lating between Moralität and Sittlichkeit, obscures the connection between the possibility of moral reasoning and the existence of a certain type of tradition-bearing community. Any particular piece of practical reasoning has rational force only for those who both have desires and dispositions ordered to some good and recognize that good as furthered by doing what that piece of practical reasoning bids. Only within a community with shared beliefs about goods and shared dispositions educated in accordance with those beliefs, both rooted in shared practices, can practical reason-giving be an ordered, teachable activity with standards of success and failure. Such a community is rational only if the moral theory articulated in its institutionalized reason-giving is the best theory to emerge so far in its history. The best theory so far is that which transcends the limitations of the previous best theory by providing the best explanation of that previous theory’s failures and incoherences (as judged by the standards of that previous theory) and showing how to escape them.

The succession of such institutionalized theories in the life of a community constitute a rational tradition whose successive specifications of human good point forward to a never finally specifiable human telos. To be a rational individual is to participate in social life informed by a rational tradition. It is when modern societies reject this kind of rootedness in rational tradition that moral theorists either with the Enlightenment and Held attempt to construct a morality from the resources of reason-as-such or with Rorty seek to come to terms with the fragmented status quo.

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COSMOPOLITAN IDEALS AND NATIONAL SENTIMENT*

HENRY SIDGWICK’S exploration of the immigration question led him to notice a “general conflict between the cosmopolitan and the national ideals of political organization.” According to the national ideal, foreign policy should “promote the interests of a determinate group of human beings, bound together by the tie of a common nationality”; according to

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the cosmopolitan ideal, it should strive impartially to promote the interests of everyone. While conceding that the cosmopolitan ideal was "perhaps the ideal of the future," Sidgwick defended the national ideal, which he identified with the standpoint of common-sense morality.¹

The national ideal is still dominant in common-sense moral thought. For example, I doubt that many would disagree with Sidgwick that a government may legitimately restrict immigration in order to protect the stability and cohesion of domestic political life. Similarly, it seems to be widely accepted that a government may give greater weight in redistributing income to improving the welfare of its domestic poor than to improving that of the poor elsewhere—even if the domestic poor are already better off than the foreign poor.

For reasons I shall sketch, I do not believe these sentiments can be defended as plausibly as Sidgwick maintained. However, my main purpose here is not to argue for a more cosmopolitan view. These arguments are clear enough.² The more difficult problem is to explain the continuing influence of the national ideal on our thinking, even after the force of cosmopolitan considerations has been appreciated. I would like to take up this problem here in a preliminary way. I begin with brief comments on the meaning of the national ideal and the reason why it needs justification, despite its prominence in common-sense moral thought. Then, I consider several arguments that are often advanced in its support. It will emerge that although these arguments are not without force, none supports the national ideal in its familiar form. Finally, I speculate about how the residual influence of this ideal might be explained, and indicate the kind of dilemma it poses for practical reasoning. My space is limited; so my remarks throughout will be regrettably schematic, but I hope to say enough to show why the "general conflict" that Sidgwick noticed is more complex and intractable than it might appear.

THE MEANING OF THE NATIONAL IDEAL

The national ideal is not the same as what has sometimes been called "national egoism" or raison d'

pursuit of its citizens' interests should be limited by "the rules restraining it from attacking or encroaching on other States" (309). Presumably, states are also subject to the rules of ordinary morality, such as the principles of charity, beneficence, and fidelity. The distinguishing feature of the national ideal is not that it takes no account of the interests of foreigners, but rather that it takes account of (at least some of) their interests in a different way from that in which it takes account of the interests of compatriots. Adopting Henry Shue's phrase, we might say that the national ideal rests on the thesis that "compatriots take priority."³

As with any principle that sanctions unequal treatment, we are bound to wonder whether the priority thesis has a moral warrant. This question will seem especially pressing where, as here, the basis on which the principle discriminates is a characteristic that is possessed nonvoluntarily and where the effect of following the principle would be to reinforce existing inequalities. For it might be that discrimination on the basis of citizenship is like discrimination on the basis of race or sex: priority for compatriots, like priority for whites and priority for males, could be nothing more than a reflection of relations of social power that have nothing, morally speaking, to be said for them. If this is not the case, we should be able to say why.

THE MORAL CONTENT OF THE PRIORITY THESIS

The priority thesis might arise at either an intermediate or a foundational level of moral thought. At the intermediate level, the thesis derives from reasoning at a deeper level where everyone's interests are treated equally. At the foundational level, the thesis asserts that the interests of compatriots should be given priority even when, all things considered, this cannot be justified by any principle of equal treatment.

