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0521834546 - Justice without Borders: Cosmopolitanism, Nationalism, and Patriotism

Kok-Chor Tan

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## Justice without Borders

The cosmopolitan idea of justice is commonly accused of not taking seriously the special ties and commitments of nationality and patriotism. This is because the ideal of impartial egalitarianism, which is central to the cosmopolitan view, seems to be directly opposed to the moral partiality inherent to nationalism and patriotism. In this book, Kok-Chor Tan argues that cosmopolitan justice, properly understood, can accommodate and appreciate nationalist and patriotic commitments, setting limits for these commitments without denying their moral significance. This book offers a defense of cosmopolitan justice against the charge that it denies the values that ordinarily matter to people, and a defense of nationalism and patriotism against the charge that these morally partial ideals are fundamentally inconsistent with the obligations of global justice. Accessible and persuasive, this book will have broad appeal to political theorists and moral philosophers.

KOK-CHOR TAN is an Assistant Professor of Philosophy at the University of Pennsylvania. He is the author of *Toleration, Diversity, and Global Justice* (2000), which was a joint runner-up for the 2003 Canadian Philosophical Association Book Prize.

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## Preface

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One central challenge to the cosmopolitan idea of distributive justice is that it is unable to accommodate and appreciate the special ties and commitments that characterize the lives of ordinary individuals and that are of value to them. Among these special ties and commitments that cosmopolitan justice seems to rule out are those associated with nationalism and patriotism. My aim in this book is to defend cosmopolitanism against this challenge. I will argue that, properly understood, cosmopolitan justice can allow for special concern and obligations on nationalistic and patriotic grounds, and that it can do so without forfeiting the cosmopolitan commitment to global egalitarianism. This work is, therefore, largely defensive, so to speak. But in clarifying the bounds of cosmopolitan justice in light of the special demands of nationalism and patriotism, I hope to present a distinctive understanding of the cosmopolitan idea of justice.

The literature on cosmopolitanism is rapidly growing. Yet this increasingly well-worked area remains rather untidy. Defenders of the cosmopolitan position themselves are not always clear or united on what their position is with respect to nationalism and patriotism. Although few, if indeed any, cosmopolitans would reject nationalist and patriotic practices altogether, some do give the impression that nationalist and patriotic commitments must be justified by reference to cosmopolitan goals, and that these partial commitments are morally defensible only if they serve the ends of cosmopolitan justice. Other cosmopolitans hold that cosmopolitanism can indeed accommodate patriotic and nationalist concerns because, so they argue, cosmopolitan justice does not require global equal concern for all persons. So one position takes a reductionist view of nationalism and patriotic concern, the other holds a revisionist view of cosmopolitan justice. These attempts to reconcile cosmopolitanism with nationalism and patriotism are unsatisfactory. The first is unsatisfactory to many proponents of nationalism and patriotism because it fails to fully appreciate the moral worth of these ideals. The second is unsatisfactory to those cosmopolitans who see a central motivation of cosmopolitan justice to be that of addressing the problem of global inequality. My aim in this

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work is to try to clear up some of these ambiguities and disagreements in the cosmopolitan position.

While this work is foremost a defense of cosmopolitan justice, it also provides a defense of patriotism and nationalism against a charge often raised against these ideals. This is the charge that patriotism and nationalism foster a certain narrow-mindedness and parochialism with regard to people's understanding of their moral obligations. My reconciliation of cosmopolitan justice with nationalism and patriotism, if successful, will dispel this concern. It will show that nationalism and patriotism are not necessarily at odds with taking the global point of view. In this regard, I think the arguments in this book will also be of interest to readers primarily interested in the topic of nationalism and patriotism.

Although this book is intended as a research monograph, I also want it to be accessible to students and scholars newly approaching the topic. To this end, chapters 2 and 3 provide background material to the cosmopolitan idea of justice, although they also set the stage for my arguments to come. Also I would like readers to find in other chapters useful, even if brief, introductions to topics such as Rawls and global justice (chapter 4), liberal nationalism (chapters 5 and 6), and patriotism (chapter 7). I hope I am able to achieve this dual aspiration of contributing to an important debate as well as introducing readers to it in the pages to follow.



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Chapter 4 is a revised version of “Critical Notice of Rawls, *The Law of Peoples*,” *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 31/1 (2001): 113–32.

Chapter 5 draws on arguments first presented in “Liberal Nationalism and Cosmopolitan Justice,” *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice* 5/4 (2002): 431–61, Kluwer Academic Publishers ©.

Part III of the book relies and expands on arguments presented in “The Limits of Patriotism,” forthcoming in a special volume of the *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*, and “Patriotic Obligations,” *Monist* 86/3 (2003): 434–53.

I am grateful to these journals and their respective publishers for permitting me to reproduce the arguments in these works here.