only one of the many properties of the rose; it isolates it’. Referring back to the passage above, reducing the rose down to its fragrance is not a ‘discarding of a sensuous material’ (the rose is, in fact, fragrant) but it is a ‘reduction of that material as mere appearance to the essential’ (Hegel, 2010: 519). That is because there are many other sensuous qualities that constitute the rose. In other words, despite having many qualities (e.g. height, redness, greenness, a certain shape), the abstract universal of the rose comes to be represented by a singular quality: the rose-as-fragrant. Thus, the universal is abstracted from the manifold qualities that comprise the concept in question and is reduced to the essential, which, upon closer inspection, is only a part of what makes the whole. It is not untrue that the rose does possess fragrance, it is just that it also has many other relevant qualities that are not represented by the abstract universal.

Conversely, contained within the concrete universal are all those manifold singular entities that make up the universal itself (Hegel, 2010: 559). In Hegel's (2010: 559; italics original) words,

‘The subject, the *immediate singular* at first, is in the judgment referred to its *other*, namely the universal; it is thereby posited as the concrete – according to the category of being, as something of *many qualities*; or as the concrete of reflection, a *thing of manifold properties*, an *actual of manifold possibilities*, a *substance* of precisely such *accidents*.’

The concrete universal is distinguishable from the abstract because it contains within it all those different elements that make up the universal itself, rather than simply abstracting one singular quality from these elements. If one was to circle all those manifold qualities that comprise the concrete, the circle itself would denote the universal; containing many properties that are evidently different to all other things contained within that circle, but each nevertheless constitute the universal. On a concrete reading, what constitutes the rose is its fragrance, height, redness, greenness, shape, and all the other components relevant to what constitutes rose-ness. Despite colour differing qualitatively from, say, the shape of the rose, these qualities are related to each other insofar as they comprise the different qualities of a rose as a concrete universal. Qualitatively, my arm differs from my leg as much as my heart differs from my finger nails but they each make up the concrete universal which is my body. Importantly, they each provide a particular function that enables the body to function properly on the whole. To help unpack this concept further, I introduce Hegel’s (2010: 534) concept of *totality*. Hegel (2010: 534; italics original) states,

‘The particular has one and the same universality as the *other* particulars to which it is related. The diversity of these particulars, because of their identity with the universal, is *as such* at the same time universal; it is *totality*.’

The different manifold features that constitute the concrete, the circle which we draw round all those relevant features, is referred to as a totality.

Now that I have outlined the concepts of abstract universal, concrete universal, and totality, the remainder of this section will have two aims. First, to step out of the shadows of Hegel’s (2010)

metaphysical system to consider the potential these concepts have when applied to historical background conditions. Second, to transform my analysis of these concepts from the sensuous examples used (e.g. the rose) and consider their application to themes of cosmopolitanism and structural injustice. In applying the concrete and abstract universal to the themes of this thesis, we can first consider the cosmopolitan principle that “individuals” are the primary unit of moral concern. The individualism underpinning this principle can, therefore, be thought of as an abstraction, given one can observe that the social world comprises individuals, but, in doing so, only a partial definition of this social world is attained as atomised individuals are rendered an essential philosophical category regardless of the broader structural context in which they are situated and navigate.

What is missing is the way in which individuals are situated within global social structures thought of in terms of a totalising system comprising manifold interdependent components. Like in Chapter II, my argument in opposition of this definition is that it abstracts away from the ways in which individuals are differently situated within global social structures. Hegel’s abstract and concrete universal introduces the totalising approach to justice that will feature throughout the remainder of this thesis. Before turning to Marx to provide more clarity as to how this dialectical system oscillates between the abstract and the concrete, I spend the rest of this section considering how the concrete universal is able to move away from the abstract universalism undergirding cosmopolitan thought.

The concrete universal contains within it different components that each make up the universal itself. When applied to social structures, we can think about how there are a range of different individuals that make up the totality itself, that is, the manifold actors whose aggregated actions produce structural injustices. What this means is that we are able to reflect upon the distinct experiences of each of the actors positioned within a social structure, and therefore account for the divergent experiences of social structures without reference to abstracted individuals. In simple terms, we can think about the ways in which both sweatshop workers and the shareholders of multinational corporations constitute the totality, but have drastically different experiences of their respective places within global social structures. In

doing so, one provides more context to global injustices and how they are reproduced when compared to the cosmopolitan analysis examined in Chapter I.

Carol Gould (1974) provides a useful application of Hegel's distinction when she argues that political theory has, traditionally, relied upon the abstract universal: seeing individuals an essentialised philosophical subject. This means that abstracted from "individuals" are the different parts that make up a certain totalising system and are differently situated in relation to each other. From this standpoint, Gould (1974) challenges this abstract universal reliance, arguing that the category of women is not an accidental feature of being an individual, but a relevant historical experience that, despite differing across time and space, can nevertheless be expressed as constituting the universal itself, when thought of in concrete terms. This is useful for considering how different groups experience a totality of social relations and the structural injustices they produce. If we consider a capitalist totality as a system of certain historical social relations, it allows us to reflect upon how agents are situated in relation to each other in ways that are asymmetric, and contain forms of oppression beyond those who sell their labour and those who own the means of production to purchase it.

Consider the Combahee River Collective statement which is often thought of as the birth of a radical left-wing identity politics. It noted how, as a group of Black-lesbian-socialists, their particular struggles were overlooked by a white, liberal feminism and a white-heteronormative socialism (Fraizer, et al., 2017). The expression of the Collective's experience of social structures positioned them as 'actively committed to struggling against racial, sexual, heterosexual, and class oppression' but did so from their first-person/group experience: to 'see as our particular task the development of integrated analysis and practice based upon the fact that the major systems of oppression are interlocking' (Frazier, et al., 2017: 15). The group was, therefore, committed to a radical politics that came 'directly out of our own identity, as opposed to working to end somebody else's oppression' but did so by noting 'that the liberation of all oppressed peoples necessitates the destruction of the political-economic systems of capitalism and imperialism as well as patriarchy' (Frazier et al., 2017: 19). Hence, on a concrete universal reading, we can only understand the individual if we also understand the structural, and we can only understand the

inverse if we make sense of individuals' specific historical position within social structures. Importantly, these experiences come to constitute the universal itself, they *are* part of what constitute capitalist social relations whose experience cannot be reduced to the philosophical category of individualism.

Shifting the focus away from the abstract universalism of dominant voices in the cosmopolitan literature provides space for a more critical analysis of the different components that constitute the totality of global social structures. The concern for the individual remains but only inasmuch as their relational positioning within a global social structure is maintained.³⁷ This redresses the limitation identified in Chapter II that an individualist ontology oversimplifies one's positioning within social structures. The circle that one draws around the different elements that constitute a totality contains within it different agential experiences of navigating social structures that differ depending on where one is placed within these social relations. In Gould's (1974: 26) words, the concrete universal 'is concerned also with human and social differences, and includes them not simply as accidents, but as aspects which constitute the universal or the essence itself'. Furthermore, the concrete universal pertains to the present historical epoch and how situated individuals experience this set of social relations, as opposed to simply considering them in the abstract-ideal form consisting of reflecting on how individuals fare in a temporal vacuum (Gould, 1974: 27-8). When reflecting upon present social relations, the concrete universal provides the scope for thinking about the pertinence of present background conditions and their role in shaping normative theory, rather than the inverse. This means we can zoom in to specific historical conditions and how different groups experience them whilst at the same time remaining requisitely universal, so as to retain an essence of the grand theorising necessary for any global theory of justice.

³⁷ As noted in the previous chapters, the concern is about how cosmopolitans claim that individuals ought to be raised to the standards of an abstract-ideal benchmark, which, upon closer inspection, ushers in certain ideological presumptions that derive from a specific historical conditions. Alternatively, the concrete universal helps to provide the space that was called for in Chapter II for thinking about how individuals are situated within a global social structure that they help to produce.

In what follows, I refer to this concrete universal as a *neoliberal-capitalist totality*³⁸ that individuals have divergent situational experiences of, but are likewise situated in relation to nevertheless. What this means is that these experiences, although divergent, can still be thought of as experiences of a singular totality all the same, and therefore attempts to transcend it (analysed in Chapter VI) can take the form of collectives resisting their own struggles, and, in doing so, helping to displace the neoliberal-capitalist totality and the divergent struggles it produces for others likewise situated in relation to it. Furthermore, what we can take from Hegel is the concept of totality, which attempts to understand the importance of each manifold component in constituting the whole. In this case, we can think about how a neoliberal-capitalist totality is made up of many different agential actions including and beyond formal institutional settings to further sites of justice that are equally as pertinent (e.g. the household; the workplace; the market; civil society; etc.). What remains missing from my analysis, however, is consideration of how this neoliberal-capitalist totality is reproduced across time and space. In other words, I am yet to factor into my critical cosmopolitan framework the relationship between a neoliberal rationality (i.e. the abstract rules and norms) and how this comes to shape and reproduce material conditions (i.e. the concrete). I will now turn to Marx's application of the abstract and concrete to fuse my critical cosmopolitan framework.

³⁸ The term neoliberal-capitalist totality, and not neoliberal totality, is used throughout this thesis in order to make it clear that, because this thesis' theoretical framework is indebted to Critical Theory, it considers the explication of a critical cosmopolitan framework as a prerequisite for thinking about how to bring about an emancipatory politics that transforms the current order of things. I wish to make clear that I develop my theoretical framework of neoliberalism not because, as we will see, analysis of capitalist social relations is no longer pertinent. Nor should my analysis, insofar as it agitates against neoliberalism, as is often the case, be seen as endorsing a return to Keynesianism – another brand of capitalism. I refer to a neoliberal-capitalist totality on the grounds that it is read as a capitalist totality reproduced by a neoliberal rationality, which in turn alters the capitalist totality itself. This is important because neoliberalism, I argue, shapes the structural injustices this thesis is interested in, and therefore it is this totalising system that collectives will be required to contend with, whether striving for a Keynesian economic policy or the wholesale transformation of capitalist social relations. If a neoliberal-capitalist totality is what social movements must contend with, then my analysis begins by attempting to characterise how it reproduces itself across time and space as a prerequisite to doing something about it.

Marx's abstract-concrete dialectical method

In *Grundrisse*, Marx (1973) grounds the methodological system that he would later apply in *Capital* (*Vol. I*) (Marx, 2013). In this section, I rely on Marx's groundwork in *Grundrisse* and use *Capital* to provide examples of how Marx's methodological system can be applied, before explicating my own framework inspired by his method. Marx attempts to extrapolate outwards from Hegel's use of the abstract and concrete dialectic from the metaphysical level and situates them within their material historical relations. In doing so, the historical capitalist relationship, a totality that is reproduced by an abstract-concrete dialectic, is brought to the fore of Marx's methodology, unlike in Hegel's metaphysical system.³⁹ To demonstrate how Marx successfully furthers Hegel's groundwork beyond the metaphysical, I will rely on Marx's examples which, when contrasted with Hegel, outline how his method goes further in useful ways, in particular, to help develop the global structural framework I am explicating in this chapter. For Marx (1973), broadly speaking, the concrete refers to the totality that contains within it different components that when aggregated can be referred to as capitalist social relations. To understand the contradictions that a capitalist system produces, is to understand that each different cog coalesces with all the others in producing certain social relations, which for our purposes, reproduce a range of global injustices.

For Marx (1973: 87), classical political economists abstract away from the manifold components constituting a capitalist totality, particularly when they 'present production... as distinct from distribution etc. as encased in eternal laws independent of history'. In other words, classical economists abstract away from historical relations and instead cast production as a natural (i.e. the abstract universal), and thus unchangeable, starting point of economic enquiry. We have already seen that such

³⁹ This is not to say that Hegel (2001: 350) does not apply the abstract and concrete to historical relations elsewhere in his work. When he distinguishes between abstract freedom and concrete freedom, for example, he considers how the former pertains to the ideals and principles of freedom, whereas the latter concerns realised forms of freedom at a given point in history (Hegel, 2001: 350). What I mean to say is that Marx (1973, 2013) places the abstract and concrete universal analysed above in their historical relations and thus offers a materialist conception of the abstract and concrete dialectic in Hegel's (2010, 1977) *Science of Logic*, and, to a lesser extent, *Phenomenology of Spirit*.

an approach, at least where theories of justice are concerned, means that theorists accept capitalist modes of production and begin by considering the sound distribution of the social goods capitalist society produces. Moreover, what this demonstrates, for Marx (1973: 97), is that to begin with production is ahistorical, since ‘production must begin with a certain distribution of instruments of production, it follows that distribution at least in this sense precedes and forms the presupposition of production’. We can see how this overlooks many other parts of what historically produced a capitalist totality and enabled it to fuse, not least what Marx (2013: Chapter XXVII) calls *primitive accumulation*: the historical processes that violently transformed the ownership of land and acted as a prerequisite for capitalist modes of production.⁴⁰ For example, England prior to the industrial revolution saw the transformation of land titles into the hands of a small group who then had the means to pave the way for the capitalist production that followed (Marx, 2013: Chapter XXVII).

To cast production as a fixed starting point obscures how capitalist production came to be as well as the other moments that are dependent on production now that the capitalist totality is fused (Marx, 1973: 99). We can say, then, that production is the result of a historical process, but ones that appears complex and diverse to the extent that it gives the (specious) appearance of a natural entity. It is not that production actually is the essentialised starting point of political economy, but, rather, that it is abstracted from a capitalist totality that has many different components that are ignored when production is placed on a pedestal. The different moments of a capitalist totality – production, distribution, exchange and consumption – are therefore not identical, but, rather, form the totality: ‘distinctions within a unity’ (Marx, 1973: 99). To abstract in this way is akin to focussing on the human heart without locating it within the totality of the wider human body; to conceptualise the body one must understand all the different components that make it possible to speak of a body at all.

⁴⁰ Marx (2013: Chapter XXVII) uses England as an example of a particular form of primitive accumulation, but the example remains relevant to other pertinent historical moments. In the final chapter of *Capital (Vol. 1)*, Marx (2013: 535) notes how the process of capital accumulation is accomplished in Western Europe at the time of writing. Hence, I reflect below upon the ways in which there are certain historical moments that were key in helping the neoliberal-capitalist totality to fuse.

In terms of situating the individual within social structures, Marx (1973: 104-6) considers how social abstractions come to shape the agency of widespread agential action. Marx (1973: 105) notes how classical economists erroneously cast social abstractions as universal truths; as natural phenomena that apply across time and space to all societies throughout history. It has been noted that what is then ushered in is an attempt to naturalise the set of historical relations that renders alternative analyses as outside of what is considered possible when present conditions are taken into account. That is not to say, however, that abstractions do not possess a certain practical truth as a result of this process of naturalisation. They may obtain ‘practical truth as an abstraction only as a category of the most modern society’ (Marx, 1973: 105), but that is not to say that they do not possess a very real practical truth in said society.

It is important to note, then, that, whilst social abstractions are not natural but represent a certain set of historical relations, that is not to say that they do not reproduce very real material consequences. Hence, there is a practical truth to a society that organises itself in accordance to certain social abstractions: ‘a product of historic relations’ which ‘possess their full validity only for and within these relations’ (Marx, 1973: 105). It would be a mistake, therefore, to suggest that, because production is abstracted and essentialised, thinking of it as the natural starting point of political economy does not have real implications when many actors across time and space consider it to be natural. In this sense, it becomes *what it is* not because it is natural but because many people *act as if it is*.

With this in mind, we can begin to consider the implications for our understanding of structural injustices and how individuals relate to a broader capitalist totality. In describing the way in which individuals appear to be placed against the backdrop of conditions that appear to be natural and unchangeable, Marx (1973: 157) notes how:

‘The social character of activity, as well as the social form of the product, and the share of individuals in production here appear as something alien and objective, confronting individuals, not as their relation to one another, but as their subordination to relations

which subsist independently of them and which arise out of collisions between mutually indifferent individuals. The general exchange of activities and productions, which has become a vital condition for each individual – their mutual interconnection – here appears as something alien to them, autonomous, as a thing.’

The sentiment of this passage, namely, ‘collisions between mutually indifferent individuals’, is similar to Young’s (2011: 52) definition of structural injustice as arising from ‘many individuals and institutions acting to pursue their particular goals and interests’. Similarly, Marx describes how social relations ‘are independent of the individuals and, although created by society, appear as if they were *natural conditions*, not controllable by individuals’ (Marx, 1973: 164; italics original). This claim is again akin to Young (2011: 53), who states that social structures are thought of ‘as objective social facts experienced by individuals as constraining and enabling’. What I aim to show, however, is that, unlike Young (2011), Marx’s analysis is able to capture the social abstractions that can be thought of as the rules and norms that underpin agential action as well as the agential action itself. What is more, Marx’s (1973) method is able to capture how social abstractions are historically produced but do influence and shape agential action, which in turn shapes the concrete social relations, and it turn legitimises the social abstractions, and so on and so on. The abstract gains its meaning precisely when it passes over to the concrete. I will now demonstrate this by presenting Marx’s application of the abstract-concrete dialectic where he distinguishes between use-value and exchange-value.

Marx (2013: Chapter I) distinguishes between use-value and exchange-value; the former refers to the uses a commodity has, whereas the exchange-value strictly denotes a commodity’s market value. The dialectical form that commodities take is expressed by Marx (2013: 19) when he says, ‘the exchange of commodities is evidently an act characterised by a total abstraction from use-value’. Hence, the use-value of a commodity denotes the concrete relation, containing within it different useful qualities, whereas the exchange-value denotes the abstraction away from usefulness into the singularity of market value. We could say that the exchange-value simply expresses the use-value, but Marx (1973: 148) wants to point out what eventually happens is that, ‘exchange for the sake of exchange separates off

from exchange for the sake of commodities'. The abstracted exchange-value thus starts to dictate the process of producing and selling commodities. For instance, the use-value of a jumper is manifold, including its ability to keep one warm on a cold day, but this becomes somewhat lost when the purpose of producing jumpers is seen as an opportunity to derive exchange-value, meaning that more jumpers are made than can be sold and often at a price that denotes the brand of the product rather than its use in keeping its owner warm. Saying little about this specific process in and of itself, what is important to note is that, whilst it can be said that abstractions can emerge out of the concrete, these abstractions also come full circle to shape the concrete itself. That is to say, the abstract is extrapolated from historical conditions but moves over into the concrete insofar as it shapes and reproduces these historical conditions.

For Marx (1973: 164) this “for exchange’s sake” process leads to us becoming ‘ruled by abstractions’. Such an assertion draws on debates about the determinism of social structures (and Marxism), which appear, on this reading, to directly rule over us rather than encourage certain behaviours. We can infer, however, from the analysis conducted above that, if social abstractions are not natural entities but are historically produced, then we are ruled by abstractions in the sense that we think they are natural, and therefore we can think of behaviour that appears as if we are ruled by them. To try and bring the distinction between the abstract and the concrete to life, as it will be applied throughout the remainder of this thesis, I refer to the London housing market to stress the importance of neoliberal abstractions when it comes to explaining these structural injustices⁴¹; similar to the injustice faced by Sandy (Young, 2011: 43-4), the hypothetical US citizen on the brink of homelessness through no fault of her own, as discussed in Chapter III.

⁴¹ I take inspiration for doing so from David Harvey, who uses Marx in this way both in *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (Harvey, 2005) and in an interview with Verso Books about his book *Rebel Cities* (Harvey, 2012), here (Harvey & Emanuele, 2017).

London's housing crisis

London's housing market has been at the heart of debates about gentrification, housing shortages, and globalisation. These processes are the result of agential action that when aggregated produced unwanted outcomes. Yet, what I wish to show is that this does not tell the full story. What is relevant here is the question regarding what are the pertinent factors that have seen London become a city only affordable to wealthy occupants. One factor is that there is a finite supply of housing in London and, given the saturation of job opportunities (and in a sense the relative dearth elsewhere), demand exceeds the supply. This is the narrative at the heart of Young's reference to Sandy, whose landlord, who is equally just acting in accordance to normal expectations, is encouraged to sell the property to developers (Young, 2011: 43). What I aim to show, however, is that we can only make sense of this narrative if we reflect not just on the concrete social relations and the agential action that produces structural harms, but also on the social abstractions that shape this agential action (and vice versa).

Consider the (now) affluent North London area of Barnsbury, Islington. Residents have witnessed three phases of gentrification marked by the shift in demographics from the original tenants who were predominantly working-class, to the third phase which has been dubbed 'super-gentrification', which has seen high-end bankers and legal professionals who work in the City of London move into the area (Butler and Lees, 2006: 473-5). One implication of this third phase is that an income of £150,000 per annum is insufficient to purchase a property and have the disposable income needed to live in the area, with house prices averaging £680,000 at the turn of the century (Butler & Lees, 2006: 478).⁴² This type of super-gentrification has had the knock-on effect, coined 'spatially displaced demand', which sees property prices in lower-income areas increase as a result of super-gentrification in more desirable areas creating a ripple effect (Hamnett, 2009); often, this has taken the form of parents in wealthy areas cashing in on their properties and pushing up prices when purchasing for their adult children in cheaper, peripheral areas (Glucksberg, 2016).

⁴² According to property website Right Move (2022), the average house price is now £912,365 as of January 2022.

Beyond the trends of middle-/upper-class gentrification, there are other moments within the London housing market that are observable in working-class communities beyond rising housing prices. In many of London's working-class communities, the aftermath of Margaret Thatcher's right-to-buy – a scheme that provided social housing tenants with the opportunity to purchase their council house at a discounted market rate without replacing the stock of social housing – continues to exacerbate the housing crisis (Harvey, 2005: 163). Despite providing families with an asset of their own, what emerged was tenants who had previously been inoculated from market forces were now in a position whereby housing speculators and developers were able to bribe and force local tenants out of their houses to make way for more luxury developments (Harvey, 2005: 163-4). One of the ways that this is made possible is by a process known as decanting, whereby 'existing tenants bid for properties elsewhere in the borough, or are moved against their will; private renters in leasehold properties are evicted, and leaseholders bought out via compulsory purchase, often at unfavourable rates' (Cooper et al., 2020).

Similar trends continued under the subsequent Labour government (1997-2010), who favoured replacing social housing estates with mixed (private) tenancy accommodation (Cooper et al., 2020: 5). In terms of Labour's housing proposals, the outcome was that developers reneged on their offer to provide affordable and/or social housing as part of the agreement with the local council (Flynn, 2016). This was achieved by relying on what is known as a Financial Viability Assessment, which was independently conducted by corporate companies that document the irreconcilability of making a profit *and* providing the same rate of affordable/social housing as initially promised, resulting in the reduction in the number of social housing units available (Flynn, 2016: 282-4). In both cases, the result has been the lack of supply of affordable/social housing for London's residents, thus pricing those without the means out of the housing market (Flynn, 2016 & Cooper et al., 2020).

There are two possible ways to narrate these events that are pertinent to understanding the structural injustices they produce. One is to continue with Young's (2011) analysis that reduces these decisions down to different moments within a concrete totality that produces structural injustices. Another, however, is to consider the broader abstractions that these events arose in accordance to and are

conducive with. That is to say, that the abstractions that these decisions took place against played a pivotal role in bringing about these structural injustices. Namely, a widespread commitment to a neoliberal common sense that saw broader ideological commitments to a market rationality when it came to housing. If we return to Marx's distinction between use-value and exchange-value, we see a shift from at least some commitment to social housing that was based on the use-value of a house (i.e. based on need for shelter), to a system in which the role of the state and local government is to ensure conditions are conducive to developers making a profit.⁴³ This is a shift that cannot be understood if we do not think about the way in which abstractions influence agential conduct that produces structural injustices.

