

## CHAPTER 12

# *Cosmopolitanism and the compatriot priority principle*

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### INTRODUCTION

To think about morality seriously is among other things to hope that it can plausibly be made to have some reasonable form of objectivity. What form it can take (if any), and still make sense, is a deeply contested matter (Mackie, 1977). In this essay, we shall argue (1) that an objective morality should take the form of intersubjectivity best captured by the method of general and wide reflective equilibrium; (2) that such a method itself yields a conception of morality that is both (a) universalistic and cosmopolitan and (b) particularistic and contextual. We will further argue that any reasonable morality must be both (a) and (b); (3) that moving on to the domain of normative politics, a justified political morality must be a cosmopolitan morality. Moreover (or so we shall argue), a cosmopolitan morality should, where a nation's sovereignty is threatened or not accepted, yield a liberal nationalism if it is to be a justified political stance. This raises the compatriot priority question and with it, the issue of the consistency of a liberal nationalist cosmopolitanism. We shall consider that in some detail.

### I

Let us begin with a brief methodological note on what John Rawls calls wide and general reflective equilibrium. What reflective equilibrium seeks to do is to *discover* patterns of coherence among our considered judgements or, where coherence is not to be found, to *forge* them into such patterns of coherence in good constructivist fashion (Rawls, 1999b, pp. 303–58). Wide reflective equilibrium takes into consideration all matters relevant to justifying our considered moral judgements, while narrow reflective equilibrium takes only our moral considered judgements, middle-level moral rules, and more fundamental moral principles

(all of which at all levels may be considered judgements) (Rawls, 1999b, pp. 286–302).

Wide reflective equilibrium then, seeks to discover patterns of coherence not only with our moral beliefs but with the things we know or reasonably believe about society, ourselves and our world: with the best-established factual beliefs, well-established scientific theories (including crucially social scientific theories), history, moral, and political theories, accounts of the functions of morality (where all of these are reasonable), and the like. We get general as well as wide reflective equilibrium when the beliefs and convictions of not just those of a single moral agent so reflecting and investigating are taken into consideration but those of most of the moral agents so concerned and so reflecting and investigating (Nielsen, 1996, pp. 12–19).

We start with particular considered judgements (convictions): usually the ones we hold most firmly. Wide and general reflective equilibrium, far from being a purely coherentist method, takes these considered judgements (taken individually) to have an *initial* credibility. But that does not turn it into foundationalism. For while these considered judgements are taken to have some initial credibility, they gain that credibility (1) by the way they hang together and (2) by the fact that they are the subject of reflective endorsements. Being put in wide reflective equilibrium means that various matters have been reflected on. The considered convictions are neither beliefs expressed by something like atomic or protocol sentences standing quite independently of each other, nor are they just received opinions or self-evident truths. They are rather deeply embedded considered convictions that have our reflective endorsement.

They also are not ethnocentric convictions or cultural prejudices; we may start with some that are, but these considered convictions are winnowed out as we apply wide and general reflective equilibrium. In failing to fit with our other beliefs, including beliefs found in cross-cultural studies, informed accounts of what our world is like, with our other considered convictions and with other people's considered convictions in our societies and in other societies, we will have, with all those convictions before us, *reasons* for criticizing, modifying, and perhaps even abandoning those considered convictions that do not fit together. We will have very good *reasons* for suspecting they are ethnocentric beliefs or cultural prejudices by the very fact that they do not fit with the rest, even after careful attempts to so read them. If they are considered convictions that, after all that rationalizing, still do not fit, then they should either be modified until they do fit or be abandoned. So instead of just having a

jumble of sometimes conflicting considered convictions, we will have instead considered convictions resulting from the use of this critical method.

The method of general and wide reflective equilibrium does not yield a final and complete equilibrium. We have no idea of what it would be like to get an unconditional or timeless warrant where inquiry once and for all could come to an end. Any equilibrium, no matter how wide and general and how carefully constructed, can be expected to be replaced by another reflective equilibrium at a later time. We can hope, if we are whiggish, that later equilibria will be more adequate than the earlier ones: that they will take in more considerations, be the result of improved theorizing and that a more perspicuous patterning will obtain. But we do not have any very clear criteria for “the most adequate” here any more than we have for convergence in the sciences. It is not unreasonable to expect some progress here but we will never get any final resting point. Truth may be time independent but justification surely is not.

## II

We next want to argue that a careful application of the method of wide and general reflective equilibrium (hereafter called just the method of reflective equilibrium) where modernity is firmly in place will yield a morality that is (a) both universalistic and cosmopolitan and (b) particularistic and contextual and that (a) and (b) can harmoniously fit together. Though, as we shall see, that idea is not without its problems.