Most efforts to justify priority for compatriots occur at the intermediate level. I cannot discuss these here in any detail, but I will comment briefly on two views, which are based, respectively, on consequentialist and contractarian interpretations of equal treatment. The consequentialist justification seems least likely to be persuasive: as with analogous efforts to justify priority for the interests of the self, any consequentialist argument for priority for compatriots will probably involve either implausible empirical premises or an eccentric standard of value. At a minimum, it would

³ Op. cit., p. 132. As Shue points out, there is more to be said about how the thesis should be formulated in detail. But I do not believe it is necessary to explore the possible variations here.
presuppose a more-or-less equal background distribution of natural resources and talents; without this, given standard assumptions about the diminishing marginal value of increasing income, there is no reason to think that over-all value could not be increased by the redistribution that would result from wealthy states acting on a more impartial principle than priority for compatriots.

This familiar difficulty infects one of Sidgwick's arguments against open immigration. He claimed that open immigration "would not be really in the interest of humanity at large" because it would defeat the state's efforts to maintain its society's internal cohesion, promote the growth of culture, and preserve the order and integrity of its domestic political process (309). Initially, this argument may seem appealing because it recognizes that these features of communal life have great value, and because it reflects a realistic awareness that they could be endangered if governments adhered to the cosmopolitan ideal. Nevertheless, if the basis of the argument in "the interest of humanity at large" is taken seriously, the argument will not be persuasive: under contemporary conditions, it is most unlikely that the value derived by their citizens from the cohesion and order of relatively well-endowed societies is greater than the value that could be gained by others from the redistribution of labor (or wealth) that would be brought about by adherence to cosmopolitan policies. Thus, I believe that Michael Walzer is correct to suggest that the intuitive appeal of Sidgwick's argument flows from a different source than consequentialist balancing; on the other hand, it is not as clear to me as it is to Walzer that the argument's appeal has some other distinctively "moral basis"—a point I return to at the end.

It might seem that a better foundation for the priority thesis could be found in a contractarian moral theory like that set forth by John Rawls. On the assumption that national societies are self-sufficient schemes of social cooperation, Rawls restricts membership in the original position to compatriots until after the principles of distributive justice have been chosen; when others are finally admitted, it is only for the purpose of choosing regulative principles for diplomacy and war. The result is a strong form of the priority thesis: since the scope of the difference principle is limited to national societies, the responsibilities of governments to outsiders derive only from the laws of nations (such as the nonin-

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tervention principle) and the natural duties (such as that of mutual aid).  

I have argued elsewhere (PTIR, 129-136, 143-153) that the membership of the original position should be global rather than national because national societies are not, in fact, self-sufficient: the system of global trade and investment, organized within a structure of international institutions and conventions, constitutes a scheme of social cooperation in Rawls's sense. Therefore, the principles of justice should apply in the first instance to the world at large. I now think that this argument misses the point (although I still accept its conclusion). If the original position is to represent individuals as equal moral persons for the purpose of choosing principles of institutional or background justice, then the criterion of membership is possession of the two essential powers of moral personality—a capacity for an effective sense of justice and a capacity to form, revise, and pursue a conception of the good. Since human beings possess these essential powers regardless of whether, at present, they belong to a common cooperative scheme, the argument for construing the original position globally need not depend on any claim about the existence or intensity of international social cooperation. Of course, the construction would be pointless if there were no feasible scheme of institutions to which principles of justice could apply. But a feasibility condition is different from an existence condition, which I had earlier thought was necessary. Unless international cooperation according to the principles of justice can be shown to be infeasible, limiting the scope of the principles to national societies on the grounds that international cooperation does not exist today (or, as Brian Barry argues, because present-day international cooperation lacks the requisite mutuality) would arbitrarily favor the status quo.  