What these examples point to is the way in which abstractions form the space within which agents make decisions they are encouraged, mandated, or simply feel they ought to make, that, when combined, coalesce to produce a structural injustice similar to Sandy's. All of this took place in a broader context of neoliberal abstractions that infringe as well as instruct certain widespread behaviours over others. This shapes the totality in such a way that it is ubiquitous, and, in order to remain historically relevant to the structural injustices this thesis is interested in, I refer hereafter to it as the *neoliberal-capitalist totality*. This brings together the concept of totality introduced in the previous section and impregnates it with an understanding that the way in which this totality is reproduced across time and space results from the abstract-concrete dialectic; the contestation of the concrete produces certain abstractions that shape the concrete, and, in doing so, the concrete legitimises these abstractions (and so on). Reference to a neoliberal-capitalist totality hereafter is predicated on the understanding that this is how it operates across time and space.

⁴³ Interestingly, Cooper et al. (2020: 9) found is that, 'even if leaseholders receive the market value for their loss of property... it would be impossible to compensate them for their loss of sense of home and community'. What can be applied to these insights is the distinction between the various use-values that somebody's home has, whilst also noting how individuals in this situation later acknowledged, even if they had been on board initially, the abstraction of monetary compensation was in the end unfulfilling.

There is a lacuna in the literature that calls for a dialectical framework that oscillates between the concrete and the abstract: considering the different moments of agential action that create a structural harm that ensures historical context; whilst contrasting these moments with the abstractions that they take place in accordance to in order to account for how one informs the other. In essence, this framework places no emphasis on the concrete over the abstract or the abstract over the concrete; they function in dialectical tandem: the abstract derives from the concrete, but the concrete is simultaneously altered by the abstract. This two-pronged analysis means that it is not simply a case of determining, like Young (2011), how individuals operate in their concrete social relations which, when aggregated, produce a structural injustice.

The result is a more complete account of how structural injustices arise that provides a two-pronged remedial response (returned to in Chapter VI). One can note that remedying structural injustices can take place at the concrete level, insofar as attempting to consider the ways in which regulations can be relied upon to temper the injustices they produce. One can reflect on the tenability of such approaches, however, at the same time as noting that, because this conduct occurs in relation to a set of abstractions that moulds agential conduct then reforms to the concrete, it will do little to transform oppressive social structure. Furthermore, if my analysis is correct that, when structural injustices are concerned, abstractions derive from the concrete, and then, in turn, alter the concrete, then it is able to account for the way in which a totality evolves across time and space. In the following section, I attempt to bring together the aforementioned methodology from Section I and Section II of this chapter to present a theoretical framework that responds to the limitations of cosmopolitanism identified in Part I and which will be applied in the remainder of this thesis.

In sum, my concern is more ideational, and places more weight on the abstract side of the ledger, in order to redress the imbalance identified with Young's (2011) structural injustice framework in Chapter III. To return to Marx, political economists obfuscate capitalist relations by abstracting production that serves to naturalise and essentialise it. Importantly, it is not that production is not an integral component of capitalist relations. Indeed, production *is* the driving force of capitalism but relies upon other

moments within the totality. Importantly, Marx shows that this abstraction is reflective of an ideology that forecloses the possibility of a political economy that sees production not as naturalised but as a socially constructed moment undergirding present capitalist relations. What this means is that Marx does not doubt that we can speak about capitalist relations as comprising material historical conditions.

What I wish to suggest is that the process of abstraction from concrete social relations is less the case of focussing on one component of capitalism, at the expense of the others, but, as far as the framework developed here is concerned, a case of abstractions arising from the successful narration (and contestation) of the perception of concrete social relations. What I endeavour to demonstrate, in the following section, is that social abstractions derive not from *actual* concrete social relations, but more that abstractions derive from a certain hegemonic *perception* of these relations. This is of particular importance when examining the role neoliberalism has played, given, as Foucault (2008: 220) notes, architects of the neoliberal turn understood that ‘abstraction is not the result of the real mechanics of economic processes; it derives from the way in which these processes have been reflected in classical economics’. In other words, we can see how neoliberalism was a response to the perception of Keynesian-capitalist relations, which relied upon a successful contestation of these conditions in order to ascend to hegemony. In the following section, I show how the first part of the dialectic, the abstraction from concrete social relations, is not a given but is the result of the successful contestation of present concrete social relations.

Neoliberalising the abstract-concrete dialectic

Having discussed what this thesis means by neoliberalism before introducing the abstract and concrete dialectical method I will adopt hereafter, I will now use this section to fuse the two components together. I aim to think about the way in which the dialectical method I have introduced reproduces a totality: a set of global social structures that produce a range of structural injustices. The primary aim is to ensure we retain the usefulness of Iris Marion Young’s (2011) account of global social structures introduced in the previous chapter, whilst responding to the shortfall of a framework that fails to place the

reproduction of structural injustices in their ideational context. To do so, I attempt to demonstrate the constant dialectical tension between the abstract – the neoliberal rationality – on the one hand, and the constant reshaping and legitimisation of concrete social relations – the material – on the other. It is in this sense that the neoliberal-capitalist totality is thought of in dialectical terms, referring to the oscillation between the abstract and the concrete that are co-dependent upon each other in order to make sense of the totality itself. In doing so, my aim is not to swing in the other direction towards an account that only focusses on abstractions at the expense of agential action, but to present a framework that tries to show the importance of the concretisation of neoliberal abstractions.

It is impossible to comprehensively explain this dialectical method within the confines of this thesis. The point of a totality is to capture the different moments that make up an overarching social system that shapes and alters the material. To focus on the importance of different moments, then, is not to suggest that these moments are sufficient in explaining the totality. Rather, they act as a minutia of how the broader totality itself forms and is reproduced across time and space. With this in mind, and with an awareness of the limitations of space, what follows presents a couple of relevant examples to demonstrate the value of thinking in terms of a totality, before applying this framework in the following chapter. The first point of focus in this section is on the way in which neoliberal abstractions do not arise from certain concrete social relations, as might be assumed, but are constructed and ascend to hegemonic status through key moments of agitation and contestation. I do so to demonstrate how powerful agents with what I have previously called norm-shaping agency are able to narrate concrete social relations in such a way that neoliberal abstractions appear to be the only tenable solution. I focus, second, on the way in which neoliberal rationalities, in particular that of benchmarking and “best practice”, have played their part in a shift towards a neoliberal governance that has repositioned the role of the state and thus altered material conditions. This is to try and show the importance of understanding a neoliberal rationality and its impact on the material when theorising about present structural injustices and what it is we ought to do about them.

This dialectical process should be thought of as a constant back and forth that reshapes as well as reproduces the neoliberal-capitalist totality. I wish to point out, however, that abstraction is not something that arises out of the concrete as if it was the inevitable consequence of certain material conditions. Rather, abstractions arise from a particular narration of the supposed contradictions that constructs a sense of reality that renders, in this case, neoliberalism as the only tenable remedy. As Herbert Marcuse (1991: 257) attests, ‘the human reality is its history and, in it, contradictions do not explode by themselves’. We can see this by analysing the rise of Thatcherism in the United Kingdom, which, as noted, alongside Reagan’s election, marks the neoliberal turn in many everyday discussions about neoliberalism. Whilst committed to seeing neoliberalism as a rationality that alters social relations, these are key historical moments in helping a neoliberal rationality gain concretisation by seeking to discredit political projects that had come before, as I will now examine.

The successful narration of events here refers to the way in which those with norm-shaping agency were able to discredit the Keynesian political project that neoliberalism would later sublate. One example of the successful contestation of these concrete social relations, is the Winter of Discontent in the UK, a time when the country was supposedly ‘held to ransom’ by the trade unions, with ‘the dead left unburied’ and ‘bins were left unemptied’ (Hay, 1996: 254). These narratives, however, in order to construct a crisis, ‘must recruit the contractions and failures of the system as symptomatic of a more general condition of crisis’ (Hay, 1996: 254). A political crisis of this sort, then, ‘is not some objective condition or property of a system defining the contours for subsequent ideological contestation’ (Hay, 1996: 255). Rather, ‘it is a subjective perceived and hence brought into existence through narrative and discourse’ (Hay, 1996: 255). The discursive tool through which this was actualised was the British tabloid media that were able to narrate, so as to construct, a crisis that required a (neoliberal) state to be able to quell the power of trade unions (Hay, 1996: 254-5).

The transformation of the role of the state saw an inversion ‘from the ‘conjectural’ politics of state management to the ‘structural’ politics of state transformation’ (Hay, 256). This is not to say that these events were constructed in the sense that they were not based in any reality beyond narration: ‘Britain’s

post-war settlement was already beginning to unravel', which had been brought about, in part, by 'the worsening global economic climate in the wake of the 1973 energy crisis' (Hay, 1996: 259; see also Harvey, 2005: 12). But headlines like 'THEY WONT EVEN LET US BURY OUR DEAD' mean 'we' are invited 'to recognise ourselves, and the threat posed by the routine assumptions of our daily lives, by actively injecting our own subjectivities into this preferred subject position' (Hay, 1996: 262). What the process of crisis construction demonstrates, however, is how concrete social relations provided the basis upon which powerful actors, in this case the media and a supporting ruling elite, can narrate events in a way where certain social abstractions gain hegemony. That is to say, the worsening background conditions did not alone present the social abstractions; they were extrapolated from the successful contestation of the events narrated by powerful actors. These sorts of moments mean that abstractions that otherwise remain in the abstract, come to alter concrete social relations once enough people are convinced that these rules and norms are the only reasonable alternative that ought to be accepted. Having clarified this point and made a minor departure from Marx's method, I use the remainder of the chapter to fuse the abstract and the concrete to produce what I call the abstract-concrete dialectic.

In what follows, I aim to demonstrate how a neoliberal-capitalist totality is reproduced not simply as a consequence of accidental widespread aggregated action at the concrete level, but as a result of this agential action being ontologically framed by a neoliberal rationality. Thinking about what contemporary neoliberalism requires reflecting upon how its rationality has carved open new forms of governance that have radically repositioned the role of the state. The term governance is crucial to understanding the methods by which a neoliberal rationality has created new spaces in which agential action is shaped and transformed. Debates about global collective action problems, such as climate change, are often said to be examples of a failure of governance rather than of government and/or the state. This shift in terms is illustrative of how power is now exercised through a range of different organisational entities and spaces. Rather than thinking of power in terms of government and the influence it has over the lives of its citizens, governance is illustrative of the diffusion of power across a now wider range of organisational entities across borders. Wendy Brown (2015: 123) notes how governance is a 'dissolving distinction' between the 'state, business, nonprofit, and NGO endeavors'.

What is important to bear in mind is that, through the framing of governance, responsibility for responding to global collective action problems does not fall to one actor, which was traditionally the state, but is equally shared amongst supposedly commensurable bodies.

Governance is not, therefore, simply an apolitical shift conducted for practical reasons, but is justified on the normative basis that ‘affirms the advantages of this dispersal and the importance of exploiting it effectively’ (Brown, 2015: 126). The dispersal of power between different actors becomes means driven and moves away from seeing government as bearing the main responsibility for achieving collective action outcomes (Brown, 2015: 126-7). Instead, it resolves any potential antagonism between the interests of the state and the private sector by merging them and pointing them towards the same shared goal (Brown, 2015: 126-7). What is produced is a procedural politics unable to assess how different partners in governance exert power because it is ‘technical in its orientation’, which, in turn, ‘buries contestable norms and structural striations (such as class), as well as the norms and exclusions circulated by its procedures and decisions’ (Brown, 2015: 131). What becomes clear is that calls for a strong state to uphold preferable sweatshop working conditions (see Kahn, 2013: 195-6; Young, 2011: 169), as discussed in Chapter III, must first contend with how neoliberalism has repositioned the saliency of the state (in relation to other bodies of governance) for achieving such goals in the first place. This contention can only take place if we shift our focus to the level of considering how rationalities shape the material conditions that produce structural injustices, which those striving for structural justice must overcome. This raises the question: in what ways has a neoliberal rationality rendered the state, businesses, and NGOs equal partners in governance structures? And, importantly, what does this mean for how we understand global structural injustices and what we ought to do about them?

We can see how different entities (e.g. states, corporations, charities, NGOs, etc.) have been brought about by adherence to a neoliberal rationality, but we can also see how neoliberal rationalities are what lock these entities together in a co-partners of neoliberal governance. For instance, the commensuration of different entities is achieved by a broader commitment to “best practice” and “benchmarking”, which ‘dispenses with the belief that different industries or sections have practices and norms necessarily

specific to them', and is expressed in 'the lingua franca of the market' (Brown, 2015: 139). Wendy Larner and Richard Le Heron (2004) present an abridged genealogy of the neoliberal concept of benchmarking. For them, the oversight of those who focus entirely on the economic reforms that many point out as examples of neoliberalism is that 'downplayed in their account... are the techniques through which global 'rules' are constituted' (Larner and Le Heron, 2004: 213).

The concept of benchmarking, as alluded to above, refers to the way in which procedures are measured against others in an attempt to determine a universalised "best practice" across all sectors (Larner and Le Heron, 2004: 214). Having begun with comparing 'like with like', new 'techniques now make it possible to think of organisationally discrete and spatially disparate objects as comparable' (Larner and Le Heron, 2004: 214). Deriving from managerial practice, benchmarking has seeped out of its managerial container, with organisations and individuals seeking to emulate these practices in 'the relentless pursuit of international competitiveness' (Larner and Le Heron, 2004: 215). We can also see this with other neoliberal rationalities like "participation", which became salient in development policy debates within global institutions like the World Bank (Leal, 2010). The idea of participation was wrestled from its more radical roots in social movements that were calling for bottom-up participation, and, instead, consisted of ushering more agents into a neoliberal economic order and its governing rationality (Leal, 2010: 90). This relied upon radical structural reforms in the form of structural adjustment programmes that acted as the precursor for establishing neoliberal participation (Leal, 2010: 90-1).

Hence, we can see how those entities that constitute (neoliberal) global governance are recast as commensurable, thus blurring the line between, say, the state and corporations, and, importantly, their interests. Consequently, what emerges from these changes is a 'global economic imaginary that is constitutive of new spaces, subjects and forms of association' (Larner and Le Heron, 2004: 220). This imaginary is important for thinking about the way in which neoliberal abstractions act as expectations and help to normalise practices that perpetuate globalised supply chains and the exploitation contained within them (explored in more detail in Chapter V). The concrete social relations that are brought about

rely upon the legitimisation of abstractions that themselves legitimise neoliberal reforms. We can see, then, how on the abstract side of the ledger we have a neoliberal rationality that not only is a prerequisite for understanding how the material world came to be shaped in its image, but how it came to be shaped in a way that reproduces this rationality and gives it the material condition in order for it to thrive.

With cosmopolitans attempting to graft principles onto formal institutional settings, what is often overlooked is how a neoliberal governance has subordinated the formal institutions that their accounts appeal to (examined in Chapter I). If cosmopolitan principles are applied to the practice of governance that equalises the role of the private sector and markets, we would continue to see development practices crafted in accordance to marketisation and shaping agents accordingly. Consider how Rawls' (1971: 52) appeal to reform the basic structure in accordance to his two principles of justice is not necessarily at odds with a neoliberal rationality. Attempting to ensure that institutions can be said to be acting to the benefit of the least well-off is not the same as ensuring that when it comes to actualising this condition it does not take the form, say, of sub-contracting the delivery of public goods to private entities; thus, altering the terms in which "justice" is delivered, which fundamentally repositions the relationship between citizens and the institutions tasked with instituting change. Likewise, calls for a stronger state to return to a more Keynesian approach are not at odds with doing so through a marketised lens.

The concrete and the abstract in this sense are co-constitutive, with social abstractions relying upon the structural changes necessary for the neoliberal-capitalist totality to flourish. The abstract concepts of participation and benchmarking rely on those with norm-shaping agency to create the preconditions necessary for their perpetuation, but also reliance on those who act in accordance to them thereafter, and thus bestow them with legitimacy. If agents all think that they need to be able to benchmark themselves to demonstrate their relative position in a globalised market system, then others will do the same, and, as a result, alter the social relations in question. The sweatshop factory owners cannot afford to not cut corners because, in a global structure of intense competition, they will fail to "make the grade" as defined as profit maximisation. Yet, what perpetuates this system is all other agents acting in

accordance to the same rationality of intense competition. The sweatshop example is useful for contrasting how thinking about the abstract and the concrete simultaneously can provide more of an ideational context to how concrete social relations are brought about and vice versa.

The two discussions I have drawn on in this section are pertinent for thinking about the way in which a neoliberal rationality frames widespread agential behaviour and alters the concrete as well as denoting how the neoliberal-capitalist totality relies upon the successful contestation of neoliberalism. The introduction of this dialectical framework enables thinking about the way in which ontological frames are important for understanding how global social structures function and alter across time and space, thus grounding an understanding of social structures in actual historical relations. This contrasts with an ideal approach to justice that seeks, *a priori*, to establish what justice is and to move towards it. In order to consider how to challenge forms of oppression, domination, and exploitation, the abstract-concrete dialectic provides a clearer critical critique of how global social structures and the injustices they produce occur. This is a prerequisite for thinking about how to alter oppressive social structures, which will be the focus of Chapter VI.

Conclusion

To recap, I defined neoliberalism not simply as an economic paradigm that brings about certain market-based reforms, but as a broader rationality that shapes social relations. I did not do away with analysis that casts neoliberalism in more material terms (e.g. Harvey, 2005; 2020), but argued that thinking in terms of a rationality can better capture the economic and “non-economic” sites where this rationality that shapes agential conduct applies. Having settled on a two-pronged understanding of neoliberalism, I sought to assign each respective prong to either side of the abstract-concrete dialectic. The neoliberal rationality refers to the abstract, whereas the material consequences of this rationality are referred to as the concrete side of the dialectic this rationality has shaped. I argued that it is useful for understanding global social structures as a totality that is shaped and renegotiated across time and space. The abstract,

however, is constructed from the successful contestation of certain concrete social relations that then alter these relations, and, in doing so, give meaning and legitimacy to social abstractions. Hence, there is a constant dialectical oscillation between the abstract and the concrete that shape one another; they are co-constitutive and should not be separated when examining global social structures.

To begin to introduce this totalising system, I started from Hegel's distinction between the concrete universal and the abstract universal. Thinking about the potential for abstracting away from manifold concrete social relations, introduced the idea of totality in which there are manifold components that make up the whole. I also briefly demonstrated how the concrete universal is helpful for responding to limitations identified in Chapter II with regard to providing an alternative to essentialist-individual universalisms. That is because, if the concrete universal is the unity of manifold components that constitute the universal itself, then we can think about the divergent experiences of different historically situated groups. We can then use the concrete universal to think about how there are not only different moments that make up a neoliberal-capitalist totality, but also different experiences of that totality depending on where people are situated and whether they are members of a marginalised group.

Having unpacked the abstract and the concrete, I referred to Marx's useful addition to the two concepts. In particular, how it is possible to abstract from concrete social relations and in turn for the abstractions to then alter the concrete social relations. Whilst there is a dialectical swing contained in Hegel's system, Marx's analysis brings it to life by grounding it in capitalist relations. Having introduced a two-pronged understanding of neoliberalism and applied it to the abstract-concrete dialectical method, I then sought to bring these strands together. I used the example of the neoliberal rationality of "benchmarking" to show how an abstract rationality can shape concrete-material conditions and how this forms and shapes new arenas and agents. I also then discussed the emergence of the Thatcher government in the UK to aim to clarify that, when I refer to abstractions, I am referring to the construction and contestation of certain events and material conditions rather than suggesting we could ever abstract from concrete social relations "as they actually are". I conclude that this is an alternative that keeps intact Iris Marion Young's structural injustice framework inasmuch as it retains the way in which widespread agential

action produces injustices, but does so in a way that cannot be detached from the specific historical abstractions that such action shapes and is shaped by.

There are key moments and components of the neoliberal-capitalist totality that can be iteratively distinguished from each other, which means that there is no one singular moment we can trace to see the derivative from which the totality fused, but we can say without contradiction that these different moments are historically rooted in broader ideational trends that did not come out of nowhere. The abstract side of the dialectic allows us to think about how agential action is framed often concurrently, and does not arise from one point in time and space. The focus on neoliberal abstractions above all else is because of their pertinence to present social relations that produce global structural injustices. It is not a failure to acknowledge that neoliberal abstractions emerged from the contestation of a set of concrete social relations that came before them, which were also based upon previous social abstractions (and so on ad infinitum). The purpose of focussing on neoliberalism is because contained in its processes are the social abstractions that frame widespread agential action that produces the injustices many cosmopolitans (examined in Chapter I) are interested in. It is the ideational context in which we find ourselves that we must strive to unpack and problematise. Having attempted to do so, the abstract-concrete dialectic enables us to think about the way in which a neoliberal-capitalist totality is shaped and reproduced across time and space.

It should be noted that the reliance on Hegel and Marx's contribution to the abstract and concrete is not to contain my analysis only to "the economic sphere". It is just as useful, to my mind, for thinking about "non-economic" forms of oppression and the relationship between the two. Any other critical lens that attempts to capture the way in which injustices affect different individuals situated in relation to concrete social relations can still be expressed in terms of the concrete universal, which provides space for thinking about divergent and opposing experiences from within a totality. Furthermore, this extends beyond formal sites of justice to more informal ones contained within the universal itself and the divergent social relations (and experiences of them) that constitute this totality, regardless of where and how it plays out. In attempting to acknowledge how a neoliberal-capitalist totality is fused by different

moments that coalesce to produce structural injustices, I am not suggesting that all structural injustices are traceable *to* this totality but are nevertheless experienced *through* it. For instance, we know that gendered forms of oppression predate capitalism, but we cannot make sense of present gendered forms of oppression without making sense of how a neoliberal-capitalist totality shapes and interacts with gendered forms of hierarchy.

Having outlined how we got to this point, this thesis is now in a position to apply the critical cosmopolitan framework explicated in this chapter to the remainder of the thesis. This chapter has tried to bring to life the abstract level of rules and norms that until now were said to be pertinent to shaping agential action. In the following chapters, I wish not to focus on a particular case study, but to think about how the neoliberal-capitalist totality is shaped and reshaped across time and space and the structural injustices this produces. I use the next chapter as a vehicle for applying my framework so as to respond to a broader omission with cosmopolitan theory, namely, that it neglects what is going on “within” affluent countries. This omission may appear as a side note to the general framework that I have explicated in this chapter, but what I aim to demonstrate is that the abstract-concrete dialectic is something that takes place across borders not just beyond them and thus cosmopolitan theory ought to be updated accordingly. In other words, I zoom in on one aspect of the neoliberal-capitalist totality and demonstrate how the “global” in global justice theory cannot be thought of as exclusively beyond borders, because the successful contestation of a neoliberal rationality takes place within the borders of affluent countries as well as beyond them and thus reproducing certain material conditions across borders.

Therefore, if we are to improve our understanding of how neoliberal social structures are reproduced, then we must make sure we include the spatial contexts in which these processes take place and reflect upon what this means for attempting to transcend them (examined in Chapter VI). To achieve this, I focus on the way in which the successful global neoliberal contestation that came in response to the 2008 financial crash was not something that took place beyond and above affluent countries, but within and across them. In addition, I analyse attempts by multinational corporations to construct a self-

entrepreneurial consumer (and producer) that perpetuates structurally unjust global supply chains *across* borders. This helps to focus on the way in which, although, as Harvey (2020: 17-8) notes, the financial crash delegitimised neoliberalism as an economic doctrine, neoliberalism retains common sense and atomised self-entrepreneurial individuals that reproduce the broader totality.⁴⁴ This helps to ground an understanding of global oppressive social structures that does not see agential conduct as flowing outward – starting “here” and producing “injustices” there – but as seeing global social structures as a totality whose inputs and outputs are shaped by neoliberal social abstractions across borders, not just above and beyond them. The application of my critical cosmopolitan framework aims to unpack and problematise some of the spatial assumptions undergirding global justice theory with the aim of overcoming the weaknesses of these assumptions in the process.