To see how a reasonable conception of morality – a conception of morality resulting from the use of reflective equilibrium – will be contextualist/particularist *and* universalistic we will work with examples that will hopefully make this compatibility clear. How people should comport themselves sexually has changed with the advent of AIDS, how a just war (assuming there could be one) could be pursued has changed with the advent of nuclear weapons, how and the extent to which fishing should be pursued has changed with the depletion of fish stocks. Things are plainly in good measure contextual and particular here. In one context a certain particular thing should be done and in other contexts, a different thing should be done. But this is generally determined by the *objective features of the situation* and the accompanying moral judgement is universal: whenever and wherever the objective situation is such that the fish stocks are being extensively depleted then, *ceteris paribus*, fishing should be halted or drastically cut back.

What should be done changes with time, place, and situation principally and importantly because the objective situation is different. As the above examples show, it is the changed objective situation, which often both *causes* and *justifies* the changed moral views. There is nothing that is subjective or relativistic going on here though there is something which is determinately *contextual*.

It is not infrequently the case that for any context S, A should be done. When context S shifts to context Q, then B should be done instead. And when the objective features of S and Q are relevantly different, we should say that for *any* group or persons at time t and in context Q, that B should be done. Or, so as to indicate that things are not quite that straightforward, that in context Q, for any statistically normal person in that context, B should be done. These claims are perfectly universalizable (generalizable) and not infrequently universal (though not always so because of a possible dispute over “relevant differences”). Contextualism and universalism happily cohabit here. In fact they require each other. Many of our beliefs and convictions change because the world changes in certain ways including the people in it.

### III

We will now consider a third claim, namely that an adequately justified morality must be, at least for we moderns, a cosmopolitan morality, though one that acknowledges the importance for people of their local and particular ways of doing things. This is again reiterable for all people. Following on that, and moving to the domain of normative politics, we will further argue that in certain circumstances a cosmopolitan will also, and quite consistently so, be a liberal nationalist (Couture and Nielsen, 1998, pp. 579–662, and Kymlicka, 2001, pp. 203–21).

A cosmopolitan is a world citizen, but “world citizenship” should not be taken literally for it is basically the expression of a moral ideal. We, as the Stoics thought, should give our first allegiance to the moral community made up of the humanity of all human beings. We should always behave so as to treat with respect every human being, no matter where that person was born, no matter what the person’s class, rank, gender, or status may be. At the core of the cosmopolitan ideal is the idea that the life of everyone matters, and matters equally. This, in broad strokes, is the cosmopolitan moral ideal.

To be committed to such an ideal involves understanding that we are part of and committed to the universal community of humanity whether

there is anything actually answering to the idea of there being such a community or not. If we are at all tough-minded, we will realize there is no world community and that the actual world is more like a *swinerai* (pigsty). But this is neither to affirm nor to deny that there could and should be a world community. Whether it obtains or not, we should act to make it obtain or to approximate its obtaining in whatever way we can.

It is also vital that local affiliations do not stand in the way of cosmopolitan commitments to humanity as a whole. We need to keep firmly before our minds, and at the core of our commitments, the cosmopolitan ideal that the life of everyone matters, and matters equally. This very cosmopolitan and egalitarian moral point of view involves as a crucial task of cosmopolitan moral agents to work, as Martha Nussbaum well puts it, “to make all human beings part of our community of dialogue and concern, showing respect [and, we would add understanding] for the human wherever it occurs and allowing that respect to constrain our national or local politics” (Nussbaum, 1997a, pp. 60–61).

Some think that cosmopolitanism wrecks itself on the shoals of the compatriot priority principle, namely the principle that, in certain determinate circumstances, where compatriots’ needs and interests clash with those of foreigners, the needs and interests of compatriots should *ceteris paribus* take priority over those of foreigners. It is not infrequently thought that a consistent cosmopolitan *cannot* accept that principle, while any kind of nationalist, including even a thoroughly liberal nationalist, *must* accept it, so right there we can see, it might be said, that cosmopolitanism and liberal nationalism are incompatible. Some, Brian Barry for example, just bite that bullet, reject nationalism *tout court* and opt for cosmopolitanism (Barry, 2001). Others just jettison cosmopolitanism and opt for nationalism, hopefully a form of liberal nationalism. Still others, like Kok-Chor Tan, while sticking with a strong version of the compatriot priority principle, seeks to show that cosmopolitanism and liberal nationalism are compatible and both desirable (Tan, 2002, 2004a, 2004b, and 2005).

Agreeing with Tan that they are compatible and both desirable, we will take a more lax position vis-à-vis the compatriot priority principle. Admitting in some circumstances it has force, we will also argue that in most circumstances the compatriot priority principle is subordinate to cosmopolitan considerations and can *standardly* be benignly neglected. However, as we argue in the last part of this essay, this is not always so. In (for example) situations where open borders become an issue, particularly for small wealthy countries (e.g.: Iceland, Luxembourg, New Zealand),

there can *sometimes* be a conflict between a cosmopolitan commitment and a commitment to the compatriot priority principle. This poses a problem for both our form of liberal nationalism and for Tan's form. We are not terribly confident that either of us has the resources to answer it. We tentatively and conjecturally propose a way of resolving that conflict right at the end of our essay.