One might wonder how these points would be affected if Rawls's theory were regarded as a "constructivist moral conception"—that is, as an effort "to articulate and make explicit those shared notions and principles thought to be already latent in common sense; or


8 Here I am accepting a criticism of my earlier view advanced by David A. J. Richards, "International Distributive Justice," in Pennock and Chapman, op. cit.: 275-299, pp. 287-293.
... if common sense is uncertain ... to propose to it certain conceptions and principles congenial to its most essential convictions and historical traditions.9 On such an interpretation, embedded in the original position are distinctive conceptions of the person and of the social role of morality. Though these are supposed to be widely accepted or presupposed in our culture, they are not seen as independently given or necessarily acceptable to all human beings as such. As a result, it may seem that the principles chosen would be applicable only to societies that share the conceptions embedded in the original position. If one assumes that the conceptions on which the theory relies are parochial to modern democratic societies, it would follow that the principles of justice are appropriate only to these societies, and do not apply globally (or to domestic societies of other kinds).10

These matters are complex and require more detailed attention than is possible here. Offhand, however, there are two reasons for doubting that the view as outlined is correct, at least as regards the international application of the principles. First, the parochialism assumption is questionable on empirical grounds: it is hardly clear that there is greater agreement in modern democratic societies than elsewhere on those elements of the conception of the person which animate the original position.11 More fundamentally, even if the assumption is true, it would not justify limiting the original position to representatives of any particular democratic society. Although the basis of the conception of the person may be parochial, the conception itself, as Rawls describes it, is not. Once the conception of the person is specified by defining the moral powers, the argument for conceiving the original position in global terms is straightforward. One might say that we are compelled to take a global view in matters of social justice by features internal to our conception of moral personality, however parochial it may be.

None of this rules out the possibility that the parties to a global original position would accept the priority thesis. They might think, for example, that owing to various unalterable features of human social life, people would fare better in a world of states, each of which gave priority to its own citizens, than in a fully cosmopolitan world. By analogy with the parallel consequentialist defense of the thesis, however, this version of a contractarian de-

10 Rawls himself apparently assumes that the conceptions are parochial in this way. Ibid.
fense would be plausible only as part of an ideal theory of global justice which also provided for background institutions at the international level that would compensate for the uneven distribution of natural and cultural resources among states.\textsuperscript{12} Since the common-sense notion of priority for compatriots does not presuppose any such background, it will not find much support in a global original position.\textsuperscript{13}

So far, I have been considering the priority thesis at the intermediate level—that is, as a principle based on considerations at a deeper level of moral reasoning at which everyone’s interests are treated equally. However, if my doubts about the thesis were to be borne out by further examination of the arguments I have briefly sketched, this would not establish that it lacks significant moral content; for it might be that priority for compatriots can be explained at the foundational level instead.

The most plausible explanation of this type is suggested by the following remark of Thomas Nagel:

There is some public analogue to the individual’s right to lead his own life free of the constant demand to promote the best overall results, but it appears in the relations of states to one another rather than in their relations to their citizens: states can remain neutral in external disputes, and can legitimately favor their own populations—though not at any cost whatever to the rest of the world.\textsuperscript{14}

Of course, the fact that there is a public analogue to a true principle of private morality does not imply that the public analogue is also true. We must ask whether there is a reason for accepting the principle of priority for compatriots which is comparable in its persuasiveness to our reason for accepting the element of private morality to which Nagel alludes. Two strategies for answering this question present themselves. Priority for compatriots might be supported by reasons pertaining to states which are themselves analogues of the reasons pertaining to persons which support the corresponding element of private morality. Or, priority for compatriots might be based on the same reasons that support the corresponding element of private morality.

The first of these strategies is not very promising. The element of

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{12}Compare Rawls’s discussion of the role of background institutions in maintaining the justice of market arrangements at the domestic level. \textit{A Theory of Justice}, pp. 265–284.
\item \textsuperscript{13}For a discussion of the obligations of rich countries in the nonideal world under global principles of justice, see PTIR, pp. 169–176.
\item \textsuperscript{14}“Ruthlessness in Public Life,” in \textit{Mortal Questions} (New York: Cambridge, 1979), p. 84.
\end{itemize}
private morality in question is a limited permission to aim at results that are less good, according to some impersonal standard, than other results that one is in a position to produce.\textsuperscript{15} We recognize such a permission, within private morality, because of the importance we attach to being sufficiently free of impersonal moral constraints to be able to pursue the projects and commitments that express our separate identities as autonomous persons. This importance might be accounted for on consequentialist grounds, but it seems more likely to be a direct reflection in moral thought of what Samuel Scheffler calls "the independence of the personal point of view."\textsuperscript{16}

There is room for dispute about whether this permission is properly conceived as internal to private morality or as an external motivational constraint. But even if the permission is understood as a part of personal morality, it does not have a plausible analogue pertaining to states. It is unrealistically romantic to characterize states qua states as expressing their separate identities by forming and pursuing projects and commitments; we have no conception of national agency, analogous to our conception of personal agency, that could give sense to something like "the independence of the national point of view"; and, in any case, it is a mystery why we should regard the national point of view as having the kind of significance for morality that attaches naturally to the personal point of view.