⁴⁴ Harvey (2020: 17) does not express this in these Foucauldian terms, but he does emphasise, more so in his later work (c.f. 2005) how Thatcher ‘wanted to transform people’s way of thinking and the whole economic culture’, noting that we are now ‘all supposed to be entrepreneurs of ourselves and invest in ourselves’.

Chapter V: Contesting the *global* in global justice theory:
applying the abstract-concrete method across borders

‘People like me who came to England in the 1950s have been there for centuries; symbolically, we have been there for centuries. I was coming home. I am the sugar at the bottom of the English cup of tea. I am the sweet tooth, the sugar plantations that rotted generations of English children’s teeth. There are thousands of others beside me that are, you know, the cup of tea itself. Because they don’t grow it in Lancashire, you know. Not a single tea plantation exists within the United Kingdom. This is the symbolization of English identity— I mean, what does anybody in the world know about an English person except that they cannot get through the day without a cup of tea?’ – Stuart Hall (2019: 70).

The cosmopolitan literature promotes a one-directional flow of global justice, with principles of justice constructed in the West before being universally applied in an outwardly fashion to spatial planes beyond borders. Some of the decolonial literature relied upon in chapters II and IV would rightly point out the coloniality that this approach to global justice reproduces; for instance, the ways in which certain knowledge-forms deriving from the West continue to engulf other lifeforms, or what Robin Dunford (2017) refers to as ‘cosmovisions’. Historical and geographical conditions mean that cosmopolitan justice applies to spaces that are much more complex than ideal approaches to justice suggest (Harvey, 2009). Despite this, the global justice literature could be accused of thinking that history began after the more recent modes of globalisation, which have existed from the 1970s onwards (Dunford, 2017: 383). If we invert this critique, we see the myth of civilisation forming endogenously in Europe before embarking on an enlightening mission, which obscures the fact that the “civilisation” within Western countries was predicated on the exploitation of resources and labour from far afield all along. What Hall’s passage at the start of this chapter illustrates, then, is the way in which globalisation is not something that only flows unidirectionally, from “here” to “there”, but also comes full circle and permeates Western epicentres in ways that cosmopolitan theory has hitherto neglected, which will be redressed in this chapter.

The fact that tea is a symbol of British identity without there ever being further reflection upon where it comes from highlights the psychological disconnect between the “here” and “there” that is isomorphic to the *two-tiered approach* to global justice I aim to problematise in this chapter. This approach refers to how, when cosmopolitans consider who ought to be included in schemes of justice, they justify it on the basis that individuals “there” are subjected to worse conditions than those “here”. It is certainly true that many of the conditions observed beyond the borders of affluent countries are often worse than those found within them. Nevertheless, there is a two-tiered approach that distinguishes between “here” and “there” and implies that the “global” in global justice theory refers to those spatial planes beyond the borders of affluent countries, whereas Westphalian frames of analysis are assumed to remain pertinent when considering affluent countries. If, however, globalisation undermines the tenability of Westphalian frames of justice then the same should hold true, regardless of the difference in material conditions, within the borders of affluent countries as well as beyond them. What we have seen is cosmopolitans cast their gaze exclusively beyond borders, as if to suggest that this is the only site in which globalisation takes place and thus the only spatial context in which global justice is pertinent; forgetting that the same forces are at play “there” as they are “here”. In others words, cosmopolitans fail look back over their shoulder to what is going on within (and across) the countries from which their theories set sail. This is a problem because what the sugar in “our” tea shows is that globalisation always comes full circle.

Reliance on ideal theory has meant that cosmopolitans have closed the door to further analysis of what is happening within affluent countries; a commitment to a Keynesian-distributive conception of justice that is assumed to be a settled debate. Instead of normatively nullifying the moral relevance of borders, cosmopolitans merely transcend, and thus reproduce the salience of, the borders in which they dwell. Thus, they seek to apply social theories of justice to non-Western spatial planes whilst affluent countries remain wedded to Westphalian frames of justice. Cosmopolitanism’s exclusivity for spatial contexts above and beyond borders reflects the implicit assumption that the conditions “within borders” do not warrant a global frame of justice. Having failed to contest *what* a conception of global justice ought to consist of (examined in Chapter I and II), the focus has been on expanding the scope of justice beyond

the boundaries of affluent countries. That is not to say there was no good reason to globalise the scope of justice, but that it does so in a way that flows outwardly beyond the boundaries of affluent countries. I argue in this chapter that this approach to justice perpetuates a *two-tiered approach* that relies upon a distinction between “here” and “there”, whereby global justice applies to the latter but not the former. What such an approach fails to account for is how the processes of neoliberal globalisation have altered the conditions within affluent countries since Keynesian-Westphalian theories of justice were constructed. What is more, such an approach fails to capture how a neoliberal rationality that undergirds globalisation and reproduces global oppressive social structures produces a range of structural injustices across borders, including affluent ones.

This chapter aims to demonstrate the implications of thinking in totalising terms, as promoted in the previous chapter. It has often been said that this thesis has attempted to capture how the neoliberal-capitalist totality evolves across time and space and the structural injustices it produces in the process. It has been argued that this results from neoliberal social abstractions that produce certain material conditions against which these abstractions gain legitimacy. What remain underexplored are the spatial assumptions to approaching cosmopolitanism this way when compared to the cosmopolitan literature examined in Chapter I. In particular, those accounts think of global justice as something that pertains to actions taken “here” that produce certain outcomes for actors “there”. That is because it is said that someone’s participation in the global economic order means that they are partially responsible for the outcome and therefore should help correct consequential injustices (e.g. Pogge, 2002; Beitz, 1975; Moellendorf, 2002). Whilst this liability approach is not wrong, per se, what is overlooked is how the neoliberal-capitalist totality is not necessarily reproduced by input actions taken “here” that produce output injustices “there”. Rather, the neoliberal-capitalist totality is reproduced by a wide range of interconnected actions across borders, many of which both contribute to producing structural injustices and are themselves structural injustices simultaneously.

In what follows, I aim to demonstrate how this neoliberal-capitalist totality is reproduced by agential actions across borders which sustain the totality, and, in doing so, blur the distinction between those

actions that produce structural injustices and actions which are reflective of structural injustices in their own right. If we adopt the totalising approach that captures the dialectic swing between the abstract and the concrete, as this thesis calls for, we can better illuminate how structural processes are reproduced across time and space when compared to Young's (2011) account. In the process of doing so, we can recast the "global" in global justice theory not as something that only exists above and beyond the borders of affluent countries (as cosmopolitan theory implies), but through and across borders too. In so doing, this chapter can be thought of as a critical cosmopolitan contribution to the mainstream cosmopolitan debate about the spatial applicability of global justice theory; an attempt to unpack and problematise spatial assumptions that acts as the impetus to shift from justice beyond borders to justice across borders.

This chapter is broken down into the following three sections. The first section analyses the way in which the global justice literature conducts a two-tiered approach. It will be argued that a distinction is drawn between the social forces and the injustices produced "there" and how they contrast with injustices "here", with cosmopolitans relying upon a comparative analysis that is unable to outline the dire conditions people "there" are subjected to without contrasting the apparent conditions of excess "here". I clarify that, whilst this comparative approach is not wrong per se, it thinks of global justice in terms of what is happening beyond borders and not the way in which global social structures are reproduced across borders, including in more affluent countries. What is warranted, in line with the framework outlined in the last chapter, is for a totalising approach that truly globalises our conception of justice by seeing what is going on "here" and "there" as two sides of the same coin.

The second section problematises the two-tiered approach by examining the United Kingdom's response to the 2008 financial crash, noting how the neoliberal rationality framed the global response, which was negotiated and applied within affluent countries as well as beyond them. The structural adjustments that followed in the United Kingdom were consistent with many other affluent countries, which relied upon a neoliberal rationality – one that attempted to prime individuals to be able to withstand the structural adjustments associated with austerity by recasting them as atomised self-

entrepreneurial individuals. This analysis shines light on how an ideal approach to global justice closes the door to further analysis of what is going on within borders and its relevance to reproducing a globalised neoliberal-capitalist totality.

The third section turns its attention to the way in which the abstract-concrete dialectic reproduces a neoliberal-capitalist totality not simply by altering formal institutions, but also as a result of pervasive tactics by major tech companies, which means consumers and producers are formed atop exploitative practices. The purpose of the third section is to show that structural injustices are not just a case of those located “here” perpetuating injustices that are experienced “there”; a totalising approach to global justice shows that widespread agential actors shape and are shaped by a neoliberal rationality that produces a range of structural injustices across borders, including injustices that arise in affluent countries. As a result, this chapter, broadly speaking, demonstrates the implications of applying the critical cosmopolitan framework developed in the previous chapter, by illustrating how the abstract neoliberal rationality is reproduced, and the concrete material relations it constructs, all in order to reconceptualise global justice across borders rather than justice beyond borders.

A two-tiered approach to global justice: problematising comparative cosmopolitanism

To begin, let us reflect on the ways in which contemporary cosmopolitans arrived at the point at which they cast their gaze beyond borders at the expense of considering what is going on within them. Consider Gillian Brock’s (2011: 461) argument: ‘if principles of egalitarian socioeconomic justice apply at the domestic level, they should apply, for the same reasons, at the global level as well’. This statement highlights global justice’s outward flow: if one accepts that the *what* of justice consists of socio-economic egalitarian principles, then it holds, for reasons previously examined, that it ought to extend to those places beyond the (affluent) country in which one dwells. This is a conventional understanding of modernity, but, instead of seeing *development* as beginning in Western countries and spreading elsewhere, *justice* is seen as normatively emanating from industrialised liberal democracies

and projecting onto the rest of the world. A framework of this kind usually warrants criticism on the grounds that this is a Western-centric view of justice and one that reproduces coloniality when applied to historically and geographically diverse communities in the Global South (Harvey, 2009; Dunford, 2017). Without downplaying the importance of this critique – one which I have explored in Chapter II, and to a lesser extent in Chapter III – I focus instead on the inversion of this outward flow of justice: what it means having neglected what is going on within affluent countries.⁴⁵

To begin to think about the two-tiered approach to global justice, consider one of the foundational arguments in cosmopolitan thought: the morally arbitrary argument. It is a matter of happenstance, the argument goes, where somebody is born; such arbitrary factors ought not to determine what one is entitled to as a matter of justice; hence, justice ought to apply globally (Beitz, 1983: 593; Pogge, 1989: 247; Moellendorf, 2002: 55-6; Richards, 1982; Caney, 2005: 123). The pertinence of this principle of global justice derives from the fact that, in many instances, where somebody is born *does* currently affect what they are entitled to. Consider Simon Caney's (2005: 123) argument:

‘Consider a world in which people’s basic rights are secured but in which people of different nations face radically unequal opportunities. This world does not include starvation but it does consign some to misery and poverty and others to great wealth for no reason other than that some are Namibian, say, and that others are American. It is difficult to see why such arbitrary facts about people should determine their prospects in life.’

This passage offers a good insight into the broader cosmopolitan approach this thesis has taken issue with. This idealised passage, then, asks us to question why a pre-determined conception of justice as equal opportunities for all is evidently not met when we consider the actual conditions Namibians and Americans are respectively subjected to. For now, all I wish to point to is that arguments within

⁴⁵ I use the word within to identify the omission in cosmopolitan thought that neglects the “within” in favour of the “beyond”. That is not because, by using the word “within”, I suggest that there can ever truly be an account of injustice that can be severed from the globalised context in which it takes place.

cosmopolitan thought rely on a two-tiered approach that distinguishes between imageries of “here” and “there” in ways that, whatever one means by global justice, we are referring to something that is pertinent to “there” and not “here”. In other words, one is saying that global justice is a matter of bringing Namibians (“there”) up to the level of Americans (“here”).⁴⁶

To get a better sense of the way in which the current approach to global justice fails to look back over its shoulder, consider the way in which the cosmopolitan literature reflects on the conditions “we” enjoy “here” when compared with the condition “they” are subjected to “there” in a two-tiered approach to global justice. It was noted above that arguing against a two-tiered system is not to suggest that we should do away with certain facts about “there” when compared with “here”. For instance, Thomas Pogge (2001: 7) relies on a wide range of statistics that reflect the starkness of injustice: ‘about one-quarter of all human beings alive today, 1.5 billion, subsist below the international poverty line’. Pogge (2001: 8) continues to tell us how ‘790 million persons are not adequately nourished, while one billion are without safe water and 2.4 billion without basic sanitation’. Surveying such statistics does demonstrate the difference between the scale of the types of injustices that tend to arise “there” when compared to those that tend to arise “here”. The point of thinking about global justice in totalising terms is not to suggest that certain conditions are not different and often more dire in locations beyond the boundaries of affluent countries. Rather, the focus is on how a comparative approach creates a two-tiered approach to justice in which debates about justice within affluent countries remain wedded to Westphalian frames of analysis that cosmopolitan theory itself has successfully contested. Moreover, if it can be shown that the (neoliberal) rules and norms that undergird global social structures – otherwise referred to as globalisation – are reproduced within affluent countries as well as beyond them, cosmopolitans ought to pay closer attention to the conditions within the countries that their theories of justice tend to derive from.

⁴⁶ I note that Caney (2005: 123) may well argue that the two-tiered approach to justice is warranted because of the urgency of the condition for those “beyond borders” when compared to those “within borders”. I attempt to tease out matters of urgency in subsequent sections, noting that my alternative approach need not suggest that all injustices are on a par. For now, I simply wish to illuminate the frequency with which cosmopolitans’ arguments rely on what I have termed the two-tier approach.

The two-tiered approach is perpetuated by a comparative analysis of phenomena that are found “there” when compared to “here”. Consider how David Held (2003: 163-4) compares the plight of the Global South with the state of play in affluent countries: ‘annually \$4 billion is spent in the US on cosmetics, nearly \$20 billion on jewellery and \$17 billion (in the US and Europe)’ is spent ‘on pet food’ (Held, 2003: 164). The aim of presenting these figures is to create an internal comparison in which the reader notes that many in the Global South could not imagine spending such sums on these items. It shines a light on the moral obscenity of a world in which there is evidently enough to go round, yet the distribution of wealth means that some can far exceed their basic needs whilst others literally perish. Cosmopolitans make the case for levels of redistribution that would correct these injustices: ‘the moral upshot of all this seems obvious: We should provide a path out of poverty to that great majority of all poor people whom we can reach without the use of force’ (Pogge, 2001: 14). Pogge (2005: 3) quite rightly comments on the absurdity of that fact that only 1 percent of the global product would be needed, in theory, to meet the poor’s basic needs.

To do so, however, he claims that ‘*they*, the global poor, have a much stronger moral claim to the percent of the global product *they* need to meet their basic needs than *we* affluent have to take 81 rather than 80 percent for ourselves’ (Pogge, 2005: 3; emphasis added). I am not rejecting the claim that the political will to meet this 1-percent commitment could, in theory, meet the basic needs of the world’s poorest. I instead focus on the fact that, although Pogge (2005: 3; emphasis added) does not call for a radical redistribution of this wealth, his argument relies upon the notion that ‘*we* affluent have to take 81 rather than 80 percent for ourselves’. The appeal to different configurations of resource access relies upon an ideal vision of affluent countries in which most, if not all, citizens reap the rewards of 81 percent of the global product rather than it being hoarded by a small group of individuals who may not even be denizens of the affluent country in question. Ironically, these cosmopolitan comparisons revert to thinking in statist terms about where the individual is located and thus are wedded to a Keynesian-

Westphalian analysis that assumes individuals-as-citizens are reaping the distributive rewards of *their* disproportionate share of the global product.⁴⁷

These comparisons take the form of comparing poverty that is absolute with poverty that is relative. The latter is seen as more palatable for a society to reproduce if one's most basic needs are being met. Peter Singer (2010: 7-8) makes this distinction when he contrasts the fact that 1.4 billion people are surviving on \$1.25 a day with those living in 'wealthy societies', where 'most poverty is relative' and 'people *feel* poor because of many of the good things they see advertised are beyond their budget – but they do have a television' (Singer, 2010: 8; emphasis added). One can distinguish between different configurations of poverty that take place "here" and "there" without downplaying the realness of the poverty that is experienced by those within affluent countries. The idea that one only feels poor makes reference to a consumerist society in which "we" are all greedy and never satisfied, constantly wanting more and more consumer items. Not only does such analysis fail to provide a broader structural context that shapes this individualistic-consumer behaviour, it also distracts from the realness of poverty within affluent countries.

Furthermore, there is a tendency when committed to the distinction between "here" and "there" to make certain assumptions about the conditions within affluent countries, which paints a more plentiful picture than is actually the case. For example, Singer (2010: 8) goes on to claim that those living in 'wealthy societies' 'all have access to healthcare'. Given that America is the wealthiest of wealthy societies, and is the example he draws upon to suggest poor Americans only *feel* poor, the fact that 25.6 million Americans were uninsured as of 2018 brings home the realness of this poverty for those people (US Census Bureau, 2019). These statistics remain in spite of the passing of the Affordable Care Act, the same year Singer published his book, which saw the expansion of US health insurance coverage (US Census Bureau, 2019). Since then, during the Covid-19 pandemic, 45 million Americans, including 15

⁴⁷ For now, I will continue to unpack the form such global comparisons take. In Section IV, I spend more time demonstrating how the neoliberal reforms within affluent countries have meant that such aforementioned accounts of global justice are unable to ground comparative claims of this sort.

million children, were unable to attain a sufficient amount of food as a result of limited financial resources (Feeding America, 2021).

The point is that the justification for expanding the scope of justice is premised on the rickety assumptions that those in affluent societies necessarily reap the rewards of living in a wealthy society. The processes of globalisation and the form they have taken in these countries, and how they have exacerbated poverty, are overlooked in favour of what are often more severe cases of deprivation. The point is that such a two-tiered approach to global justice mandates that we pick either a global justice beyond borders or a Westphalian justice within borders. If we pick the former, the only cosmopolitan option, then we are in a position where the focus is cast outwardly and sees what is going on in affluent countries as sitting outside of what constitutes the *global* in global justice. I argue that this is a false dichotomy, and, if we are to typify the global social structures that produce structural injustices, we must adopt a totalising approach that is a *truly* global conception of justice.

We could continue with a comparative analysis indefinitely, calling upon different examples that show that poverty is more serious within affluent countries than the aforementioned commentators suggest. The reason for not continuing to do so is because the point I am trying to make clear is more about the structure of the two-tiered approach before considering the implications of it. Later on, I argue that this approach tends to overlook the way in which globalisation is a social process that takes place within, as well as beyond, affluent countries, so cosmopolitans ought not to make binary distinctions between the two and instead approach global justice as a totality. Furthermore, I attempt to show that the situation is worsening from when cosmopolitan principles of justice were first constructed. Take, for example, extreme poverty within the USA. Luke Shaefer and Kathryn Edin (2013: 259) ‘estimate that the number of households living on \$2 or less in cash income per person, per day, in a given month increased from 636,000 in 1996 to about 1.65 million in mid-2011’.⁴⁸ This example of absolute deprivation in the US

⁴⁸Shaefer and Edin (2013: 254) refer to part of the problem that perpetuates the “here”/“there” logic: ‘Tellingly, the World Bank does not release official estimates for the United States for this metric [\$2 a day] because it is meant to capture poverty based “on the standards of the poorest countries’. They go on to say that, ‘extreme destitution is assumed to be very uncommon among wealthy nations’ (Shaefer

is not simply an exception to “the norm” of relative poverty, it is the result of, at least in part, 1996 welfare reforms and the post-2008 financial crash and the subsequent recession (Shaefer and Edin, 2013: 264). Importantly, then, the structural approach I am calling for is, unlike in the cosmopolitan accounts examined in chapters I and II, sensitive to the changes observed across borders and what this means for global justice theory.

This means that, when conducting an analysis of global social structures, one must reflect upon where the abstract and concrete dialectic takes place and the totality that this reproduces across time and space. If, as I aim to show in this chapter, this process takes place within affluent countries as much as it does beyond them, then, regardless of the difference in material conditions produced in different locations, it is important to understand them in tandem, as two sides of the same coin; a totality. This is a necessary precondition for when it comes to analysing social movements tasked with agitating to dislodge the neoliberal-capitalist totality. That is because, if neoliberalism is reproduced across borders, both within and outside of formal institutional settings, maintained by a wide range of agential actions that take place across borders, then attempts to transcend present oppressive social structures must take place across borders too.⁴⁹

What is needed is a structural analysis of the ways in which neoliberal rationalities are negotiated and navigated, as well as the range of interrelated outcomes across borders. In the next section, I seek to demonstrate that, in response to the global financial crash, a neoliberal rationality was negotiated and consequently framed responses to the crash across the borders of affluent and non-affluent countries. Thus, the next section will apply the abstract-concrete dialectic in order to think about the ways in which a neoliberal rationality constructs certain agential actions. I do so in conjunction with showing that these processes occur across borders, not just beyond them. Neoliberal rules and norms may have initially been shaped by those with what I have called norm-shaping agency. Indeed, I seek to show that the

and Edin, 2013: 254). Cosmopolitans certainly ought to reflect on why this is the case, as well as ensuring they do not repeatedly reproduce fallacies.

⁴⁹ I return to these matters in Chapter VI.

process of reproducing neoliberal social structures consists of a repeated process of renegotiating a neoliberal rationality that shapes concrete social relations. However, I conduct this analysis to also point to the way in which this rationality shapes agency right down to the individual level in a way that helps to perpetuate the concrete social relations agents are navigating.

This will be done by first focussing on the United Kingdom's response to the 2008 financial crash, before reflecting on the way in which particular changes to consumerism have been perpetuated by companies and consumers. The objective is to reject a two-tiered approach to justice and focus on global social structures as a totality. It should be stated with clarity that focussing on what is going on in affluent countries can easily be misinterpreted as an attempt to invert the two-tiered system and prioritise injustices within affluent countries at the expense of those that are often more dire. Indeed, David Held (2003: 170) suggests that a foundational principle of cosmopolitanism is 'the avoidance of serious harm and the amelioration of urgent need'. That is why he argues that we should allocate 'priority to the most vital cases of need and, where possible, trumping other, *less urgent* public priorities' (Held, 2003: 170; emphasis added). "Public" here refers to those injustices "here" that should only be attended to once injustices "there" have been remedied. However, I aim to show that this two-tiered approach to global justice further perpetuates a symptomatic approach that was discredited in Chapter I, one that attempts to put out the fire without questioning what rules and norms underpin globalisation and that cut across borders to produce a range of structural injustices that also occur across borders.

Globalisation "within" borders

To reflect upon the way in which cosmopolitans think of what is going on within affluent countries beyond comparative arguments, I will now consider how some of the cosmopolitan literature thinks of globalisation in relation to affluent countries. I argued in Chapter I that one of the problems with cosmopolitanism is that globalisation is cast as an institutional composition that is otherwise neutral, providing the right institutional modifications. I return to this issue, to illustrate how cosmopolitans

attempt to institutionalise a Keynesian-distributive model to processes of globalisation that are cast as existing above and beyond affluent countries.