We shall endeavor in what follows first briefly to state what liberal nationalism is and how it contrasts with ethnic nationalism and other illiberal forms of nationalism and, second, try to clarify the issues described above and hopefully thereby make our take on them compelling.

#### IV

There are, it is crucial to understand, nationalisms and nationalisms. Some types (ethnic nationalism, for example) are to be despised and resisted and sometimes even to be fought (Couture and Nielsen, 1998). However, of whatever stripe, a nationalist is someone who cares about the nation of which she is a member and seeing, or at least believing, its independence threatened or seeing that it has not yet been achieved, seeks securely to sustain or achieve, as the case may be, some form of sovereignty, or at least some form of self-governance, for her nation. In speaking of a nation, we are speaking of a *people* who constitute a political community; a nation, that is, is a group of people with (a) a distinctive history, traditions, and customs, and, typically but not always (e.g. the Scots), with a distinctive language; in short, what Kymlicka calls a distinctive encompassing (societal) culture and (b) a sense that they are a people sustaining or seeking some form of self-governance (Seymour, 1998).

There are forms of nationalism that are barbaric and vicious while others (*pace* Barry) are liberal and tolerant (Couture and Nielsen, 1998). In their most extreme forms, non-liberal nationalisms engage, when the opportunity is at hand, in genocide and ethnic cleansing. Even in less virulent forms, they are xenophobic, exclusivist, typically racist, tracing national origin to ethnic origin and sometimes even to race. For such nationalists, national identity is in the blood or is an inherited encompassing societal culture or both. Where membership in a nation is marked by descent, we have ethnic nationalism and this is incompatible with universalism or cosmopolitanism or indeed, as Engels put it, with just plain human decency (Nielsen, 1996–1997).

Liberal nationalisms, on the other hand, are thoroughly compatible with universalism and arguably compatible with cosmopolitanism. All

liberal nationalists are liberal in the sense that Isaiah Berlin, John Rawls, and Donald Dworkin are liberals. They are committed to pluralism and tolerance. Liberal nationalists, like Johann Herder and David Miller, see and stress the vital importance to people of their local identities and attachments which include, in conditions of modernity, national identities, and attachments. Access to national membership is not, on such an account, through descent but through a will to live together and to cooperate and reciprocate. Liberal national membership, on that account, also comes with the cultural attunement from living in a liberal society, accepting the constitutional essentials of that society and a mutual recognition of those similarly attuned. Liberal nationalisms are compatible with universalism and arguably, but controversially, with cosmopolitanism in the ways in which we have shown particularism/contextualism is compatible with universalism. If our argument goes through, the ways in which liberal nationalism support having local identities is compatible with cosmopolitanism.

Brian Barry thinks that liberal nationalism has zero exemplification in our actual world. They are just ideas in some theoreticians' heads (Barry, 2001). But that is plainly false. The independence struggles of Norway and Iceland from Sweden and Denmark respectively were struggles by liberal nationalists, and both the seceding nations and the nations seceded from were liberal societies and all of these societies later became social democratic liberal societies. The struggle between them at the time of their secession, though bitter, was carried out within the framework and parameters of liberal democracies. In our times the powerful and protracted nationalisms in Flanders, Catalonia, Quebec, Puerto Rico, Scotland, and Wales are all liberal nationalisms and the states opposing them are liberal states. Propaganda goes on on all sides; still, the peoples and the nation-states of such nations resulting from secession would remain liberal.

Why can a Catalonian nationalist or a Quebec nationalist not also be a cosmopolitan? Indeed some of them – perhaps even most of them – are. Certainly, at least many of them think of themselves as such. But can they *consistently* be both liberal nationalists and cosmopolitans? We have argued they can, but Kok-Chor Tan has argued that consistency can only be obtained, on our account, by having an impoverished conception of the compatriot priority principle (Tan, 2004a). Yet that principle is so central, or so Tan claims, to liberal nationalism that it needs to be in a stronger form than we sanction. It is liberal nationalism with a strong compatriot priority principle, he claims, that must be shown to be

compatible with cosmopolitanism. Tan argues reasonably that, given an adequate conception of the compatriot priority principle, it can. Others have thought that no cosmopolitan can consistently accept the compatriot priority principle. Still others think that there is an irresolvable conflict between cosmopolitanism and liberal nationalism over some key applications of the compatriot priority principle (e.g. over the problem of open borders). It is to these crucial issues, generated by their at least putatively conflicting views, to which we turn.