I turn therefore to the second strategy for explaining a foundational commitment to priority for compatriots: this is the strategy of deriving the commitment from the same considerations that motivate our acceptance of the principle of priority for the interests of the self. If individuals have a right to resist some of the sacrifices that impersonal morality demands in order to pursue their own commitments, then their governments may not require such sacrifices of them. Accordingly, there is an upper bound to the cost that a state can be morally required to bear in connection with pursuit of cosmopolitan goals (or any other goals). This upper bound defines the degree of priority that a government may accord to the interests of compatriots.

I believe that some such reasoning yields the most plausible account available of the moral content of priority for compatriots. But it must be emphasized that the priority thesis, so construed,

\textsuperscript{15} By "some impersonal standard," I mean any agent-neutral standard for ranking outcomes according to the amount of over-all goodness that they contain. It does not matter, for present purposes, how such a standard is defined.

will have significant limits. These limits derive from two sources. One is the underlying permission for individuals to favor themselves when necessary to protect their pursuit of important personal projects and commitments. This permission is itself limited; one may not forgo the chance to do great good for others in order to avoid a trifling sacrifice for oneself. This limit on the personal permission (however it is defined) will be reflected in the national permission as well. The other source involves the difference between individual and group sacrifice. One of the ways in which our individual sacrifices may be excessively burdensome is in setting us at a disadvantage relative to others who have sacrificed less. Where sacrifices are imposed on an entire population, however, this problem may not arise (supposing that the sacrifices are fairly allocated). Hence, it might be that a state may demand more of its people than its people, as individuals, must demand of themselves when cosmopolitan goals require sacrifices of them.

Patriotism and Loyalty

It seems likely that the influence of the priority thesis in common-sense moral thought extends beyond what can be justified by the kinds of considerations discussed so far. The moral content of the national ideal is only part of the content of the national ideal. What is the rest?

A tempting answer is that the residual influence of the priority thesis is nothing more than a psychological or sociological artifact, whose significance for practical reasoning is merely that of an obstacle to be accommodated until it can be eliminated altogether.

In the end, this may prove to be correct. However, I do not think it is obviously correct, since it takes no account of at least two kinds of nonmoral but also non-self-interested reasons that back up some (though certainly not all) instances of patriotic sentiment. Some such reasons flow from a sense of shared loyalty: the feeling that I have obligations to compatriots simply because this is our country. I believe that such feelings are real and that they are primitive in the sense of being irreducible to feelings with a basis either in impersonal morality or in self-interest. To some extent, the influence of loyalty in practical reasoning might be explained with reference to its role in our projects and commitments, but I doubt that such an explanation would be fully satisfactory. (I do not know what a better explanation would be like, however.) Another kind of reason that sometimes backs up patriotic sentiment is per-

fectionist. Just as we can see ourselves as striving to realize in our own lives various forms of individual perfection, so we can see our countries as striving for various forms of social or communal perfection. Again, it does not appear in either case that the influence of perfectionist reasons can be fully explained on moral grounds; yet, in both cases, this influence is persistent and clearly distinguishable from that of self-interest.

To return to where we began, the influence of both types of reasons can be detected in our thinking about immigration policy. For example, some combination of them surely provides the best explanation of the appeal of Sidgwick’s argument that open borders would lead to the corruption of domestic culture and politics—an appeal that persists even if we think, contrary to Sidgwick, that open borders would better serve “the interest of humanity at large.” If this is right, his “general conflict” reproduces on the large scale a pervasive dilemma of practical reasoning: how to combine different kinds of reasons for action when these reasons conflict and lack a common basis in virtue of which they can be reconciled. To make progress in international ethics, we need to recognize this dilemma and to understand more fully its nonmoral (as well as its moral) sources.

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THE BURDENS OF JUSTICE*

I

T IS frequently suggested, more or less explicitly and more or less strongly, that to acknowledge global principles of justice would be to commit oneself to duties to transfer wealth from oneself or one’s community in such enormous amounts that one would have to commit a kind of financial hara-kiri in the fulfillment of the duties. This would be, if not strictly insane, highly supernerogatory, which comes to the same thing if one has a sufficiently expansive notion of the bounds of healthy self-interest. The general idea is that there are so many of them (the desperately poor) compared to us (the comfortably affluent) that providing for all of them is going to cost a bundle. Even if we share the burden

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