Consider John Gerard Ruggie (2003: 116), who notes, ‘how hard it was and how long it took to institute the original embedded liberalism compromise at the national level, the prospect of achieving a similar social framing of global market forces seems exponentially more daunting’. Robert Goodin (2003: 80) makes a similar claim: ‘the bad news from a moral point of view is that all the progress we made towards justice, domestically, is now at risk of being undermined *from abroad*’ (Goodin, 2003: 80; emphasis added). He later goes on to say that ‘all our hard-won gains at home will thus be undone’ (Goodin, 2003: 89). On this reading, globalisation is an exclusively exogenous process – *from abroad* – rather than something that is negotiated exogenously and endogenously at the same time.

Leaving aside the fact that by justice these commentators refer to a parochial conception (i.e. individual-distribution), the image of globalisation that is projected here is one of a reified force that institutional mechanisms are struggling to contain rather than something that is negotiated and navigated within (as well as beyond) institutional settings across borders. Consider ‘the mobility of capital, goods, people, ideas and pollutants’ David Held (2004: 15) tells us ‘increasingly challenges the capacity of individual governments to sustain their own social and political compromises within delimited borders’ (Held, 2004: 15). On such reading, the process of neoliberalism has not eroded social and political compromises, but it is the unwieldy force of globalisation that is coming over the horizon to erode the social democratic order. Imperative for Held (2004: 15), then, is that governments act quickly to socially democratise the global order so as to hasten globalisation’s propensity to erode social democracy at home. Globalisation is here thought of as an inevitable process that exists above and beyond the borders of states that the global institutional mechanisms must quickly be devised to quell.

Idealised approaches that close the door to further contestation about the conception of justice result in a situation where Keynesian economic models are said to be possible without exacerbating global injustices. That is because social democratic principles rely on a basic contradiction: ‘policies seem

contradictory since they are forced at the same time to strengthen the productive power of capital and to counteract its effects' (Prezeworski, 1980: 55). There are two problems that arise when we take this point seriously. First, it has often been the policy, especially in small European countries, to open up their economies to seek new sources of accumulation in order to provide the means to fulfil welfare commitments beyond what is possible from their own productive capacities (Krasner, 1976: 319-20 & Cameron, 1976: 1253). What this means is that, if European welfare states relied upon further entrenchment of markets beyond borders in order to fulfil their commitments, how expansive would market relations need to be to do the same the world round? And, how can we avoid the injustices that arise from this expansion? This leads to a second point that, when we reflect on what this means for those cosmopolitans seeking to globalise social democracy, there is a failure to consider the ways in which doing so relies upon the further entrenchment of capitalist relations in order to have the means to redress the injustices these relations are already producing. This is before we consider in what ways these accounts must wrestle with a neoliberal rationality that would provide an economised grid when considering how to entrench global social democracy.

Historically, social democracy at home has relied upon the exacerbation of conditions abroad, as Nancy Fraser (2021: 116) notes, when relying on the work of Timothy Mitchell (2009): 'All told, oil-fuelled social democracy at home rested on militarily imposed oligarchy abroad'. The point is that there is a connection between the social democracy enjoyed "at home" and the exacerbation of exploitative conditions abroad, which, despite being integral to debates about global social democracy, do not feature in contemporary cosmopolitan accounts. That is because globalisation is presented as something that occurs beyond (and above) states and which ought to be quickly wrestled back into a social democratic direction so it does not continue to seep back through the borders of affluent countries. What becomes obscured is the way in which rationalities that reproduce "globalisation" and the conditions for global structural injustices are negotiated and navigated across borders, including affluent ones. In response, I aim to think about the "here" and the "there" as two sides of the same coin in order to redress the imbalance and think of global justice as a totality. I do so by analysing the response to the financial

crash in 2008 and how neoliberal rationalities were negotiated across borders and the implications this had on material conditions within affluent countries.

The 2008 financial crash

The reason for choosing to analyse the 2008 financial crash is threefold. First, the crash itself was, and still is, a good example of the consequences of the entrenchment of a neoliberal global order. A crash of that magnitude was only made possible by globalised social relations, which meant that ruptures in one part of the world had a ripple effect across the globe. This not only evinces the power global economic systems have attained, but also how such an event foregrounds a globalised response. Second, the financial crash is a good example of how a globalised neoliberal rationality was able to remain hegemonic despite the failure of states not only to properly regulate banks, but also to facilitate the salience of the banking sector and financialisation more generally.⁵⁰ Third, this rationality was negotiated and navigated across borders, producing a range of different material consequences depending on the political, social, and economic context in which it was implemented. Despite these contextual differences, however, what we can see is that a neoliberal rationality is negotiated and navigated across borders not just beyond them.

I should stress that it is important to note that the rules and norms that underpinned the response to the financial crash were implemented within affluent countries as well as beyond them, pointing to the need for a totalising analysis of global social structures that includes but is not reducible to formal political institutions. Adopting this approach not only finalises the application of the abstract-concrete dialectic I introduced in the last chapter, it also responds to the two-tiered approach by contesting *the global* in global justice. The purpose of this section therefore is to evidence the changes that have taken place

⁵⁰ David Harvey (2020: Chapter II-V) has more recently argued that since 2008 neoliberalism has lost its legitimacy. But, with a failure to narrate an alternative, the capitalist class has relied on neo-conservatism and authoritarianism to paper over the cracks. Although I agree, it is not within the scope of this thesis to unpack these matters in more detail; the point that is important is that neoliberalism has not gone anywhere and the pertinence of my claims in this thesis therefore remain intact.

within affluent countries that demonstrate the way in which the rules and norms that undergird globalisation are perpetuated across borders, as well as showing that these abstractions have altered concrete social relations, and, in doing so, have reshaped and reproduced a global neoliberal-capitalist totality across time and space. To make my case, I refine my focus to the United Kingdom, but that is not to say that similar trends have not occurred across other industrialised countries.

To begin, it is important to consider the role the IMF (2010a, 2010b) played in narrating the crash and the structural adjustments that came in its wake. The IMF's (2010a: 4) response to the trend of 'fiscal activism...cushioned the adverse effects of the crisis'. Thus, it was 'now necessary to articulate a strategy to ensure the sustainability of public finances' (IMF, 2010a: 1). Otherwise, 'failure to do so would destabilize expectations, raise borrowing costs, and weaken the effect of the fiscal and monetary support now being provided' (IMF, 2010a: 1). The IMF (2010a: 1) argued that, 'letting the fiscal stimulus measures expire is only a first and relatively minor step'. The opportunism to respond to decades of "unsustainable" levels of debt-spending ratio is reflected by the longevity of the World Bank's response: 'a preferable strategy would aim to reduce debt ratios to more prudent levels in the medium term' (IMF, 2010a: 11). Therefore, 'the goal *should* be to present a comprehensive strategy aimed at lowering government debt over time to levels regarded as prudent *and to keep debt at those levels during the following decades*' (IMF, 2010a: 11; emphasis added). Interestingly, we can see that these methods are not only narrated as the only possible responses to the crash, but are also seen as long-term solutions once the dust has settled thereafter.

The crash was not, therefore, narrated as an example of what happens when a globalised banking system is improperly regulated, but as an opportunity to further unweave from the Keynesian model in the age of Western deindustrialisation. The possibility of responding by increasing various levels of taxation was not deemed a legitimate option, because 'the tax burden is already high in several advanced economies, which means that a large part of the adjustment *will have to* take place on the spending side' (IMF, 2010a: 26; emphasis added). The idea that the IMF's response is a matter of dealing with the unfortunate circumstances of the crash is overshadowed when the IMF (2010a: 17) clearly sees this

moment as presenting the opportunity to persevere with lasting structural adjustments: ‘growth-enhancing reforms, such as more competitive goods markets and removal of labor market and tax distortions, should be pursued with vigor, because they counteract the undesirable effects of population aging on growth and public spending’. The market rationality was thus applied to public services: ‘phasing out low-priority programs and ensuring maximum spending efficiency’ which is achieved by ‘prioritizing expenditures and enhancing the cost-effectiveness of public spending’ (IMF, 2010a: 34). There was no justification as to what these variables had to do with the crash and why they ought to be structurally reformed. The implication of this IMF (2010a) paper is to shift the focus away from the financial sector’s role in the crash – there is no reference to the recapitalisation of the banking system and calls for further regulation of the financial system – towards governments and the debt-ratio levels deemed unacceptable to a repositioning neoliberal rationality.

The attempt to normalise the logic of austerity was not only a long-term agenda, but also one that was professed to be necessary in all national contexts. In a separate report from this period, the IMF (2010b: 1; emphasis added) states that ‘the overarching objective is to attain strong, sustained, and balanced growth. This requires large scale fiscal adjustment when the recovery is securely underway, *normalizing* monetary policy while unwinding *crisis* monetary measures, gradually withdrawing financial sector support, and ensuring consistency of policies *both within and across countries*’. The universality of this approach across borders suggests it was not simply an economic tool used to control national debts and respond to the economic crash, but was a chance to achieve structural adjustment with implicit conditionalities. That is because, ‘if a country’s private and public sectors are both paying back debt at the same time, then the only way that a country can grow is by exporting more’ (Blyth, 2013: 9). However, not all countries can export at the same time because in order for an export-led approach to bring about economic growth, export-led countries require there to be other countries who have adopted an import-led approach in order to purchase the exports in question, and therefore, not all countries can implement austerity as a means to growth (Blyth, 2013: 10). This suggests that austerity was not a matter of ensuring economic growth, but was speciously justified on these grounds in order to implement widespread neoliberal reforms.

Interestingly, the logic of austerity was not only accepted in affluent countries, but also in non-affluent countries beyond where the financial crash had first ruptured. Isabel Ortiz and Matthew Cummins (2013) analysed the response taken by 128 developing countries. They found that in most developing countries there was a commitment to increased expenditure in the form of stimulus as an immediate response to the 2008 crash (Ortiz and Cummins, 2013: 57). After the first phase, developing countries largely adopted an approach of fiscal contraction (Ortiz and Cummins, 2013: 60-6). Notably, they adopted austerity policies regardless of whether indicators of economic recovery were present or not, and, importantly, did so even in cases where they were not dependent on IMF finances (Ortiz and Cummins, 2013: 65). The most recent attempts at structural adjustment by the IMF have come in the form of helping to reduce the set of reasonable options in both affluent and non-affluent countries. Hence, whilst global institutions set the tone of how countries ought to respond to events like the 2008 financial crash, austerity was not imposed onto “developing peoples”, but came about as the result of accepting a neoliberal rationality that reduces the possibility of responding otherwise.

The importance of analysing these papers is to get an abridged sense of the direction in which the global economic order was heading after the global financial crash. What differentiates this from seeing it as a case of “us” imposing an unjust order on “them” is that these reforms were also promoted within the boundaries of affluent countries. The neoliberal rules and norms that permeate throughout the IMF papers demonstrate the ontological frame through which remedies to the global financial crash were narrated. A financial crash that emanated from an international banking sector that was not regulated properly was able to be diagnosed as pertaining to the expenditure of states, which meant that the rational option was to alter the terms on which governments provided public services. The effects of these policies are inevitably different across time and space and it is not the case that these policies demonstrate that cosmopolitans ought to take them more seriously than injustices beyond borders. Nevertheless, these examples serve to reiterate there are recent reasons to believe what has long been

true, namely, that it is misguided to see globalisation as something that happens beyond and above the borders of affluent countries.

We can see that, after the crash, the role of the neoliberal state was cast as seeing itself as needing to further entrench a market rationality, whilst at the same time using the crash as an opportunity to transform the relationship between citizens and the welfare state in accordance to this rationality. That is why, when implementing austerity, what we saw was a shift away from discourse concerning an unregulated banking sector to one of a sovereign debt crisis (Blyth, 2013: 7). The fact that the state bailed out the banks not only meant that debts were socialised, but served to distract from the financial sector's role in producing the crisis to the state; states declared they had spent too much, 'ignoring the fact that this "spending" was the cost of saving their assets with the public purse' (Blyth, 2013: 15).⁵¹

Countries had the option to enact different responses to the 2008 financial crash, but limiting policies to austerity speaks to the salience of neoliberal rules and norms. The neoliberal rationality constructs the role of the state as one that orders itself in accordance to market principles and rationale; a rationality that was seen as the solution rather than the problem. The claim that governments were spending too much was not seen as contradictory to the decision for governments to expend trillions of dollars and pounds recapitalising the banking system. By December 2009, the UK government had expended £950bn saving the banks, and spent a further £512bn the following year (National Audit Office, 2011: 3). In the US, in the region of \$29tr was spent by the Federal Reserve on the bailout of financial institutions (Felkerson, 2011: 1). Importantly, what we see is the abstract-concrete dialectic in action, which the range of options limited to a neoliberal rationality that in turn alters concrete social relations. Importantly, if it can be shown that globalisation can be thought of as a set of rules and norms that are

⁵¹ This is why it is surprising that commentators continue to pedal the spurious notion that the austerity that followed the crash (and neoliberalism generally) could ever be said to be illustrative of 'the neoliberal dream of a small state' (Farnsworth and Irving, 2018: 462). Understanding neoliberalism as an ahistorical commitment to a small state, when, in fact, the state is a salient actor in bringing about the material conditions that reflect a neoliberal rationality undermines attempts both to understand neoliberalism, and importantly, to transcend it and the structural injustices it produces (examined in Chapter VI).

negotiated and navigated by a wide range of actors within and beyond formal institutional settings, cosmopolitans ought to take this into account and reflect upon what this means for justice *across* borders. To consider how a neoliberal rationality produces concrete social relations in its image, which, in turn, both shapes subjects and provides the material condition for neoliberalism to thrive, I analyse austerity policies in the UK.

UK austerity

Focussing on the UK, I turn my attention to analysing the effects of the structural adjustments made within affluent countries. In order to conclude this section, I will reflect on the structural transformations observed in the United Kingdom since 2010 as a prerequisite for contesting *the global* by calling for the inclusion of affluent countries within the global justice constellation. The depth of the structural adjustments that have occurred in the United Kingdom since 2010 should not be understated. The impact has been widespread, and there are at least some cuts that have been felt by most groups, including those middle-class groups who remain relatively well-off under austerity. For instance, the tripling of university tuition fees in the United Kingdom has landed many young people in debt that would have been seen as unimaginable in the decade prior to the crash. Having said that, we know that austerity disproportionately hits poorer communities, who rely more heavily on public services. We also know that austerity disproportionately affects certain groups, especially poor women (Pearson, 2019) and disabled people (Cross, 2013); evidence has shown that the unemployed and disabled were hit hardest by widening health inequalities (Reeves et al., 2013). Given the lack of space to do this case study justice, however, I will focus less on the intersection of these structural adjustments, although important, and focus on their continued impact on society's poorest.

In thinking about the financial crash using the framework of the abstract-concrete dialectic, it would be a mistake to focus exclusively on the changes to the concrete social relations as a result of austerity policies. In the period after the crash, the newly elected Coalition government in the UK presupposed austerity by shifting a sense of communalism away from a Keynesian rationality to a neoliberal

rationality. That is, away from a welfarist conception of communalism towards seeing the community as at its strongest when individual-entrepreneurial potential is unleashed. In 2011, Conservative Prime Minister David Cameron (2011) gave a speech introducing his concept of the “Big Society” and how this would change governing in the wake of the financial crash. In this speech, Cameron (2011: no pagination; emphasis added) stated:

‘It is actually social recovery as well as economic recovery. I think we need a social recovery, because as I have said lots of times in the past, there are too many parts of our society that are broken, whether it is broken families or whether it is some communities breaking down; whether it is the level of crime, the level of gang membership; whether it’s problems of people stuck on welfare, unable to work; whether it’s the sense that some of our public services don’t work for us – we do need a social recovery to mend the broken society... I think it is a different way of governing... it’s actually enterprise, *it’s entrepreneurship that is going to make this agenda work.*’

Against the backdrop of a broken society about to struggle from the consequences of austerity, the economic recovery is bound up with a social recovery in which entrepreneurialism is able to fix social ills. The construction of a neoliberal agent that can, through their own self-entrepreneurialism, remedy the structural ills in their communities set the stage for the changes to the concrete social relations that austerity policies produced. In addition, casting Britain as broken *prior* to austerity, meant that attempts to account for the negative consequences austerity was having on communities could be explained away as a lack of personal responsibility. What we see is a sense of communalism concerned with “making your community a better place”: an atomised individual is constructed in terms of entrepreneurialism fit for navigating this structurally adjusted social reality. To see how this neoliberal rationality moulded material conditions that brought about structural injustices, I will outline some of the implications of these structural adjustments.

One of the most impactful changes that came as part of a widespread austerity package was reforms to benefit (welfare) payments, for instance, given to the unemployed or those with a disability. The attempt to realign citizens in accordance to the Big Society came in the form of sanctioning welfare recipients, often for trivial reasons. For example, one young couple's address was incorrectly recorded by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), resulting in them being sanctioned for a month for failure to attend job centre meetings they were unaware were scheduled (Butler, 2015). David Clapston was sanctioned for missing one job centre appointment, yet only three weeks later he died. As a diabetic, he died from a lack of money to purchase food and pay for the electricity that powered the fridge where he stored his insulin (Ryan, 2013).

Whilst this is certainly one of the worst cases, benefit sanctions are no exception, but were structurally widespread in the years after the crash: between the imposition of new benefit rules in October 2012 and June 2013 (the month David was sanctioned), 580,000 sanctions were imposed on benefit claimants (DWP, 2013: 5).⁵² Benefit sanctions resulted in the proliferation of food poverty and an increased reliance on foodbanks in the decade that followed the crash. The UK's biggest supplier of emergency food parcels, the Trussell Trust (2014), reported that 913,138 people had received three days of emergency food compared to 346,992 in 2013-14. The main reason quoted for foodbank use was as a direct result of benefit sanctions (Trussell Trust, 2014).⁵³

Benefit sanctions are but one trend that occurred in the UK after the coalition government was elected in the wake of the financial crash and drove austerity at all costs. The magnifying glass could be placed over the long list of austerity measures that were imposed in the "lost decade" between 2010 and 2020. This includes but is not restricted to the following structural adjustments between 2010 and 18: local

⁵² This is not to say that this is the first time that benefit sanctions have been used. Jamie Redman (2019: 85) notes that reference to welfare dependency as a precursor to attempts to sanction benefit recipients dates back to the 1980s. My point is simply that such sanctions were again weaponised in an attempt to create the material conditions in which only neoliberal subjects were rendered fit to withstand and navigate this emerging material architecture.

⁵³ Some conservative commentators claimed that the proliferation of food banks should be celebrated, as they were an example of the Big Society in action (see Nelson, 2015).

council budgets were cut by 49 percent, resulting in local authorities being left with no choice but to restrict the services they provided (Maguire and Chakelian, 2018). This has included the abandonment of rebuilding secondary schools in need of vast improvements, in addition to cutting the Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA) to students from disadvantaged backgrounds (Maguire and Chakelian, 2018). There have been drastic cutbacks in community institutions that provided a range of support, particularly in poorer communities, which are placed under great strain: more than 600 youth centres closed, with a loss of 3,650 staff; as did an estimated 1,000 Sure Start centres, which provided pre-school learning, health, and childcare assistance to poor families; 478 libraries closed and a further 230,000 hours of opening times were lost (Maguire and Chakelian, 2018). There have been drastic transformations in social care, with a (real term) 5.8 percent decrease in social care spending, despite already long-term underfunding and an ageing population; and a £950m reduction in spending on legal aid that enables those without the resources to defend themselves in court (Maguire and Chakelian, 2018).

These examples suggest, however, that all services were cut and make it tempting to conclude that this represented “the rolling back of the state”. We can see how this is not the case when we consider, for example, the UK’s National Health Service (NHS) and the reforms that this institution has undergone in recent years. The NHS remains free to any citizen who requires its services. That said, rather than seeing the fact that it is free as an example of it managing to withstand neoliberal reforms, it has actually taken up the mantle of a market rationality. The most altering set of reforms since the creation of the NHS came in 2012, when the UK coalition government passed the Health and Social Care Act 2012 (Health and Social Care Act, 2012). How healthcare is now provided to citizens aligns with a neoliberal rationality of market efficiency and competition (see Health and Social Care Act, 2012: § 75). It is not, then, that the state has reneged on its reasonability to provide healthcare, but that it continues to provide healthcare that is justified on the basis of market metrics.

We can start to see, then, how neoliberal rationalities were successfully narrated as the only tenable response to the global financial crash, and provided the space to restructure public services as well as

how they were delivered, and thus impressed on the material world, producing a range of structural injustices as result. Moreover, we can see how this was brought about in a relatively short period of time by those with the norm-shaping agency to alter the material conditions in this way. Again, these structural injustices can only be made sense of if we acknowledge the wider neoliberal context and where it plays out. Moreover, we can see that within affluent countries there have been structural adjustments that show how the neoliberal rationality that underpins globalisation was also navigated and negotiated across borders, which impacted on relations within affluent countries. What is more, the neoliberal rationality that was negotiated by the IMF and the UK national government that followed, shows both the relationship between how a neoliberal-capitalist totality is reproduced across time and space and how this rationality fundamentally altered citizens' material relationship with the state in ways that are important to consider when it comes to matters of structural justice.

Moreover, reflecting upon these changes has implications for cosmopolitan theories of justice. If cosmopolitans are committed to the welfare of individuals wherever they reside, then it is important that they begin to theorise and reflect upon the changes observed in affluent countries and what this means for their theories of justice. Remaining committed to globalising a conception of justice that has been transformed within affluent countries as well as beyond them is no longer tenable. A commitment to ideal theory renders cosmopolitanism immobile to the changes within affluent countries as well as the changes in the rules and norms that underpin the processes associated with globalisation that must alter the way we think about justice.⁵⁴

⁵⁴ The same criticism can be made against liberal nationalists/statist accounts on the basis that they continue to promote a Keynesian conception of justice, only in this case, they do so whilst remaining wedded to the Westphalian frame. Their arguments rely upon an idealised conception of intra-state solidarity that co-members of a particular political community possess, say, a national imaginary and shared history (see Miller 1997, 2007). However, it has been argued that a neoliberal rationality has undermined intra-state modes of solidarity, creating an atomised economic agent, whose duties are to themselves and their families (Brown, 2015: 217). If so, the basis of solidarity upon which redistributive mechanisms rely is undermined. These accounts, therefore, often rely upon an idealised conception of solidarity that is said to only be present amongst co-members of nation states but absent when it comes to grounding cosmopolitan duties. Nevertheless, liberal nationals and statist would likewise be required to reflect upon what these reforms mean for the solidarity upon which their justifications for remaining wedded to the Westphalian framework rest.

In the following section, I wish to show how the neoliberal-capitalist totality produces a range of expectations and shapes agential conduct in ways that produce certain structural injustices that arise across borders. I focus on the role of tech giants, like Amazon, in shaping producers and consumers that are conducive to ever-pervasive and exploitative practices. I do so to evidence that the neoliberal-capitalist totality produces injustices across borders in complex webs of supply chains that blur the distinction between those producing structural injustices and those subjected to them. It should be said, I am not implying that the major tech companies I analyse exist as a result of the structural transformations considered above. Rather, I zoom in on another part of the neoliberal-capitalist totality within affluent countries and consider how structural injustices are reproduced across borders. Unlike Iris Marion Young's (2011) social connection model that focusses on how "we" are connected to injustices inflicted upon "them", the focus here is more on global social structures and how they are shaped and navigated by a wide range of actors, producing structural injustices across borders. The example of tech giants blurs the line running through the two-tiered approach to global justice, and therefore illustrates how these injustices across borders are two sides of the same coin.

Structural injustice across borders: the case of Amazon and Co.

The purpose of this section is to continue to think in totalising terms, but to do so in a way that moves beyond global institutions and national governments and their policy consequences, instead, focussing on the more subtle and everyday ways in which a neoliberal rationality shapes certain agential behaviours that produce structural harms across borders. What I wish to show is that an important part of understanding broader global social structures is to think about the way in which powerful actors and individuals shape and are shaped by a neoliberal rationality. This means that the types of policies examined above are not unrelated to the shift in consumer trends we have seen in recent decades, but are certainly not reducible to them. Furthermore, I use this section to reflect upon the comparative arguments, examined in Section I, to demonstrate that the notion of "affluent Westerners" ostentatiously purchasing items that reflect the stark inequalities across borders, on a structural reading, can be thought of as part of a broader social structure that pressures consumers to buy goods that reproduces structural

injustices across borders. This approach to analysing these phenomena thinks in terms of a totality that acts in accordance to certain rationalities and produces injustices “here” and “there”; that are shaped by and themselves shape agential behaviours across borders. I will now analyse recent trends in contemporary consumerism.

What we might refer to as consumerism has drastically changed in recent years, and thus warrants new ways of thinking about the injustices such practices produce. In previous chapters, we saw how Iris Marion Young (2004, 2006, 2011) relied on apparel-producing sweatshops as an example of a structural injustice. The supply chains of apparel brands contained within them exploitative practices for those working in the sweatshops that supply their goods. The purpose of drawing the reader’s attention to this industry was to demonstrate how the actions of many actors produce the structural injustice of sweatshop labour. Although consumers only form part of the agents who produce sweatshop working conditions, they were nevertheless cast by Young (2011: Chapter IV) as helping to produce sweatshop working conditions in the Global South when purchasing cheap apparel. Whilst victims are said to remain responsible for fighting oppressive social structures, the focus on particular structural injustices, rather than the broader social structures, means that a distinction is still drawn between those who perpetuate injustices and those who are subjected to them (Young, 2011: 145). Whilst this analysis is not wrong per se, I argue that we need a more complete picture that analyses how consumers come to be purchasers and thus implicate themselves in global social structures and the harms they produce, whilst at the same time being victims, of sorts, of oppressive social structures.

What I want to do is introduce a slightly more complicated picture, one in which global social structures are understood in more totalising terms in which agents are shaped by and shape a neoliberal-capitalist totality that produces structural injustices across borders. This means that social structures are seen as oppressive in shaping the behaviours that produce structural injustices and not just in producing the structural injustices themselves. I want to suggest that this analysis can be supplemented by focussing less on the flow of injustice from “here” to “there” in a two-tiered tone, and instead approach the example with a more totalising analysis with no start and end point. What I mean by no start and end

point, is to say that oppressive social structures of the kind that produce sweatshop labour conditions themselves rely upon shaping and moulding the kind of consumers that purchase goods that reproduce these injustices. In so doing, global social structures encourage certain behaviours that can themselves be thought of as structural injustices rather than actions that simply produce them elsewhere. We can note this whilst still accepting that the biggest victims of these social relations are those who are subjected to injustices like sweatshop working conditions. What I mean by no start and end point, then, is that it is not straightforward to discern where the action that produces structural injustices begins and ends. It is more accurate to think about all these actions as taking place within a broader neoliberal-capitalist totality that produces a wide range of structural injustices across borders when enough agents accept its driving rationality and act accordingly.

To think about the changes in consumerism, let us reflect upon the commonplace framing of the changes that have been brought about by a particularly technically-driven marketplace for goods: technological advancements are able to better respond to consumer demands and shift production accordingly. The prevalent narration insists that tech giants are simply responding to consumer demands for cheap goods and expedient service (see Taplin, 2014: 254; Ram, 2016). Of course, it would be wrong to suggest that there is not some truth to this, given the ability to use technology to better get a sense of the products that are selling well and those which are not. Nevertheless, framing the changes in consumerism as such obscures from analysis the ways in which tech giants have used their technological apparatus to construct a consumer and producer that perpetuate structural injustices across borders. What is perpetuated is the idea that the consumer is increasingly impatient because of a spontaneous desire to receive goods at a fraction of the cost and in a fraction of the time. Instances of impatience are all around us with fast-fashion brands (e.g. ASOS, 2022; Pretty Little Thing, 2022; Misguided, n.d.; and Boohoo, 2022) offering cheap subscriptions that ensure free next-day delivery and free returns on all items.

This system encourages consumers to “purchase” many items in one go and return most, if not all, of them once they have tried them on at home. The result has seen a proliferation of poor working conditions across borders, including within affluent countries. With the increased demand for fast

fashion, production of these products has proliferated in the United Kingdom, bringing with it many of the sweatshop working conditions outlined by Young (2004; 2006; 2011): the diffusion of the supply-chain into small garment factories; a business model with small margin for error, reliant upon high volume and quick turnaround time; workers being paid an average of £3 per hour, with an estimated £1 million a week in unpaid wages in the East Midlands alone; mistreatment by management with threats, humiliation, and the refusal of toilet breaks is rife; and a lack of formal employment contracts (Hammer et al., 2015: 8-11; 22; 35). The majority of these workers were women from Eastern Europe, the Middle East, North Africa, and South Asia (Hammer et al., 2015: 27); showing how globalisation continues to come full circle and reproduce a stock of exploitable (gendered) labour within affluent countries.

The demand for the expedient delivery of goods has also created an auxiliary delivery industry that has seen the proliferation of delivery drivers with precarious employment conditions. In some cases, they reported working some hours for free, given that they are required to sort through the parcels before leaving and they are only paid for the time they are out delivering (Rawlinson, 2021). Often classed as self-employed, delivery drivers use their own cars and are deprived of workers' rights such as sick pay and paid holiday.⁵⁵ The perpetuation of this system of free-returns and intrusive advertising plays a major role in the production of environmental structural injustices. The offer of free-returns increases demand for products, with as many as 25% of online orders in the UK being returned by consumers (Ram, 2016). Some of these items are repackaged and resold, but many end up in landfill (Constable, 2021). This produces detrimental environmental consequences as well as placing additional pressure on supply chains that produces structural injustices across borders.

⁵⁵ Recently, these trends have been undermined by industrial and legal action. The delivery service DPD recently gave workers the option to become employees, providing them with sick pay and holiday pay, or remain self-employed (Booth, 2018). DPD's decision to define their workers and full employees came after a worker put off attending medical appointments to treat his diabetes for fear of being fined for failing to show up to work; he later died as a result of the damage to his kidneys (Booth, 2018: no pagination). The UK Supreme Court recently ruled that Uber drivers were, in fact, employees and were therefore entitled to full workplace rights (Russon, 2021). The persistent difficulties of labour challenging the neoliberal state are, however, illustrated by Uber successfully expending \$200m to overturn a California state law that had likewise mandated the redefinition of the employment status of drivers in order for them to receive employment benefits protected by law (Paul, 2020).

The ripple effect of these consumer habits is prone to the kind of analysis advanced by the cosmopolitans assessed in Section I; namely, that the levels of opulence observed in the West are morally obscene when contrasted with the dire conditions many are subjected to. This state of affairs, however, suggests we ought to unpack the broader social structures, and where they play out, rather than simply graft redistributive principles of justice onto an order that continues to reproduce these conditions. Moreover, such modes of redistribution do little to note that the opulence observed in the West is not particularly freeing or non-exploitative in its own right, especially for those who work for these companies within the borders of countries in which such displays of opulence are used as examples for prioritising “global” justice at the expense of what is happening in affluent countries. In what follows, I aim to illustrate that the blurred distinction between producer and consumer relies upon particularly pervasive and intrusive tactics that have seen the reproduction of a system built on exploitation. The purpose of doing so is to try and shift our focus away from a two-tiered approach, and consider the way in which a global neoliberal rationality shaped by individuals, at the same time, shapes agential conduct. My main point is that the way in which companies construct consumers compatible with the exploitation upon which their business models rest, is as much a relevant part of the story as the forms of structural harms these structures produce. This remains true even if we wish to remain committed to concluding that sweatshop working conditions are more exploitative than the pressure people are placed under to consume cheap goods.

The focus on “consumer behaviour” places the blame for perpetuating unjust supply chains at the feet of consumers. It should be noted that the pervasive and intrusive tactics that tech giants employ do not absolve consumers of responsibility to, say, lessen their impact on the environment. What is important, however, is not to render an individualised way of looking at the exploitation produced at the expense of a more nuanced structural analysis. Consider the way in which tech giants like Amazon need not rely upon the advertising on televisions and newspapers, but can produce tailored adverts that appeal to potential customers through their smartphones, meaning that ‘over time [these platforms] have come to form part of the infrastructure of their lives’ (Culpepper and Thelen, 2020: 295). The tactics include

emailing potential consumers to encourage them to complete their abandoned online purchase, along with targeted ads on social media platforms that are tailored to show goods that one is likely to purchase. Other potential barriers preventing consumers from purchasing have also been lessened by companies (e.g. Klarna) that offer interest-free payment plans allowing consumers to defer a payment or spread it out over a monthly payment plan (Smith, 2021).

This construction and heightened demand for consumer products relies on an auxiliary industry that uses pervasive tactics to ensure repeated consumption. This is an industry associated with social media “influencers” who carefully construct a “candid” online image that places products at the heart of the desirable life they are said to lead. These tactics in the broadest sense are nothing new – perfume, car, and cigarette adverts long used the image of the good-looking, well-accomplished man and woman whose lives are infinitely better as a result of purchasing the advertised products. What is new, are the pervasive mediums and tactics that are able to share these adverts in ways never seen before. For example, the influencer who, instead of acting in an advert, opens up their social media accounts to branding collaborations, where they showcase an idyllic lifestyle from morning to night, wearing and using the latest fashion and beauty products (de Perthuis and Findlay, 2019). The posts of influencers are often indistinguishable, at first glance, from friends’ posts. What is more, the line between influencers and potential consumers is becoming blurred, with an increasing number of “ordinary” users being approached by brands for subtle product placement, which means the promotion of certain goods and lifestyles is seamlessly entangled with everyday social interaction. The construction of an agent who is quite often simultaneously a producer and consumer, making use of apps that are sold as helping friends connect, is, in fact, increasingly constructed in relation to an entrepreneurial capital (Brown, 2015: 33).

Until now, we have largely reflected upon how a neoliberal rationality has impressed on the material world in ways that are important to understanding structural injustices. We can see, however, the dialectical relationship between the abstract and the concrete when we consider how the conditions outlined above are also made possible by changes to people’s material conditions. A proliferation of

precarious work has seen employees' skill-sets rendered obsolete or waning in applicability in a relatively short period of time (Kalleberg, 2011: Chapter V). The practice of auditing and benchmarking often requires employees to spend time demonstrating the value or impact of their work as well as, or instead of, actually doing the job itself (Costea et al., 2008). Workers now with the technological advancements to work from home find that an 'always online culture' is prevalent, with an increasing number of employees expected, or feeling expected, to respond to work emails outside of their contracted hours (Stawarz et al., 2013: 1384). We can see, therefore, how a neoliberal rationality and neoliberal social relations are crafted in each other's image.

These expectations have only been complicated and exacerbated further by Covid-19, where many workers have been working from home and failing to draw the line between the workplace and home life. A totality approach to global injustices, therefore, is better able to capture the individually endured forms of structural injustice, or what we might call the structural pressures agents are placed under. Instead of considering "our" connection to global structural injustices like sweatshops, we can think about the other parts of the process that themselves rely upon exploitative conditions to produce a wide range of structural injustices across borders. The focus is on how a neoliberal-capitalist totality shapes and encourages certain behaviours that are themselves debilitating and oppressive to those performing them. The neoliberal agent is thus transformed from the selfish consumer to someone overworked and subjected to a range of social pressures that produce oppressive social relations that they simultaneously produce and are subjected to.

It would be misleading, therefore, to suggest that consumer demands spontaneously arise as a result of the "spoilt Westerner" whose access to basic resources is so extensive that they cannot possibly wait for superfluous material goods to be delivered to their door. We can think about the way in which Amazon has fundamentally restructured consumer expectations about how long is reasonable for a good to be delivered once purchased online: when advertising Prime – a subscription service that allows members to purchase items with free next-day delivery for a small annual fee – Amazon used the slogan 'not for patient people' (Subramanian, 2019). It is not, however, that the consumer has become less

patient, rather, this image has been constructed both by the tactics of major corporations and the macro-structural conditions that produce impatient consumers.

In sum, the oscillation between an abstract rationality, on the one hand, and the concrete material conditions it shapes on the other, is something that takes place within affluent countries, and, if someone is serious about challenging oppressive global social structures, they must reflect upon how to disrupt this totality. In so doing, a two-tiered approach to justice is rejected in favour of thinking in terms of a globalised neoliberal-capitalist totality that is reshaped and reproduced by agents across borders. Cosmopolitan thought ought to include what is going on in affluent countries within the broader global justice constellation.

Conclusion

To recap, the purpose of this chapter was to apply the abstract-concrete dialectic to another part of the broader neoliberal-capitalist totality. I achieved this by drawing attention to the failure within debates about global justice to reflect upon the spatial assumptions concerning what someone means when they refer to the “global” in global justice theory. Normally, “global” refers to those social processes and injustices that arise “there” in spatial contexts beyond the borders of affluent countries. What I attempted to contest was what I referred to as a two-tiered approach to global justice that rests on a distinction between “here” and “there”; overlooking how the processes of globalisation are reproduced and reshaped across borders. I argued that, despite differences in the severity between many of the structural injustices that arise beyond borders, the two-tiered approach forgoes analysis of global social structures as a totalising system operating across borders.

Alternatively, I attempted to contest the idea that globalisation – a force that refers to a much wider set of social relations than formal institutional settings – is something that is only reproduced above and beyond the borders of affluent countries. To provide historical relevance to this otherwise enigmatic

argument, the focus was on the way in which a neoliberal-capitalist totality could be thought of as consisting of an abstract neoliberal rationality that shaped the concrete material world *across* borders. To evidence this, this chapter analysed the structural adjustments in the United Kingdom after the 2008 financial crash. The assessment of how a neoliberal rationality framed what constituted a reasonable response to the financial crash was consistent across borders to the extent that doubt was cast on the tenability of justice beyond borders. Hence, globalisation was not something done by developed countries to everyone else, nor was it something that was exogenous; it was negotiated and implemented across borders in accordance to a shared neoliberal rationality. This chapter then turned to the changes in consumerism and global supply chains.

The purpose of telling a more nuanced story about the consumer habits of predominately Western consumers aimed to evidence how global social structures should be thought of as a totality that rely upon the perpetuation of lots of different moments in order to function in the way they do. That is to say, it is not simply the case that agents in one location spontaneously make choices that, unintentionally, produce global structural injustices like sweatshop labour. The perpetual dialectical abstract-concrete tension means that to focus on the way in which structural injustices arise from aggregated individual action does not tell us about the broader context within which this action takes place. It is also the case that social structures place pressure on agents to be the types of consumers that perpetuate wider social structures. We can think less about the way in which we are all connected to particular structural injustices, but think more about the way in which global social structures shape our world, as well as are shaped by us, in ways that produce a range of injustices across borders.

The overall aim was to dislodge the two-tiered approach to global justice and frame the analysis in more totalising terms by reflecting on the way in which abstract rules and norms shape the material world, and vice versa. A totalising approach, although expansive and ambitious, avoids differentiating between “here” and “there” to the extent that the broader rules and norms that transcend borders are not typified. In the next chapter, I analyse how a neoliberal-capitalist totality that is reproduced by an abstract-concrete dialectic might be dislodged. I aim to demystify the social structures, which often appear

objective and natural, by reflecting upon the ways in which transnational social movements are not simply attempting to reform the material world shaped by a neoliberal rationality, but are also challenging the rationality itself in ways that can transcend the neoliberal-capitalist totality. This is a difficult task because normally, as has been argued, theories of structural injustice have neglected the abstract level and thus are prone to reproducing the oppressive social structures by attempting to reform, rather than transform, the concrete social reality they have produced. However, despite it being a difficult and often obscure task, I aim to show that many transnational social movements have the capacity to disrupt both sides of the abstract-concrete dialectic, showcasing the potentiality for replacing oppressive social structures with something more preferable.

Chapter VI: Structural justice: dislodging the abstract-concrete dialectic

The previous chapters of this thesis have offered a new way of thinking about global structural injustices within debates about cosmopolitan justice. My central argument has been that existing structural injustice approaches are limited in their failure to capture the rules and norms (i.e. social abstractions) that shape agential behaviour. Having set this problem up in Part I, the thesis then spent most of Part II addressing the implications of this intervention. In particular, I sought to demonstrate the value of the abstract-concrete dialectic for examining global structural injustices and how it can better capture how they emerge and the social relations reproducing them. Having done so, I considered what this meant for spatial considerations in global justice debates; arguing that, because social abstractions are negotiated and navigated across borders, cosmopolitans ought to think in terms of totality, reject a two-tiered approach to justice, and, as a result, commit to justice across borders. The next step is to consider what this all means in the pursuit of structural justice.

When we reflect on this thesis more broadly, we can see that it has adopted what has been referred to as a critical cosmopolitan approach (adopted in Chapter II), which is committed to considering how to transform present social structures. This led the thesis (chapters III and IV) to examine what it is about present oppressive social structures and how they operate that can tell us something about what it is we ought to do to move beyond the current order of things. In other words, this thesis unpacked, ontologically speaking, what it is we mean by social structures and how they are reproduced across time and space, which inevitably alters, normatively speaking, what it is we ought to do in response. In attempting to bring these threads together, this chapter will argue that the consequence of my alternative structural injustice framework lends itself to a more transformative, rather than reformist, approach to structural justice; which asserts that we must disrupt the abstract *and* concrete sides of the dialectic in order to transcend the present neoliberal-capitalist totality across borders. What is more, as a consequence of the analysis conducted in Chapter V, this should take place across borders, both within and outside formal institutional settings.

In the following pages, it will be argued that the task of transformation is essential in order to ensure that neoliberal rationalities do not persist even after attempts to transform present social structures at

the concrete level have been successful. It is in this sense that my critical cosmopolitan alternative lends itself to a more transformative structural justice, when compared to Young, precisely because it goes further than simply reforming present concrete social relations. Instead, it continues up to the abstract level that reproduces these concrete social relations in the first place. Yet, what I attempt to show is that reforms and transformation should be thought of in tandem, a crucial component of bringing together a virtù-minded structural justice that is never truly closed but always contested and transformative. Having reconceptualised what we mean by social structures and how they are reproduced, I consider what this reconceptualisation means when it comes to doing something about oppressive social structures.

This chapter is broken into three sections. In Section I, I briefly return to the work of Iris Marion Young (2011) to reflect upon the implications for structural justice when our two accounts are contrasted. I argue that, because her account does not unpack the rules and norms that shape global structural injustices, it becomes vulnerable to being co-opted by the inequalities present when movements contend with formal institutions. I also argue that shifting our analysis to the abstract level means we can theorise about the possibility of social movements being appropriated by a neoliberal rationality, and thus failing to surpass the social forces that movements collectivised to transcend. I distinguish between *co-option* – referring to both the ideational forces and the structural inequalities that shape outcomes within formal institutional settings – and *appropriation* – referring to the more subtle ways in which social movements frame their activism in accordance to hegemonic rationalities. I take appropriation one step further by arguing that even those social movements that take up the mantle of attempting to transcend neoliberalism will often fail to do so if their reading of neoliberalism itself is skewed either towards a more concrete-economic understanding (e.g. Harvey, 2005) or a more abstract-rationality reading (e.g. Foucault, 2008). In response to this problem, I argue that a two-pronged reading of neoliberalism, grounded in Chapter IV, can help us theorise about how to transcend neoliberalism at the abstract and concrete levels. I conclude this section by asserting that reforms to the concrete social relations do little to dislodge the broader neoliberal-capitalist totality, and need to be supplemented by an approach to structural justice that aims to simultaneously agitate at the abstract *and* concrete levels.

In Section II, I attempt to reassert the importance of thinking about the abstract and the concrete as two sides of the same coin, and thus that they should be thought of in tandem when it comes to transcending oppressive social structures. In making this case, I rely on the work of Rosa Luxemburg (2006) to examine how we might ensure that social movements do not see the amelioration of present concrete social relations as antithetical to attempting to transcend the broader social abstractions. I introduce Luxemburg's (2006) argument for reform *and* revolution, reflecting upon its transferability in grounding the account of structural justice I propose in this chapter. I then return to Bonnie Honig's (1993) distinction between a virtue and virtù politics, to argue for a virtù-minded approach that is able to reposition itself and retreat from formal institutional settings in order to avoid ideational and institutional forms of co-option, as well as to mitigate ideological appropriation. I conclude this section by clarifying that there are no guarantees; structural justice will often fail to meet its own demands and will produce remainders of its own. Nevertheless, I do so to set the stage for analysing social movements that have the potential to actualise a structural justice that this thesis can endorse.

In Section III, I examine transnational feminist and ecological struggles to highlight the potential they have to align with my critical cosmopolitan framework. I focus on the former to outline how transnational feminist movements have fought for reforms to concrete social relations, whilst at the same time reflecting upon the broader gendered abstractions that brought these struggles to bear. I also note how transnational feminist movements have the potential to remain universal in their approach without collapsing into an universalism that refers to abstracted "individuals". I then assess ecological struggles, less so to focus on their potential for operating at the abstract and concrete levels and more to unpack the potential this ecological zeitgeist possesses. In doing so, I defend Nancy Fraser's (2021) assertion that this ecological moment contains within it a transformative potential in which a new common sense is up for grabs. This means that ecological struggles contain within them a broad potential located at the level of citizens, collectives, and movements tasked not simply to focus on reformist policies but to question our fundamental relationship with nature. It is here that the potential contained within this moment comes to the fore inasmuch as it has normalised transformative reflection

and debate within everyday life that frames emancipatory “environmental” and “non-environmental” struggles alike.

Taken together, I essentially argue that the movements considered in this section are illustrative of a praxis consistent with my theoretical framework.

Failing to transcend the abstract-concrete dialectic

In previous chapters, I have attempted to ground an alternative approach to cosmopolitanism that better analyses global social structures as a totality, which takes seriously its abstract *and* concrete composition. Doing so means that there are a number of different considerations for structural justice when compared to accounts that focus exclusively on the aggregation of agential action (e.g. Young, 2011). Those accounts that do so preface a structural justice whereby those who are connected are, to various degrees, collectively responsible for ameliorating the injustice in question (Young, 2011: 110). Consequently, the focus on how to conduct collective action to this end, whilst vague, remains committed to those changes that seek to reform the concrete social relations brought about by the neoliberal-capitalist totality. For example, Young (2004: 388) calls for assisting workers in unionising to improve the working conditions of sweatshops rather than attempting to bring about global social structures that do not produce sweatshop working conditions.

Failing to critically assess the abstract level means that reforms can only serve to tweak the current social structures and does little in the way of transcending them. One may wish to note that Young’s claims do not necessarily preclude this possibility. Indeed, if we point out the need to redress the lack of analysis of the ideational context and how it shapes structural injustices, one might conclude that we must simply continue to share responsibility to resist and disrupt at the abstract level. However, we can see this is not possible from within the incumbent structural injustice framework because present attempts to alter oppressive social structures – ‘forms of collective action designed to change the incentive structures, alter the constraints, or shift the distribution of benefits in continuing to buy and

sell goods manufactured by superexploited workers' (Young, 2004: 388) – rest upon using the neoliberal rationalities and tools bestowed by present social structures, and thus fail to transcend its internal logic. That is because the language of incentives, benefits, and distribution fails to consider how we might move towards a condition in which we can transcend the injustice of sweatshop working conditions beyond making minor reforms to global supply chains that are taken as a given. We can still suggest that improvements in working conditions are desirable, and thus ought to play a role in strategies for reforms, whilst ensuring we do not at the same time reify the current order of things by implicitly reproducing the notion that we cannot reasonably transcend oppressive social structures. If so, then what kind of problems does a structural justice run into when it remains committed to reforms at the concrete level at the expense of the abstract?

Structural justice at the concrete level

Attempts to make inroads at the concrete level mean that the obstacles social movements face tend to be expressed in terms of the powerful and the institutional tools they have at their disposal when compared to social movements that lack resources and formal power. The term *co-option* is often used to refer to the ways in which activists' aims are diluted by the powerful in formal institutional arenas. This refers to the process by which, when activists see fit to attempt to either engage with or enter formal institutional settings, powerful actors are able to manipulate the aims and objectives to their own ends (Young, 2001; Dryzek, 2000; Bohman, 1996). For instance, John Dryzek (2000: 97) notes that, in instances when state officials do not have good reason to include movements into state practice and deliberation, 'then presumably the group in question must moderate its stance in order to fit with established state imperatives'. We can also think about movements that enter a coercive institution, and, over time, their aims and objectives become less radical as they begin to align with the institution's bureaucratic procedures. In these instances, social movements assimilate and do little to hold institutional practices to account (Dryzek, 2000: 97).

Co-option, at least as I employ the term, is institutional in the sense that not needing to compromise relies upon structural inequalities within institutional settings that ensure that social movements do not threaten the dominance of the powerful within them. That is to say, co-option is only made real because what makes the powerful powerful, as such, is that they have at their disposal institutional mechanisms that either can be operationalised to retain power or the mechanisms themselves are set up in such a way as to produce the same outcome. To consider how social movements ought to proceed, Iris Marion Young's (2001) paper *Activist challenges to deliberative democracy* places a hypothetical activist in conversation with a hypothetical deliberative democrat. The activist believes social movements ought to embark on disruptive tactics outside of formal institutional settings, whereas the deliberative democrat argues that such tactics do little to alter democratic outcomes because there is nobody striving for change from within the system (Young, 2001: 671). The deliberative democrat, therefore, believes in getting people with a range of opinions in one place to develop policies and outcomes each have contributed to; whilst the activist points out that these institutional settings are unequal and time is better spent drawing attention to these imbalances via external forms of disruptive politics (Young, 2001: 673).

The type of structural inequalities the activist is referring to include what James Bohman (1996: 125) calls political poverty, namely, when citizens are unable to 'participate effectively in the democratic process and their consequent vulnerability to the intended and unintended consequences of decisions'. This is particularly true of marginalised groups whose values are not recognised by dominant groups, in addition to only possessing limited resources and time to be able to fully partake in democratic procedures (Bohman, 1996: 125-29). When citizens do not have access to the same information and resources they become excluded from the democratic process (Bohman, 1996: 130). In cases of political poverty, Young's (2001: 679) deliberative democrat is attentive to these limitations and looks to 'the good citizen' who ought to 'vigorously advocate for creative ways to expand the publicity of deliberations about problems and policy proposals and make them inclusive'. The activist remains unconvinced, noting how, in the context of structural inequalities, 'advantaged actors have greater

access to the deliberative process and therefore are able to dominate the proceedings with their interests and perspectives' (Young, 2001: 679).

What remains missing from this account is that, whilst it acknowledges that there are limits to operating within the present system, calls to protest from outside aim to alert the powerful to the institutional inequalities they benefit from and ask them to do something about them. This precludes those forms of activism and resistance that aim to draw attention to social structures in an attempt to transcend them. What we often see is that social movements are thought of as reaching their pinnacle when working *with* the powerful to alter present social structures in order to make them fairer, rather than agitating for more radical transformations. This occurs with regard to structural justice: Young (2011: 150) frames the problem as protestors who run the risk of being repressed by the powerful, on the one hand, and the powerful being let off of the hook if protestors are too concerned about being repressed, on the other.

In an attempt to find a middle ground, Young (2011: 150) settles for a tactic where 'the responsible stance of those with a primary interest in undermining injustice is not to blame the powerful, the ones whose interest it is to perpetuate the structures, but rather to publicly hold them to account'. On this reading, in order to hold the powerful to account, collectives must not only be able to draw attention to how the powerful benefit from structural injustices, but also rely upon the same powerful elites and the institutional arrangements they dominate in order to bring about their aims and objectives. The forms of protest and resistance are further diluted by calls to ensure that attempts at structural justice do not blame those who benefit from the status quo. We can now see how the powerful can co-opt social movements in this context and strive to find a middle ground that does little to transcend oppressive social structures that are weighted in favour of incumbents, and, importantly, hegemonic rationalities.

We can see how such an approach to structural justice provides the space for the powerful not just to co-opt specific social movements, but to appropriate the wider cause. Here, appropriation refers to the ideational modalities in which the powerful and social movements align, often implicitly, with the hegemonic common sense whereby agency is assessed through the ontological lens of the social

abstractions (and the relations they shape) that social movements are agitating against. Consider how attempts to take seriously racial, gender, and/or ecological forms of justice have often been expressed in neoliberal terms. For example, the World Bank does accept that gender justice is something that ‘matters intrinsically, because the ability to live the life of one’s own choosing’ is ‘a basic human right’ (World Development Report, 2012: 3). Taken alone, it would appear that calls for protest and resistance have made the powerful take the demands of social movements seriously and have carved out a space for a dialogue that enables social movements to work with powerful institutions to reflect upon how they conduct their practice.

The intrinsic value of gender justice, however, is soon expressed as mattering instrumentally insofar as gender equality contributes to economic efficiency: ‘nothing more than smart economics’ (World Development Report, 2012: 2-3). The report’s insistence that gender justice should be thought of in terms of girls’ and women’s access to market mechanisms evinces the ideological appropriation limiting structural justice to the contours of a neoliberal rationality. Inclusivity of women and girls here becomes inclusion within oppressive and exploitative market mechanisms. What occurs is not any meaningful analysis of gendered relations and what is required to transform them, but a simple view of “gender justice” as a ‘win-win’ that allows institutions to continue to achieve neoliberal goals (Davids and Anouka, 2016: 88). This is in part the result of senior members of staff at the World Bank quelling research that promoted alternative frameworks and fast-tracking research that perpetuates a market rationality (Broad, 2010: 298). More generally, alternatives are rejected by dominant institutions when development itself becomes aligned with neoliberalism and other possible avenues are foreclosed (Broad, 2010: 295). Thus, we can see how a structural justice that holds the powerful to account, as Young (2011: 150) suggests, does little to disrupt the neoliberal rationality that will inevitably frame attempts to hold the powerful accountable.

It would seem, then, that the activist still has grounds to come back against the deliberative democrat, even though the latter has somewhat accepted the tactics of the former. That is because the deliberative democrat assumes that mechanistic changes will arise from within the present democratic paradigm so

long as the forms of protest from outside are sufficient.⁵⁶ This may be true, but what remains pertinent is how inviting social movements to the table can still lead to the appropriation of certain broad movements and rebranding of them in accordance to a hegemonic common sense. In other words, the activist could retort by arguing that it is not that we must pressure the present system to ensure its processes are more equitable and democratic, but that “the system” is itself the problem and transformative structural justice cannot simply agitate from within. The reason this approach still fails is because of the modes of appropriation that often make it seem like something is being done only for that *something* to be expressed in accordance to hegemonic rationalities that reproduce the structural injustices that motivated the activist to become active in the first place. We can see, therefore, how reflecting on appropriation, and not just co-option, is able to warn against the possibilities of a structural justice that, like Young’s (2011: 150), can easily become engulfed by the powerful and the (neoliberal) rationalities of the incumbent paradigm.

In addition, those activists that seek a more radical transformation of incumbent ideological forces and institutional mechanisms would note that the *raison d’être* of coercive political institutions is to reproduce hegemony and thus perpetuate structural injustices. Therefore, no amount of working *with* the powerful will see these institutions meaningfully change. Instead, what is required is to remain outside of institutional settings and disrupt them so as to call into question both the institutional apparatus from which the powerful derive their power and the hegemonic rationalities that are perpetuated by norm-shaping agents. In response, what I aim to show is that, whilst we can acknowledge that it remains important to reform present social structures, this commitment does not necessarily need to be at odds with striving for a structural justice that aims to dislodge the abstract *and* concrete sides of the neoliberal-capitalist totality. I argue that a structural justice consistent with my critical

⁵⁶ I acknowledge that this is not the purpose of Iris Marion Young’s (2001) paper. Her paper begins from the perspective of the deliberative democrat and considers how to take the concerns of the activist more seriously. I am simply attempting to invert this analysis by beginning from the activist’s perspective by considering some of the problems that persist despite Young’s commitment to taking the tactics and methods of the activist seriously. It is important to note that doing so will have different implications, as Young attempts to assimilate the activist within formal democratic structures whereas my analysis does not.

cosmopolitan alternative must have the means to be able to protest from inside *and* outside incumbent democratic arenas. It must do so whilst also creating the space to retreat and reflect upon how to ensure that activism takes place at the abstract as well as the concrete level so as to transcend oppressive social structures in order to mitigate against co-option and appropriation.

Opposing neoliberalism

The potential limitations that activists committed to structural justice face are infinite. If at every turn co-option and appropriation limits social movements, then it is permissible that one would conclude that they might as well accept the objectivity of social structures and seek those reforms that seem possible from within the present system.⁵⁷ This is particularly tempting when one considers that it is possible that social movements are themselves unaware of the way in which they frame and approach structural justice through the lens of a neoliberal rationality. In particular, it is possible that social movements will fail to meaningfully dislodge a neoliberal-capitalist totality on the basis of what neoliberalism *is* and therefore how it *ought* to be challenged. Thus, I wish to focus in this sub-section on the possibility that social movements will fail to transcend oppressive social structures precisely because of the understanding of neoliberalism that they use to frame the social forces they take issue with.

Recall the two understandings of neoliberalism examined in Chapter IV, namely, an economic-concrete reading on the one hand and an abstract-rationality on the other.⁵⁸ It is possible that, if social movements

⁵⁷ A good example of a recent social movement that attempted to move beyond this binary emerged during the Black Lives Matter (BLM) protests of 2020. The BLM movement did not simply appeal to the present judicial system in order for Derek Chauvin – the policeman who murdered George Floyd – to be brought to justice. Rather, these calls were made alongside modes of protest and agitation that aimed to call into question the racism inherent in the American policing system. Thus, calls for justice were embedded within a wider attempt to call into question the broader system itself. I will return to these matters in subsequent sections where I outline the potential contained in such an approach to structural justice.

⁵⁸ To recall, it was David Harvey's (2005; 2020) Marxist reading of neoliberalism concerning those material reforms stemming from neoliberalism on concrete side of the ledger, and the Foucauldian (Foucault, 2008) reading that sees neoliberalism more as a governing rationality that represents the abstract side.

accept one reading of neoliberalism at the expense of the other, they will fail to dislodge the broader neoliberal-capitalist totality that produces the injustices that motivated them to collectivise. What this thesis attempts to do is problematise the possibility that structural justice becomes implicitly framed in neoliberal terms and thus reproduces the totality by other means, *even when* agents both accept that something ought to be done about oppressive social structures and take up the mantle of opposing neoliberalism. This will most likely be the result, I argue, when social movements understand neoliberalism more as an economic-concrete phenomenon than as an abstract-rationality – and vice versa.

It was argued in Chapter IV that neoliberalism is best thought of as an abstract-rationality that shapes the concrete social relations that in turn shape abstractions as a consequence (and so on and so forth). It was also noted how proponents of a Foucauldian understanding that sees neoliberalism as a subject-forming rationality invert the limitation of materialist understandings by failing to see how this rationality is reproduced and informed further by the concrete social relations it continually shapes. How social movements understand neoliberalism is therefore relevant to their success in disrupting what I have referred to as the abstract-concrete dialectic. If social movements lean too much towards the rationality-abstract side of the dialectic they will focus on neoliberalism's market register, and, in doing so, fail to problematise and respond to the concrete-material reforms this register shapes and how it affects people's lives. Likewise, if social movements focus on the concrete-material side of the dialectic they will do little to challenge the broader rationality and will leave the concrete social relations largely intact. This means that how movements understand what neoliberalism is will have an impact on how to transcend what I have called the neoliberal-capitalist totality.

Consider a social movement that thinks of neoliberalism as an economic project that largely derives from Thatcher and Reagan's economic and social policies before arising, in divergent ways, in different national contexts across the globe (e.g. Harvey, 2005; Watkins, 2010). On this reading, to oppose neoliberalism is to organise against the social policies that derive from these political projects. One might even suggest that the very act of unionising, to continue with Young's (2004: 388) proposal,

would be seen as both necessary and sufficient to alter the structural injustices associated with neoliberalism. What is missed is the way in which unions could do little to transcend the current conditions they fight to improve, if they express their representation of workers in neoliberal terms. A neoliberal rationality can frame the aims and objectives of unions, which may strive for preferable working conditions but do so in a way that aims to better inoculate members from the competitive and exploitative nature of their workplace, rather than attempting to transform working conditions away from these practices.

Consider how unions within universities are striving to secure preferable working conditions to members of staff who are at the sharp end of a marketised higher education system. In the United Kingdom, the University and College's Union (UCU) has, in recent years, engaged in numerous rounds of industrial action that seeks to defend pensions, fight to tackle rising workloads, ensure job security in the face of casualisation, and finally, to fight against the gender, racial, and disability pay gap (UCU, 2022). Valiant though these rounds of industrial action are, there remains a reluctance for the union to cast its net to include the broader neoliberal rationalities that have brought about industrial disputes. This is illustrative of a failure of unions to capture the changing *telos* of higher education institutions, whereby a focus on *impact* has seen British higher education universities fall into line with neoliberal benchmarking practices, thus placing undue stresses on academics' workloads.

The shift towards a corporate market framework within British universities is perhaps best evidenced by the Research Excellence Framework (REF, n.d), which attempts 'to provide benchmarking information and establish reputational yardsticks', which in turn, has seen academics spending more and more of their working day attempting to quantify the impact of their research rather than actually conducting research. Departments within universities are now increasingly expected to justify their existence on the basis of their perceived impact, most often understood as being economically viable, and yet, at present, the UCU and other higher education unions have little to say about challenging the broader frameworks through which these practices are reproduced. What these examples show is that whilst there is a clear role that unions can play in agitating for structural justice, they must do so in a

way that challenges the emergence of neoliberal rationalities that bring about the working conditions that validate their calls to action. This could take the form of conducting strike action that refuses to complete REF benchmarking tasks, as well as refusing to write the academic publications that bolster impact assessments. This could take place alongside fights against worsening pensions, pay, and working conditions, but does so in a way that attempts to bring to bear the changing *telos* of universities and their altering social function.

In sum, a commitment to responding to the global structural injustices this thesis has analysed requires reflecting on neoliberalism, as a rationality, to consider how it helps to shape and legitimise the material conditions activists must contend with. What the example of British universities illuminates is that shifting the focus to the ideational context against which agential action takes place, and not just focussing on actions themselves, as Young (2011) does, has practical consequences when it comes to challenging the global structural injustices this thesis has analysed throughout. For instance, a union may strive to improve the pay and working conditions in sweatshops only to fail to question the structural forces that brought about sweatshops and the broader rationality that renders them commonsensical. Furthermore, the union itself may be structured in a way that places benchmarking and efficiency as the driving force of its practice and be led by those officials that work alongside factory workers to ensure that targets are more manageable, rather than challenging the system of time-pressured targets more broadly. These struggles now take place against the backdrop the neoliberalisation of work, which has seen the power of labour diminished as employment becomes more precarious, with workers required to take on a number of different jobs to ensure a sufficient income stream, often becoming unemployed from one or more jobs at a moment's notice.

Attempting to reform exclusively at the concrete level, then, will inevitably overlook how the material spaces reproduced by hegemonic rationalities present unique challenges when it comes to unionising in a neoliberal world. The foundations necessary for the solidarity that underpins attempts at structural justice are shaped by neoliberalism and how we conceptualise its rationalities. Therefore, there are

important considerations that must take place at the abstract *and* the concrete level when considering the role unions can play in transcending oppressive social structures.

Conversely, if neoliberalism is thought of merely as a rationality, this viewpoint is prone to failing to consider the ways in which social movements can intervene in material relations to disrupt the broader neoliberal-capitalist totality. If social movements focus particularly on the *lingua franca* of the market and the subjects this rationality produces, the focus tends to be on evidencing the way in which individuals make decisions in accordance to an increasingly rationalised neoliberalism. Despite social structures shaping individualised agency, such a reading draws less attention to the aggregated action that reproduces the neoliberal-capitalist totality that this thesis has taken aim at. The competitive self-entrepreneurial individual is thus rendered static due to their incongruity with social movements and collectivism by definition of their self-interested neoliberalised subjectivity. This leads to the potential to challenge neoliberalism being expressed in purely ideational terms and relies upon people becoming wary of the economised lens through which a neoliberal rationality is constructed without challenging the material world this rationality has crafted and continues to reproduce.

These are just some of the limitations that those committed to structural justice face when it comes to attempting to dislodge a neoliberal-capitalist totality. I do not aim to provide a wholesale remedy to these limitations, nor would such an endeavour be possible. Instead, I point to the potential ways in which these limitations might be overcome and a transformative politics gain the momentum needed to transcend oppressive social structures. What arises from this is the need for social movements and activists that are able to keep enough of a distance from oppressive social structures so as not to be co-opted and/or appropriated by them, as well as being able to maintain a distance to reflect upon theory and practice to account for how a neoliberal-capitalist totality evolves across time and space. In the next section, I focus on the theory side of the coin in order to examine the types of social movements that my critical cosmopolitan account would endorse, before shifting my focus to the practical side, in the final section, to consider the ways in which transnational movements are engaging in a praxis that is consistent with my structural injustice framework.

An agonistic alternative

What I aim to do in this section is present the case for a more agonistic approach to structural justice. I argue that this is necessary in drawing attention to structural injustice as well as providing the means to transform conditions rather than conduct minor reforms to present concrete social relations. If social movements are prone to being co-opted by neoliberalism not only institutionally but also appropriated, ontologically, and the rules and norms that produce widespread agential action are not part of the structural justice equation, then activists must somehow find ways to go further and ensure that minor reforms are not accepted at the expense of challenging the broader neoliberal rationality and the capitalist totality it reproduces. I argue that an agonistic approach is necessary to ensure that structural justice moves beyond interventions at the concrete level and continues to disrupt, so as to transform, social structures right up to the abstract level. In doing so, I share Rosa Luxemburg's (2006) commitment to reform *and* revolution, insisting that the disruption of the abstract and that of the concrete are two sides of the same coin. I do so before endorsing an *agonistic cosmopolitanism* (Honig, 2006) to ensure that activists constantly self-reflect as they enter formal institutional settings, as well as engage in moments of retreat to reflect upon their aims and tactics.

Let us begin with Rosa Luxemburg's (2006) insistence that we ought not to fall prey to the false dichotomy between reform and revolution. In the previous section, I reiterated the importance of making reforms at the concrete level but also clarified that this should not forgo contesting and challenging the rules and norms that shape the conditions movements protest against. To this end, consider how Luxemburg (2006: Part I) rejects Eduard Bernstein's hypothesis that capitalism's internal contradictions can be overcome and socialism achieved through parliamentary struggles and trade unionism alone. Luxemburg (2006: 56) rejects the false dichotomy at the heart of Bernstein's argument, which places reform as antithetical to revolution. Bernstein casts reform as a political approach that is slower, intelligent, and methodical, whereas revolution is an expression of unrestrained emotion, executed rapidly, and something that arises spontaneously (Luxemburg, 2006: 56). For Luxemburg (2006: 57),

no such choice exists between reform and revolution as ‘they condition and complement each other, and are the same time reciprocally exclusive’. After all, what are considered reforms exist ‘only in the framework of the social form created by the last revolution’ (Luxemburg, 2006: 57). It is not the case, therefore, that we ought to see social reforms as ‘a long drawn-out revolution and revolution as a condensed series of reforms’ (Luxemburg, 2006: 58).

For present purposes, we can think about how attempts to ameliorate concrete social relations need not be at odds with attempts to transform the social abstractions that shape them, and therefore transform the concrete social relations they reproduce. For those committed to structural justice, it need not be the case that the only options on offer are those that are considered to be a set of “reasonable” reforms in the here and now. Rather, a set of reforms should be placed alongside attempts to transcend the present state of things. What I am outlining is more the dynamic between revolution and reform within Luxemburg’s work, rather than focussing on how reform and revolution can actualise socialism. That is to say, Luxemburg’s refusal to choose between reform or revolution is isomorphic to an account of structural justice, like mine, that is concerned with simultaneously altering the concrete social relations and the abstract rationality shaping them. To attempt to disrupt the abstract-concrete dialectic is both to reflect upon ways of reforming using the tools bequeathed by the present institutional framework (i.e. reform) and to consider ways in which to simultaneously agitate from the outside so as to bring about a new order of things (i.e. revolution).

It is important to note that attempts to promote the reforms at the expense of thinking of reform and revolution in tandem, however, are not a matter of prudence and feasibility. Rather, proponents of social reforms who ‘pronounce themselves in favor of the method of legislative reform *in place of* and *in contradiction to* the conquest of political power and social revolution, do not really choose a more tranquil, calmer and slower road to the same goal, but a *different* goal’ (Luxemburg, 2006: 58; emphasis original). This is important to note because there is a temptation to suggest that those cosmopolitans committed to reforms, like those analysed in Chapter I, are simply trying to propose solutions given the tall order of trying to transcend oppressive global social structures. That is to say, they are working on

the reform side of the coin because it is less demanding and one can more easily imagine the improvements that modifications to the current global economic order would bring about. However, it is more accurate to suggest that such an approach to global justice is reflective of a different set of less transformative goals.

Consider the Global Dividends Tax (Pogge, 1994: 212) introduced in Chapter I; this is the type of reform to the present global order that does little to displace oppressive social structures and their undergirding assumptions and norms. It is not simply that these reforms consist of attempts to act prudently in the here and now. When Pogge (1994: 212; emphasis added) talks of imposing a small taxation on a nation's resources, he is referring to his reforms being '*sufficient* continuously to balance these ordinary centrifugal tendencies of market systems enough to *prevent* the development of excessive inequalities and to maintain in equilibrium a rough global distributional profile that preserves global background justice'. Thus, it is not that these reforms are the result of recognising that disrupting the abstract-concrete dialectic is necessary, only one will simply have more luck making modifications to present concrete social relations. Rather, it is the case that the goal itself is to settle for reforms to the current (neoliberal) global economic order. If we agree that transformative structural justice is in fact demanding, this is not the same as accepting that it is unfeasible; what I attempt to do in what follows is lay the foundation for rejecting the notion that we are forced to make a choice between the two. In order to make this point, I aim, in the following section, to demonstrate how attempts to make reforms to the concrete social relations must also be done with an eye on transcending oppressive rationalities that shape them; both are necessary, neither are exclusively sufficient.

A critical cosmopolitanism is, therefore, not at odds with calls for better working rights for sweatshop workers (e.g. Young, 2004, 2006 2011; Kahn, 2013, 2018). However, critical cosmopolitanism does not see the need to ameliorate the working conditions of sweatshop workers at odds with also ensuring that the broader neoliberal rationality is undermined. It may even be that, as Luxemburg (2006: 33) noted, although trade unions are unable to fundamentally transform capitalism, they create the space for the solidarity necessary to not disband their efforts towards transformative change beyond their

initial aims. Similarly, whilst the immediate aims of unions to protect workers who are subjected to exploitative working conditions cannot transform the broader relation of capitalists and workers, they can set the wheels in motion for thinking about the forms of solidarity necessary to disrupt the broader abstract-concrete dialectic. When it comes to Young's (2011) account, one may be minded to point out that it is "forward-looking", and, in some sense, it attempts to accept where we are and reform the structural injustices as a matter of urgency to those most harmed by them, and therefore does not forgo attempts to disrupt at the abstract level. One of the things my account does is not to reject the importance of reforms, but makes explicit the risk of representing a different goal that falls short of transforming the social structures that reproduce the injustices Young's (2004, 2006, 2011) account examines.

Returning to a virtù-minded approach to structural justice, which was introduced in Chapter II, can help us think about the ways in which movements continue to push against the abstract level as well as striving for concrete reforms. Recall Bonnie Honig's (1993) *Displacement of Politics*, which distinguishes between *virtue* and *virtù* approaches to the political. A virtue politics refers to those theories that close the door to contestation and pride themselves on juridical settlements, whereas virtù theorists argue that such settlements are impossible, that any settlement will inevitably contain its own remainders, and, importantly, even 'those that are relatively enabling or empowering' (Honig, 1993: 2-3) With this in mind, a virtù approach is achieved when social movements acknowledge that the 'levers of critique sediment into norms, they engender remainders of their own, and the only way to remain sensitive to that process is by switching perspectives and positioning yet again' (Honig, 1993: 208). Thus, a virtù politics does not shy away from contestation but sees it as the *raison d'être* of politics; it is inevitable, and means that collectivism that is thought of in these terms agitates to go beyond accepting the settlements brought about by reforms to concrete social relations.

Although Honig (1993: Chapter VII) leans more towards a virtù conception of politics because it does not close the door to contestation and disruption, in the final chapter of her book, she makes the more nuanced case for a virtù-virtue dialectic. In redressing the displacement of politics within political theory, she wishes not to set virtù politics on a path of contestation absent of any forms of settlement:

‘politics consists of practices of settlement and unsettlement, of disruption and administration, of extraordinary events or foundings and mundane maintenances. It consists of the focus that decide undecidabilities and of those that resist those decisions at the same time’ (Honig, 1993: 205). Evidently, Honig’s (1993) distinction refers to a much more fundamental categorisation within political theory that I could not possibly do justice to in this chapter. Nevertheless, the purpose of drawing attention to this distinction is to reiterate the strengths of a more virtù-minded structural justice. Thus, the aim is not to exhaust Honig’s heuristic contribution, but to promote a mode of disruptive politics that goes beyond appeals to existent formal sites of justice, one that attempts to bring the remainders of the cosmopolitan vision into focus and ensure that nothing is (or rather has the potential to be) closed off, and thus be placed beyond contestation, even if strands of a nascent critical cosmopolitan begin to solidify.

As a result, the point here is that we can better appreciate the uses for such an approach by reflecting upon Bonnie Honig’s *agonistic cosmopolitanism*, which is consistent with the type of structural justice this chapter endorses. In an effort to situate agonistic cosmopolitanism within the literature, this can be contrasted with Seyla Benhabib’s (2006) *Another Cosmopolitanism*, which better aligns with Iris Marion Young’s approach. To note, Honig (2006) and Benhabib (2006) are concerned with the cosmopolitan implications of the rights of non-members living in Western states. Akin to Luxemburg’s (2006) argument, I wish to focus on the transferability of these approaches rather than focussing on the finer details of their application.

For Benhabib (2006: 60), ‘the law provides the framework within which the work of culture and politics go on’, and therefore, ‘the art and passion of politics occur within those walls and very often politics leads to the breaking down of these barriers or at least to assuring their permeability’. We must, Benhabib (2006: 70) tells us, ‘reconcile cosmopolitanism with the unique legal, historical, and cultural traditions and memories of a people’, one that will ‘respect, encourage, and initiate multiple processes of democratic iteration’. Alternatively, Honig (2006: 109) grounds a virtù approach when she argues that attempting to develop a cosmopolitan vision that introduces political contestation once the contours of the formal political order has already been determined, runs the risk of reproducing a range of

cosmopolitical remainders. Benhabib's variant therefore sees cosmopolitan politics as taking place *within* the limits imposed by a legal framework and is therefore *prior* to politics (Honig, 2006: 109). Similarly, Young's (2011: 150) account sees the politics of contestation and protest as accepting the broader contours of the democratic arenas in which social movements agitate against and sees structural justice as a case of working with the powerful to hold them account, as discussed in the first section of this chapter.

To provide an alternative, Honig (2006: 117) thinks that rights should be thought of as implying 'a world-building that is not incompatible with the project of building juridical institutions and safeguards, but also reaches beyond that project because it is wary of the sedimentations of power and discretion that accrete in such institutional contexts'. Hence, Honig's (2006: 119) agonistic cosmopolitanism is cosmopolitan in the sense Benhabib's account is, inasmuch as it shares Honig's advocacy for permanent residency and suffrage for non-members of liberal democratic systems. It attains its agonist prefix not simply as a result of calling for these rights, but goes further to 'prevent the energies of those movements from being lost once their state-centred and state-affirming goals are won' (Honig, 2006: 119). Honig's (1993; 2006) virtù-virtue dialectic approach is therefore useful for thinking about how to avoid forms of co-option and appropriation by situating activists as inside and outside institutional settings as well as placing them in perpetual reflection on their aims and objectives as they seek to transform the present paradigm. It is not necessarily the case that a virtù-minded structural justice must focus on democratic institutions and citizenship, as Honig does, but it can frame an approach to structural justice that is perpetually repositioning itself and willing to retreat as well as reflect upon its approaches and ontological frames when striving to transform oppressive social structures.

It should be noted that this thesis thinks of the theorist as characterising the ways in which structural injustices arise as a prerequisite for thinking about the potential contained within the present paradigm when it comes to transforming social structures. Nevertheless, I concur with Stuart Hall (2019: 78-9), when he says there are 'no guarantees' in political resistance. Referring to the representation and participation of members of marginalised groups, Hall (2019: 78-9; emphasis added) states that '*there*

are no political guarantees of that kind' when it comes to transforming the condition of the marginalised groups in question. Similarly, there are no guarantees that a structural justice wary of these limitations will not fall prey to them anyway; it is inevitable that any approach to structural justice will produce remainders of its own. Regardless, what this chapter aims to do is provide a reflection upon the possibilities for dislodging the neoliberal-capitalist totality that previous chapters have attempted to characterise. The applicability of a critical political theory will always rely upon a praxis and struggle that is by no means linear or straightforward. In the following section, I argue that a more agitational mode of structural justice can ensure that movements are able to constantly reposition and reflect upon their approach in order to mitigate the limitations discussed above.

How might we transcend the neoliberal-capitalist totality?

To transform the neoliberal-capitalist totality is a tall order. Such attempts are reliant upon a loose conception of solidarity that sees individuals form collectives with the aim of bringing to bear the oppressiveness of present social structures. When we reflect upon the themes of this thesis, this is a particularly difficult pursuit when we consider the insistence on the need to also consider the importance of social abstractions. What it means to challenge rules and norms is much harder to imagine and therefore much harder to build solidarity around when compared to, say, an unpopular policy enacted by a community's local council. To further complicate the matter, recall how in Chapter IV it was claimed that the concept of totality enabled us to consider the ways in which divergent experiences of a neoliberal-capitalist totality comprised the concrete universal itself. It was said that, despite drastically different experiences of a neoliberal rationality and the concrete social relations it brings about, we could still "grand theorise" about neoliberalism in ways that are useful to an account of global justice. Therefore, what arises is the difficulty of considering what it means to challenge a neoliberal-capitalist totality given these differences across time and space whilst acknowledging some kind of shared experience nevertheless. In this section, I reflect upon the ways in which transnational social movements act in ways that are consistent with disrupting the abstract *and* the concrete and possess the promise of transforming oppressive social structures.

In this section, I aim to provide a response that is by no means comprehensive and will still leave many questions open-ended, but it will attempt to point my critical cosmopolitan alternative in the right direction. I rely in this section on transnational social movements to evince forms of structural justice that represent a praxis consistent with the themes of this thesis. In what follows, I analyse transnational feminist movements and present eco-climate struggles. I focus first on transnational feminism to demonstrate the potential that these movements have for agitating for reforms that strive to improve present conditions (i.e. the concrete), whilst also keeping an eye on the broader gendered relations they are fighting to transform (i.e. the abstract). Furthermore, I argue that these movements can do so without collapsing into an essentialised “individual” and can remain sensitive to the divergent experiences the neoliberal-capitalist totality across time and space. I then turn my attention to climate change because I share Nancy Fraser’s (2021) sentiment that climate struggles contain a certain potentiality that can transform ongoing social structures rather than attempting to find solutions from within the present paradigm.

Transnational Feminist Struggles

One way we can see the potential contained within feminist movements to agitate at the abstract and the concrete levels is by distinguishing between what Maxine Molyneux (1998: 232) calls practical and strategic interests. The former are ‘those based on the satisfaction of needs arising from women’s placement within the sexual division of labour’ whereas the latter are ‘those involving claims to transform social relations in order to enhance women’s position and to secure a more lasting re-positioning of women within the gender order and within society at large’ (Molyneux, 1998: 232). The commitment to re-positioning ensures energies are not lost after reforms are won and that a virtù-minded approach to reflecting upon how to go again is ever present. The space for reflection ensures that practical interests are not actualised from the top-down and are thus said to be applicable across time and space (Molyneux, 1998: 233). For example, consider how the issue of public-funded childcare and pay for reproductive labour is commonplace in feminist debates; yet both can underappreciate the

historical specificities of these struggles, and, if taken alone, can fail to challenge the broader gendered relations that render them a practical interest in the first place. Hence, practical needs ought to be framed and articulated with cultural, historical, and political nuance without collapsing into cultural relativism (Molyneux, 1998: 233-4).

The usefulness of this distinction and its applicability to transnational feminist movements is that it places practical and strategic struggles in dialectical relationship to one another in ways that are useful when it comes to thinking about how to disrupt the broader neoliberal-capitalist totality. Struggles centred around practical interests have transformative potential with movements oscillating between the two, to demonstrate how practical interests are shaped by strategic interests (Molyneux, 1998: 235). However, as stated in the last section, there are no guarantees and often practical attempts fail to transform into more strategic struggles (Molyneux, 1998: 235). Nevertheless, what such feminist agitation highlights is how practical interests are shaped by broader gendered relations, which is applicable to thinking about the ways in which a bottom-up critical cosmopolitanism might initially position itself. It may well be that activists fail to do little more than work from within oppressive social structures, but what such movements demonstrate, nevertheless, is an understanding of the importance of perpetually re-positioning as a result of understanding that there is a ‘compliance with the existing gender order, while in the case of strategic interests there is an explicit questioning of that order and of the compliance of some women within it’ (Molyneux, 1998: 235). This relies upon agitation within actual forums of political contestation, rather than constructing hypothetical principles, à la Rawls, that seek to link the practical and the strategic, which ‘can only emerge through dialogue, praxis and discussion’ (Molyneux, 1998: 236).

This approach can help to avoid the forms of co-option and appropriation considered in the first section. However, it is important to note that the distinction between the practical and the strategic should not be reducible to formal policy arenas. For example, Gambhir Bhatta (2001: 22) makes what might seem like the same distinction when it comes to moulding the current development agenda and setting the agenda itself. Bhatta refers to an *integrationist approach* that ‘encapsulates gender issues within

existing development paradigms without transforming the overall development agenda', which contrasts with an *agenda-setting approach* that 'implies the transformation of the existing development agenda by *inclusion* of a gender perspective' (Bhatta, 2001: 22; emphasis added). Whilst this is important to note in those instances in which social movements have deemed it appropriate to agitate from within the current paradigm, the limitation persists that was outlined in the previous section, namely, that such a distinction fails to question the concept of development itself. The distinction between practical and strategic can apply to formal institutional settings but is not reducible to them by creating the space for reflecting on the relationship between the two. This helps to ensure that transnational feminist movements are able to retreat and reposition and help mitigate against co-option and appropriation. This is consistent with a more *virtù-minded* and agonistic approach to politics which is able to fluidly occupy spaces and democratic arenas whilst at the same time being able to retreat and reassess at all times.

It is important, then, that a more agonistic cosmopolitanism clears the space for those movements that are requisitely distanced from the sort of hegemonic reproduction that occurs when influencing policy whilst simultaneously challenging the paradigms that are reproduced in these arenas. We can see how Brazilian feminist movements in the 1980s, to avoid being co-opted by feigned attempts at agenda-setting development policy, stated prior to working with certain agencies that they would not partake in the legitimisation of any agency that would not allow for democratic contestation and those who were not allies of feminist causes (Molyneux, 1998: 228-9). Moreover, the ability of movements to ensure that practical and strategic interests remain on the table as well as possibilities for operating outside and within formal institutional settings, means they are able to re-position themselves in relation to the transformation of potential sites of contestation (e.g. NGOs, the state, charities, corporations, etc.) associated with neoliberal governance. Importantly, the commitment to oscillating between the abstract and the concrete means that transnational feminist movements have often operated at the fundamental level of gendered relations and how they are shaped, rather than focussing exclusively on specific struggles. Therefore, we can see that these movements provide tools for thinking about a structural justice that reforms the concrete level whilst attempting to transform the abstract level too.

To challenge the rules and norms, and the neoliberal rationality that shapes the social relations feminist groups both partake in and wish to transform, it is important to reflect upon how an alternative common sense can be produced. Through a neoliberal lens, women are often cast as separable from gendered relations at the same time as they possess only “good gender” as economised agents tasked with dismantling “their own” gendered oppression (Davids and Anouka, 2016: 92). Consequently, the only kind of gender justice on offer is a distinctly neoliberal brand of justice. This obscures power inequalities and how women shape and are shaped by oppressive gendered relations, as well as excluding all forms of oppression that cannot be remedied by increasing their access to market mechanisms. This means that, when transnational feminist movements do ensure there is distance placed between them and the social forces they seek to challenge, there is the space necessary to reflect upon the way in which hegemonic neoliberal ontology frames the types of policies and practices they seek to develop a new common sense in response to.

The focus on social movements usually consists of examining the moment when groups have collectivised and set their sights on a group of actors or coercive institutions they wish to target. Underexamined is the role social movements play in moments of retreat, when reflecting on how best to maximise their collective struggles based upon their perception of present concrete conditions. This might take place after the success of achieving certain reforms, but also when trying to avoid co-option and/or appropriation. This is important because often activist prescriptions based around the language of struggle focus on resistance and disruption at the expense of considering how ‘resistance is not, therefore, always – a new start, a breaking with the past’ but also concerns challenging the abstract rationality of neoliberalism and the parochial ontological frame it reproduces; thus, requiring that ‘contestation might at times be radical, but can also be manifested in small and subtle ways’ (Davids and Anouka, 2016: 93). The perpetual oscillation between the concrete and the abstract contained in a *virtù* structural justice relies upon different forms of contestation that ‘search for different styles of subversions, other than, but within existing power hierarchies’ (Davids and Anouka, 2016: 93).

In the remainder of this sub-section, I attempt to show that transnational feminist struggles need not collapse into the abstract-essentialised categories of “individuals” and/or “women” as if universal across time and space whilst remaining requisitely global in scope. This reignites the potential, outlined in Chapter IV, of thinking in terms of totality, and how it allows one to reflect upon the divergent experiences of agents within said totality, and, importantly, not as mere accidents but as constituents of the (concrete) universal itself. I will now turn to Serene Khader (2019; see also Vergès, 2021) to outline the inspiration a transnational feminist movement that endorses her vision could provide for thinking about how to dislodge the neoliberal-capitalist totality.

Khader’s (2019; see also Vergès, 2021) decolonial universalism is able to wrestle back a conception of the universal that avoids the essentialism associated with what she terms ‘missionary feminists’ without reneging on a commitment to anti-imperialism. Missionary feminism elevates an idealised conception of Western women as a projection “into the future” relative to the women of the Global South, who remain rooted “in the past” (Khader, 2019: 22-6). According to missionary feminists, the latter must move away from the cultural practices that render women in the Global South shackled to archaic modes of gendered oppression (Khader, 2019: 22-6). This feminism rests upon pointing to certain regressive cultural practices that evince the types of oppression that missionary feminists profess to be able to ameliorate (Khader, 2019: 22-6). However, the cultural practices pointed to as holding women back from actualising their (Westernised) potential are not spontaneous, but are negotiated and engendered against the backdrop of a history of colonialism, as well as a series of imperialist wars and interventions (Khader, 2019: 26-8).

Despite missionary feminism’s attempts to universalise a particular perspective that relies on a saviourism that strips subjects of their moral agency, Khader (2019: 36) argues that universalism itself need not be jettisoned. A universalism that avoids missionary feminism relies upon a critical cosmopolitan approach that ensures ‘opposition to sexist oppression’ is attentive to ‘different judgements about the presence and causes of oppression in different cases, as well as with the employment of different practical strategies and different moral vernaculars in different cases’ (Khader,

2019: 38). This is achieved in two ways, first, by pointing to what is wrong (gendered forms of oppression) rather than what is right (idealised notions of womanhood that will usher in Westernised particularities masquerading as universal) (Khader, 2019: 38). Second, in order to avoid the limitation that denoting what is wrong can be framed in a way that is Western-centric and thus reproduce domination, ‘the notion that feminism is opposition to gender-based oppression does not specify what the indicators of [structural] advantage and disadvantage are in any given context’ (Khader, 2019: 39).

Importantly, Khader’s (2019) decolonial universalist transnational feminist ethic takes into account concrete universal experiences when disrupting the neoliberal-capitalist totality. Recognising the divergent experiences of women, and other stratifications, positioned across time and space, and thus in different geographical and material conditions that have been shaped by historical processes, like imperialism, does not foreclose recognising that subjects have a shared yet divergent experience of neoliberal capitalism and can, through their own as well as shared struggles, disrupt it. The rationality of neoliberalism is increasingly altering more and more facets of social life across borders, and is, in turn, reproducing and legitimising social relations that in turn imprint on the structural architecture of people’s lives. We can therefore recognise transnational struggles without abstracting them into an essentialised experience whilst at the same time recognising that the increasing ubiquity of a neoliberal rationality means we cannot do away with thinking in universalistic terms.

Similarly, Hey-Ryoung Kang (2014: 48-51) rightly points out that cosmopolitans reproduce an inappropriate frame for thinking about global justice because they obscure the experiences of women as a historically constructed group. Kang (2014: 51) therefore argues for women’s collectives that form around their own experience of gendered forms of oppression but ‘who also advocate for the justice claims of others, whose burdens are related to their benefits’. Focusing on how “individuals” fare and what is in their best interest forgoes the opportunity for expressions of solidarity amongst and between collectivities that are able to amplify the voice of hundreds of “individuals” who experience gendered forms of oppression (Kang, 2014: 53). For instance, as individuals, ‘workers of Tijuana’s maquiladoras were silenced and inaudible to most of the world... these voices have been amplified and gained a larger

audience since the formation of the Macquiladora Solidarity Network, which makes justice claims as a collective agent' (Kang, 2014: 53). Each collective remains committed to its own struggle-perspective, but does so in a way that allows for the formation of solidarity between other collectives who likewise navigate gendered social relations.

The Ecological Zeitgeist

When thinking about the divergent experiences of neoliberal-capitalist social relations, it is clear that there are a range of potential sites and modes of resistance that can transform social structures. I argue that the ubiquity of ecological struggles reminds us that, whilst there remains no guarantee, divergent experiences of climate change across time and space mean that agents are already motivated to do something and join forces with others in the process. Instead of framing global justice as a matter of “us” coming to the assistance of “them”, ecological struggles have shown signs of those navigating a neoliberal-capitalist totality agitating from their own struggle-perspective in an attempt to transform oppressive social structures. This means that attempts to do so can exist across borders as ecological struggles are important in affluent countries as well as in nonaffluent ones. Furthermore, given that ecological struggles call into question “our” fundamental relationship with nature, there is the potential to reflect upon what this means for unpacking and challenging the basic social abstractions perpetuating this ecological crisis. However, instead of focussing on specific movements and their ability to agitate at the abstract level, as this has already been discussed in the previous sub-section, here, I wish to focus more on the ecological zeitgeist itself and its potential for transformative change. In particular, I aim to demonstrate that the ecological crisis is particularly ripe for ensuring that fundamental questions about how “humans” interact with nature are on the table. These questions are so fundamental that, as we shall see, they have the potential to frame other forms of structural oppression, exploitation, and domination.

Inspired by Nancy Fraser's (2021) optimism about the potential contained in the present ecological moment, I reflect upon what it means for critical cosmopolitanism. There are two specific

considerations that I will narrow my focus to. The first consideration is less to do with the different ecological movements and their specific tactics and more with the ubiquity of the present ecological zeitgeist itself, namely, how, in recent years, debates about “our” relationship with nature and how it might be transformed have become normalised. Regardless of how social structures are reproduced across time and space, if one is serious about their transformation then a necessary first step is making commonplace to imagine beyond present social structures. What I attempt to demonstrate is that, in some cases, this is already underway to such an extent that the ecological crisis is not one in which work needs to be done to assess how to motivate citizens and communities to care about climate change. Rather, the motivation to do something about climate change is so strong that work is needed to redirect it towards critical cosmopolitan ends. The second consideration concerns how the ubiquity of this ecological moment operates at the fundamental level of social relations, so much so that it has the potential to frame other struggles that have traditionally been thought of as “non-environmental” (Fraser, 2021: 96). This is not only consistent with critical cosmopolitanism insofar as it is transformative, but it also commits to a broad movement that attempts to take with it the correction of the structural injustices this thesis has examined.

It should be said from the outset that the potential contained within ecological struggles is not ubiquitous and should not be overstated. My claim is not that there is consensus. In fact, the opposite is true: the consensus that “something needs to be done” engenders a multitude of “somethings” that are framed through a range of different ideological lenses (Fraser, 2021: 95). For instance, eco-nationalists commit to the preservation of “their own” land by excluding racialised “others” (Fraser, 2021: 95). Sentiments that could blossom from such movements are the antithesis of any iteration of cosmopolitanism and point to the need to not overstate the potential climate struggles possess.

The same can be said for the neoliberal rationality that I have stressed the importance of challenging throughout this thesis. For example, at the macro-economic level we have seen carbon offset markets perpetuate the idea that there is always a market solution to capitalism’s starkest contradictions (Fraser, 2021: 95). This market rationality can also be observed at the consumer level, with the supposed

“internalisation” of the negative excesses of climate change amounting to little more than adding a small fee to the cost of a plastic bag. This policy is illustrative of a micro-level marketised approach to climate change that individualises the problem and operates under the mantle of everybody from the capitalist class to workers “doing their bit”, and, in doing so, obscures the class stratifications between the two. The engendering of a counter-hegemony that appeals to a critical cosmopolitanism, therefore, is by no means guaranteed; in accepting the need for better ecological practice, there are a wide range of lenses one can choose to adopt that not only fail to disrupt oppressive social structures but potentially deepen them.

Instead, the fact that the present ecological moment remains up for grabs means it can be wrestled in a new direction, towards a new common sense that a critical cosmopolitanism would endorse. This relies upon impregnating present ecological contestations with, in this case, a critical cosmopolitanism that goes beyond simply looking to enact certain policies that lessen the structural harms (both actual and potential) associated with climate change. This is thought to be possible because we are in a moment that, as Fraser (2021: 96) notes, is ‘no longer tamed by a ruling common sense that forecloses out-of-the-box options’; rather, ‘the political sphere is now the site of a frantic search not just for better policies, but for new political projects and ways of living’. This means that there is scope for making structural connections between the ecological breakdown agents are faced with and the broader capitalist totality that brought them about, and its neoliberal variant that continues to exacerbate the situation. Therefore, my account of structural justice attests to a *virtù* politics that sees the processes of contestation and agonism as ongoing and never closed. The fact that the dust has yet to settle on the ecological moment we are living through means the motivation different actors possess to “do something about the climate crisis” has the potential to be injected with the type of emancipatory politics a critical cosmopolitanism champions.

To do so, this critical cosmopolitanism will require modes of activism that aim to wrestle the yet-to-be-settled climate change narrative. To think about what this might look like, consider Lea Ypi’s work on the cosmopolitan political avant-garde, whose ‘strategies of mobilization rely on the ability to link the

past – what has already been achieved – with a vision of the future – what remains to be done’ (Ypi, 2012: 161). Her account of such a cosmopolitan movement, however, is one that relies upon activists within liberal democracies in order to ‘illustrate how existing political institutions and state-based associative relations might be transformed in a way that reflects global justice imperatives’ (Ypi, 2012: 167). Nevertheless, we can take the spirit of Ypi’s (2012: 161) account and detach it from its institutional context in order to consider how a critical cosmopolitan praxis could rely on a political avant-garde (i.e. a transformative transnational political movement), in its attempts to ‘use the imagination and invest creative energies in giving concrete shape to abstract interpretations’.

Current appeals to climate structural justice often attempt to hold the current system to account in a way that is consistent with Young’s account of structural justice. However, we can consider how these movements might be redirected towards more emancipatory ends. For instance, “Youth Strike for Climate” – started by Swedish teenager Greta Thunberg, which sparked a global youth movement for climate change – is essentially committed to institutional reforms that would see emissions capped at 1.5 degrees above pre-industrial levels and Green New Deals (Nevett, 2019). This is an important intervention that centres on holding the powerful to account in order to meet the targets they set themselves. Nevertheless, youth groups like Fridays For Future (n.d.), who make opaque demands to ‘unite behind the science’ and ‘ensure climate justice and equity’, could be co-opted by powerful elites and appropriated by neoliberal forces, but could well move in a more radical direction if the powerful are perceived not to be taking the climate crisis seriously. However, it is hard to imagine how struggles and modes of agitation will not continue to question the present social relations and their continued impact on the environment as severe weather events act as a reminder of the need to challenge broader social structures. Thus, what remains up for grabs is whether the climate crisis is viewed through a virtue lens of “solving climate change once and for all” (only to return to “business as usual” but in a more environmentally-friendly fashion) or placing climate change as a virtù struggle that sees our relationship with nature as ever evolving and not something that can ever be cleansed of further contestation and transformation.

Finally, as alluded to above, the fundamental level at which climate contestation operates can help us to frame “non-environmental” injustices, which can be corrected as climate activists strive for transformative change. Doing so means that there is a structural connection between the ecological struggles agents are faced with and the broader neoliberal-capitalist totality that continues to exacerbate the crisis; whilst at the same time not neglecting what this means for a range of global injustices that cannot be disentangled from the global ecological context in which they take place. The divergent experiences of agents navigating social structures across time and space are by no means shared, but actual and prospective solidarities are forming around a commitment to challenge the broader social structures that reproduce these divergent ecological struggles. That is not to say that concerns for the ecological crisis should trump these injustices, but, rather, they ‘must trace that threat to underlying societal dynamics that also drive other strands of the present crisis’ (Fraser, 2021: 96).

To think about how the ecological crisis has provided the lens through which to frame “non-environmental” global injustices, consider the way in which transnational ecological movements, often referred to as Ecological Justice Organisations (EJOs), have developed a vocabulary that can help frame and think about a plethora of different ecological injustices and sites of struggle across borders. This includes, but is not restricted to: ‘environmental racism’, ‘environmentalism of the poor’, ‘food sovereignty’, and ‘bio-piracy’ (Martinez-Alier, 2016: 739-47). These concepts provide an ecological language that can help connect divergent ecological contestations with other structural injustices the neoliberal-capitalist totality shapes. For example, ‘environmental racism’ is used as ‘a concept that in the EJOs means to treat badly other people in pollution of resource-extraction injustice on grounds of membership of particular ethnic groups, social class or caste’, which is then used in ‘the fight against disproportionate incidence of pollution in areas predominantly black, Hispanic or indigenous’ (Martinez-Alier, 2016: 742).

The importance of framing a range of structural injustices is that it avoids the possibility that movements become disconnected in their attempts to correct individuated instances of injustice. For instance, Young (2004; 2006; 2011) champions the efforts of the anti-sweatshop movement not to see the

injustice of sweatshops as specific to one factory and the conditions contained within it, but to see it as a structural issue that is the result of a wide range of aggregated actions. Whilst this is not wrong per se, such an account of structural justice can fail to meaningfully disrupt the broader neoliberal-capitalist structures if movements remain “single-issue”, focussed in their pursuit of reforms to present structures. Here, in this ecological moment, there is the potential to link together the anti-sweatshop movement insofar as it can illustrate the negative consequences fast fashion has on the environment with other ecological struggles that likewise contain within them attempts to respond to the structural harms that stem from exploitative practices. Furthermore, this helps link together a plethora of concrete social relations reproduced by a neoliberal-capitalist totality that forms the basis for agitating to disrupt the broader social structures themselves.

It is precisely the uncertainty around ecological debates that makes it conducive to providing the space for those committed to transformative politics to operate at the fundamental level, and, in doing so, bring into view a wide range of structural injustices that point to the need to transcend existent social structures. Whilst there are no guarantees, and the potential contained within these movements remains only a potential, a critical cosmopolitanism attempts to bridge the gap between its theoretical presuppositions and the praxis tasked with bringing it about.

Conclusion

This chapter aimed to ground an account of structural justice that differs from Iris Marion Young’s (2011) on account of the distinct structural injustice frameworks I have advanced. The fact that my account is explicit about the ideational context in which structural injustices arise inevitably had implications for the account of structural justice promoted. To recap, this chapter attempted to unpack and problematise some of the obstacles that social movements are faced with when it comes to struggles for structural justice. In particular, this chapter analysed the potential of a structural justice that, like Young’s (2011), is committed to working with the powerful and holding them to account for the

structural injustices they have the power to reform. It was noted that such attempts were vulnerable not only to co-option but also ideational appropriation that Young's (2011) account is not sensitive to, as a result of failing to analyse the broader ideational context in which agential action plays out. Thus, this created the space for outlining an alternative praxis consistent with my critical cosmopolitan framework, one which is consistent with attempts made in previous chapters to place the same weight on the abstract side of the ledger as on the concrete side.

To this end, this chapter first unpacked and outlined theoretical approaches that would be able to accommodate reform as part and parcel of wholesale transformation, which relied upon challenges to the neoliberal-capitalist totality at both the concrete and the abstract levels. Rosa Luxemburg's (2006) rejection of the (false) dichotomy between reform and revolution was relied upon as it was said to be isomorphic to my argument, which attempts to see reform and transformation as two sides of the same coin. Bonnie Honig's (1993) theorisation with regard to virtue and *virtù* politics was returned to, in order to frame Honig's commitment to an agonistic cosmopolitanism (Honig, 2006) that sees reforms as necessary but not sufficient. This provided the theoretical outline for examining an account of structural justice consistent with my framework. What was then required was to consider how this might play out and what existent transnational movements and moments are best placed to bring this potentiality to life.

In the following section, it was argued that certain transnational feminist movements are able to map onto the theoretical contours of a structural justice committed to reform and transformation. The ecological crisis was then briefly outlined, less so to focus on its potential for reform and transformation (although present) and more to note how there are already signs that social movements and activists are active in challenging our fundamental relationship with nature. It was argued that there is a certain potential contained in this ecological *zeitgeist* that goes beyond thinking from within the incumbent paradigm, in that it thinks how to transcend it. In sum, having spent the majority of this thesis attempting to augment the dominant structural injustice framework, this inevitably led to the need to augment the account of structural justice that goes with it.

Conclusion

The purpose of this thesis was to problematise cosmopolitan thought whilst remaining committed to a global scope of justice. That is to say, my critique was not an attempt to reject cosmopolitanism, but to reconceptualise it from the bottom up. Therefore, this thesis should be read as a critical friend of cosmopolitanism, but one that is committed to remaining critical enough to test its friendship with mainstream global justice theory. As a result, the originality of this thesis is not simply that it contributes to debates about cosmopolitanism, structural injustice, and neoliberalism, but, rather, that it constructs a critical cosmopolitan framework that is better able to account for the role neoliberalism plays in reproducing global structural injustices. In sum, this thesis has aimed to develop an alternative framework that captures the ideational rules and norms as well as the agential action they shape. The contribution that this makes to the literature is an account that can better capture how oppressive global social structures are reproduced as a prerequisite for attempting to transcend them.

Analysing the overall argument

This thesis presents the case for a critical cosmopolitan alternative that is better able to capture how global social structures are reproduced across time and space. This has taken the form of attempting to re-conceptualise cosmopolitanism by taking it apart and reconstructing it from the bottom up. In Chapter I, it was shown that cosmopolitanism was too symptom-based insofar as it focussed on what institutional fixes would see a better distribution of resources in order to redress evident inequalities beyond borders. It was argued that this derives from cosmopolitans casting globalisation as, predominantly speaking, a force for good, which simply requires top-down institutional reforms in order to realise global justice. This not only evidenced the hypothesis expressed in the introduction that cosmopolitanism, despite appearing like a rich and diverse school of thought, was actually, upon further examination, committed to a narrow conception of justice (i.e. individual-distribution); it also illustrated

how a concern for how individuals fared completely abstracted “individuals” from the broader social structures and their pertinence to reproducing global injustices.

In response, this thesis sought to transcend the limitations identified within mainstream cosmopolitan thought not simply by aiming to tweak the dominant liberal framework but also to provide an alternative framework of its own. To this end, Chapter II argued that cosmopolitanism would only be able to conduct a more in-depth analysis of oppressive social structures if it adopted alternative ontological and methodological approaches. The purpose of Chapter II, then, was to dismiss the present individualist ontology and its complimentary ideal methodology and call for a critical cosmopolitan approach that first attempts to characterise the social structures that produce the injustices cosmopolitans highlight. This part of the thesis illuminates the importance that was stressed throughout this research project of first providing a theoretical framework that is able, empirically speaking, to capture how structural injustices are reproduced across time and space. The importance of doing so is illuminated when one notices that, if an account fails to account for how structural injustices arise and are reproduced, those important features it overlooks will inevitably fail to be corrected when it comes to structural justice.

With this in mind, it was shown that Young’s (2011) structural injustice framework was better equipped to respond to a cosmopolitanism that provides symptom-based solutions that rely on a rationale of liability. It was shown, however, that, before we can discuss what collectivising to ameliorate oppressive social structures looks like, we must first analyse in more detail what the rules and norms are that agential action acts in accordance to. This is in a similar vein to the cosmopolitan literature, which it was noted in the introduction is often thought of as a settled debate, which is said to be applicable to more and more global collective action problems. What we have seen is a similar trend with regard to an emergent literature that largely endorses Young’s account of structural injustices and how they arise. For the most part, this literature centres on outlining the need to think structurally and/or attempting to apply a structural analysis to debates about remedial responsibility and structural injustice (e.g. Abdel-Nour, 2018; Lu, 2018; Hayward, 2017; Kahn, 2013; Nussbaum, 2011; Goodin and Barry, 2021). In contrast, what this thesis has sought to do is to provide a more in-depth analysis of the

ideational context in which structural injustices arise, which will inevitably alter what we mean by structural justice. In doing so, this research differentiates itself insofar as it was able to take a step back and reassess cosmopolitanism and structural injustice frameworks, before stepping forward to reassess what these findings mean when it comes to the pursuit of global (structural) justice.

Consequently, the critical cosmopolitan alternative this thesis explicated has tried to overcome the limitations of mainstream approaches to cosmopolitanism, as well as providing an augmentation of the dominant structural injustice framework. Chapter IV then turns to Hegel (2010) and Marx's (1973) distinction between the abstract (universal) and the concrete (universal). Here, I argued that this is a useful conceptual distinction that helped us to think about the way in which neoliberal abstractions arise from the contestation of certain concrete social relations, and in turn gain hegemony, and, in doing so, continue to shape and normalise concrete social relations across time and space. In other words, the abstract concerns the rules and norms that shape widespread agential action, whereas the concrete considers the material world that is shaped by this agential action as a precursor for thinking about the dialectical relationship between the two. This marks an original contribution to debates about global justice in and of itself, as theorists like Hegel and Marx are seldom examined in debates about cosmopolitanism, thus providing novel frameworks and categories for thinking about justice across borders.

What this meant was that my critical framework was able to open up possibilities for analysing spatial assumptions underpinning cosmopolitan thought that were not available beforehand. Consequently, thinking in terms of a totality means that the abstract and concrete are understood in tandem, which also provided the space in Chapter V to consider how many of the actions that are said to produce structural injustices "there" are in fact themselves products of a broader social structure in such a way that it is difficult to discern between injustice-producing actions and actions that are themselves symptoms of oppressive social structures. Doing so not only problematised long-held spatial assumptions underpinning cosmopolitan thought, but also problematised the causal connection between actions that produce injustices and actions that are themselves likewise symptoms of an unjust social structure.

Thus, as before, the critical cosmopolitan framework was able to think in terms of totality and not simply casual links between one web of agents, on the one hand, and victims who are subjected to these injustices, on the other. What this meant is that assumptions underpinning debates in cosmopolitanism and structural injustice were unpacked and problematised, noting how they are reproduced in and through a wide range of social relations across borders; thus, creating the space for examining this means for structural justice without collapsing back into mainstream cosmopolitan proposals that call for top-down institutional reform.

Having spent the majority of the thesis getting to the point in which it was better able to account for how structural injustices are reproduced, it was finally time to move onto what this meant for structural justice. Because the thesis showed the importance of accounting for both the abstract and the concrete sides of the ledger, it was argued that structural justice must be consistent with a praxis that derives, distinctly, from my alternative structural injustice framework. Moreover, this thesis was able to differentiate itself from Young (2004, 2006, 2011) in another important way. Namely, it noted that, because her framework is considerably more attentive to the agential action that reproduces structural injustices and less so to the ideational rules and norms, her account of structural justice was reformist and lacked a distinctly transformative potential. Yet, without downplaying the importance of reforms to oppressive social structures, the thesis created the space to consider how a more comprehensive analysis of oppressive social structures enables us to consider how we might transform them.

Contribution to the literature and future research avenues

This thesis provides original contributions to debates about cosmopolitanism and structural injustice, providing a structural account that places “individuals” in relation to the global social structures they shape and are shaped by. The contribution to the literature, however, is not simply to make cosmopolitanism more structural, but to also provide a critical alternative that remains global in scope, but ontologically and methodologically distinct from mainstream cosmopolitanism. This presents a critical cosmopolitanism for those who remain unconvinced by statism, nationalism, and

communitarianism, but also for those who share the contention that cosmopolitanism in its individualist ontological iteration means that critical theorists are reluctant to accept its vision. However, the distinctness of my critical cosmopolitan alternative does not preclude it from making important interventions in debates that mainstream cosmopolitans should take more seriously. Therefore, the aim was to present an account of global justice that asks mainstream cosmopolitans to question some of their most basic assumptions, whilst, at the same time, providing useful theoretical frameworks and categories for those theorists that already self-describe as a critical theorist of some hue. This account is a critical friend insofar as it is not at odds with cosmopolitanism, as it accepts its sentiment and scope, but it does so in a way that opens up new avenues of debate that are useful for fostering a critical cosmopolitan vision.

Another contribution this thesis makes is, by examining the broader neoliberal-capitalist totality, it extrapolates analysis away from pertinent individuated structural injustices to broader social relations. For example, there has been some discussion in this text about climate change, in particular, its perceived potential to act as the backdrop to an emancipatory politics that transcends neoliberal social structures. This is demonstrative of an alternative that sublates Young's (2004, 2006, 2011) structural injustice framework and its reliance upon a causal link between a wide range of different actors and a particular tangible structural injustice. Alternatively, the critical cosmopolitan framework helps to avoid the temptation to exclusively examine particular structural injustices before remedying them (e.g. sweatshops), and instead asks the reader to keep in mind the broader social abstractions that condition these injustices. What this means is that there is a focus on the social structures more broadly and not just the aggregated action that reproduces injustices. That is to say, it avoids the possibility of simply remedying specific structural injustices, but instead focusses on the more fundamental level of the totality of social relations that produce a range of injustices across borders.

Another broad contribution this thesis makes is its attempt to move cosmopolitan thought closer to debates about capitalist relations and the rationalities/ideologies enabling their reproduction. The explication of my critical cosmopolitan framework was motivated by a lack of in-depth analysis of the

ideational rules and norms that shape the agential action that brings about structural injustices. Leaving aside the literature on structural injustice, this thesis represents an attempt to consider, in more detail, contemporary capitalist relations and how they are reproduced. This paves the way for a cosmopolitanism that is more focussed on capitalism, its crises tendencies, and how it perpetuates and shapes the injustices that cosmopolitan thought is interested in remedying. Instead of attempting to impregnate cosmopolitan thought with a more critical analysis, one motivation for conducting a theoretical alternative was to sever cosmopolitan thought from a conception of justice that is largely traceable to the liberal ontology of Rawls' (1971) *Theory of Justice*. The purpose of this thesis was to capture how contemporary neoliberal-capitalist social relations are reproduced and how they might be transformed. This opens up avenues for further research that may, as a result of research projects like this one, need not dedicate as much space to outlining and differentiating itself from mainstream cosmopolitan thought and its undergirding ontological and methodological assumptions, but, instead, conduct a critical analysis of global social structures that can stand on its own two feet.

The examination of the neoliberal-capitalist totality contained in the previous pages also makes it possible to think about how it has shaped and is shaped by certain political phenomena that are pertinent to debates about cosmopolitanism. For example, despite the importance of examining the rise of Authoritarian Nationalism and/or the Covid-19 pandemic, a comprehensive analysis of these phenomena was outside of the scope of this thesis. Nevertheless, thinking about how neoliberalism shapes and is itself shaped by the politics of authoritarian nationalism and Covid-19 remains salient (see Harvey, 2020). Consider the role authoritarian nationalism has played in reproducing neoliberalism insofar as perpetuating a politics of “culture war”, one that distracts from the material conditions brought about by a neoliberal rationality. In the past, conservative ideologies have facilitated and complemented neoliberal reforms. For example, the New Right and their moral commitment to the family, Christian values, and personal responsibility went a long way to ensuring support for parties that economically disadvantaged those who were relied upon at the ballot box in order to implement neoliberal reforms (Harvey, 2005: 81-6; Fraser, 2009: Chapter VI).

Similarly, we have seen the state take an active role in response to the economic implications of the Covid-19 virus. Acts of “state intervention” in the economy in many Western countries are not illustrative of an aberration from the neoliberal-capitalist totality; rather, they are a part of it. The United Kingdom’s response, for example, shows multiple examples of how a neoliberal rationality has eclipsed the boundaries between the market and the state. This is most notable with the scandals regarding the awarding of Covid-19 contracts for protective gear and testing to friends of government ministers who owned ad hoc companies, often with no experience of producing the products they had won the contract to make. The contribution to the literature that this thesis makes, is not only thinking about how the neoliberal-capitalist totality evolves across time and space and how it shapes and is shaped by political events; it also helps us to think about the potential such moments possess for agitation against the status quo in an attempt to transcend the present neoliberal-capitalist totality.

We can see, then, that the disruption created by crises such as Covid-19 and the climate change crisis that is ever present is that they provide the backdrop for transformative reflection and change. Recent examples of disruptive politics and resistance in the form of Black Lives Matter protests in the summer of 2020 point to the potential for thinking about emancipatory politics in a time of crisis. The intensification of the Black Lives Matter movement, both in the US and transnationally, was shaped by the Covid-19 crisis in which it took place. Much of the frustration and anger following the video of George Floyd’s murder was shaped and informed by widespread economic insecurity, namely, the failure to provide the means of subsistence to citizens so they could properly protect themselves from the respiratory harms caused by Covid-19. Protest movements have intensified against the backdrop of a global pandemic that has lifted the curtain on the injustices and inequalities that have long been bubbling away underneath.

The difference in death rates and provisions offered depending on one’s nationality, for instances, provides an example of the failure of ongoing social structures to preserve human life and provide the means to flourish, against the backdrop of governments and multinational corporations keen to “get the economy back up and running”. A critical cosmopolitanism must work to bridge these movements and

not engage in the politics of divide and rule, but to see them as possessing the potential to question the rules and norms of the social structures that reproduce these conditions. What exactly this will look like remains to be seen; Covid-19 provides a shorthand to a shared, albeit divergent, lived experience across borders. The opportunity and potentiality posed by the present crisis is the dress rehearsal for the ecological breakdown lurking in the background; the need to contest and transform neoliberal social structures is ever ripened.

A more specific contribution of this research is that it sets a foundation for spatial debates in cosmopolitan thought. One of the more specific original contributions of this thesis was in Chapter V, where the basic assumptions about what constitutes “the global” in global justice theory were problematised and unpacked. This provides scope for thinking about what is going on within affluent countries and its pertinence to debates about global justice. To some degree, this task is already underway. For instance, Joshua Hobbs (2021) argues that cosmopolitans ought to take “national injustices” (e.g. homelessness) within affluent countries seriously, as a prerequisite for motivating citizens of affluent countries to do something about “global injustices”. This motivational critique centres on attempting to ameliorate the conditions in one place to make people more willing to assist in alleviating dire conditions elsewhere. Whilst there is a key distinction between this argument and the one advanced in Chapter V, namely, that Hobbs’ (2021) account perpetuates a two-tiered approach to global justice, nevertheless, both contributions push for cosmopolitans to reflect upon the spatial assumptions and imaginaries when it comes to thinking about global justice. It is important that further cosmopolitan research pays greater attention to the connection between what is happening “here” and “there”, whilst always bearing in mind that somebody’s “there” is always somebody else’s “here”.

Lastly, it is worth reiterating the lacuna in the literature this research project has attempted to fill. In sum, this thesis has developed a critical cosmopolitan framework that severs itself from an individualist social ontology and instead attempts to place agents in relation to the structures they help produce and are subjected to. Having strived for a structural analysis of global injustices, this thesis was able to better account for neoliberal abstractions *and* the concrete social relations they shape, as well as the

structural injustices that are reproduced as a result. The main purpose of this thesis is to demonstrate that cosmopolitans have failed to grapple with the structural nature of global injustices, whereas previous attempts at explicating an account of global structural injustices have relied too heavily on the mechanical actions that produce a range of injustices without considering the ideational context in which these actions take place. Thus, this thesis is not only able to overcome the limitation that cosmopolitans fail to place “individuals” in relation to global social structures; it also means that this research is able to augment a structural injustice framework that is insensitive to the ideational rules and norms that reproduce an array of global injustices that we ought to care about. This is the necessary first step to ground an account of structural justice that calls for reforms to present social structures as well as one that calls for their transformation, which, in turn, endorses the emancipatory politics required to this end.

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