v

Tan's treatment of the compatriot priority principle is crucial to what is at issue here. We maintain that Tan has in effect, though not explicitly, confined himself to ideal theory here, and that this, in discussing the relations between cosmopolitanism and liberal nationalism, is a defect. What we see when we are doing ideal theory in such contexts is the thesis that individuals or even states may favor in certain circumstances their compatriots and that this is not *in itself* objectionable. This is problematic for a cosmopolitan. We heartily agree with Tan when he says

. . . if the formation and sustaining of special and local attachments are constitutive of any meaningful and well-lived human life, any theory of justice that fails to take seriously these attachments can be renounced as a *reductio ad absurdum*. The aim of justice is not to undermine the good for individuals but to fairly facilitate their pursuit of the good, and it is the good that gives meaning and worth to people's lives. (Tan, 2004a)

Tan further argues that "nationalists have to accept the priority for compatriots as one of the local commitments that individuals do and must develop to live rewarding and rich lives" (Tan, 2004a). This is not something that is *optional* for a nationalist. Thus, given our nationalist commitments, we must "accept the priority thesis as part of common sense morality, and consequently a theory of justice that rejects the priority thesis [as part of ideal theory, we add] is not a theory of justice that is made for humanity" (Tan, 2004a).

Tan argues that for a nationalist, it is not sufficient to say that particular attachments and the compatriot priority principle have instrumental value only. "For serious nationalists, national membership and attachments are not only instrumentally valuable – to be valued only as a means to some more important ends – they are also to be valued for themselves" (Tan, 2004a). Indeed, for most ordinary people, their shared nationality



has non-instrumental value because it is constitutive of their well-being or conception of a good human life. Membership in a national community is a good that is valued for itself, for what it means to individuals, and is not merely valued instrumentally because it furthers some impersonal goals. Part of what gives meaning and worth to a shared national membership is the special concern members have for each other's needs. "To regard nationality as having *only* instrumental value is to empty it of much of its meaning and force" (Tan, 2004a).

However, it is important to remember that things can (and usually do) have, both instrumental value and non-instrumental value. Some value walking as an end in itself *and* as a means for keeping healthy. Group membership, including a shared national membership and attachments and (which is something else again) compatriot partiality, could be valued as an end (for the very reasons that Tan gives) and as well be valued instrumentally. To say that that compatriot priority has instrumental value is not to say that it has *only* instrumental value. We need (instrumentally need) local attachments for a society to flourish even if we refuse to acknowledge that anything like that can have a value in itself or even that such notions make sense. We can leave the debate over whether group attachments have value in themselves for the philosopher's closet without disclaiming the *central* role that group membership plays in justice and human flourishing. For practical political argumentation, a sound argument that shows the instrumental value of compatriot priority and the instrumental value of local attachments is sufficient. This could be as true for a serious nationalist concerned with the achievement of the national self-determination of the nation of which he is a member as for anyone else.

In arguing as we just have, we are not committed to a *reductive* program. We are not saying there is "nothing morally significant about national attachments as such," or that the "priority thesis is reducible to cosmopolitan principles." Indeed we think *that* is a mistake and perhaps even an incoherency. What we are saying is that the compatriot priority principle and national attachments have, whatever other value they may or may not have, instrumental value and that this justification is available even for someone, including a serious nationalist, who cannot see anything morally significant about national attachments as such.

We do not want to reject the compatriot priority thesis. However, we want to reject the idea that serious nationalists have to grant this principle an inherent or intrinsic value. Serious and consistent nationalists can, and often do, recognize that national attachments are important precisely

because these attachments play a central (instrumental) role in achieving democracy and local as well as global justice. We also want to deny that considerations about the status – instrumental, inherent or intrinsic – of the compatriot priority principle cuts much moral-*political* ice. These are considerations which, when we are thinking concretely and practically about how the world can and should be ordered, we can benignly neglect. That notwithstanding, we can agree with Tan that, *as far as ideal theory goes*, the real challenge for a cosmopolitan nationalist is to show how the cosmopolitan commitment to global egalitarianism can be reconciled with the nationalist principle that compatriots do take priority.

Let us pull some things together. Tan *may* well have a strong case for saying that we should say, that the “compatriot priority thesis is exercisable only against the background global order that is just” (Tan, 2004a). That is why we now, though rather uneasily, treat the compatriot priority principle as exclusively a part of ideal theory, never a part of non-ideal theory, for it is unfortunately only in ideal theory that we can find a global order that is just. The real world does not yield such a picture. We also think that there is some force in saying, as Tan does, that

priority for compatriots must be useful for global justice before it is to have [much] moral significance. For the purposes of cosmopolitan justice, so long as the priority for compatriots is *compatible* with the requirements of justice [we would say global justice], the nationalist need offer no further explanation for his preferences. (Tan, 2004a)

Indeed, here Tan gives a clear instrumental justification to compatriot priority. Our point is that we need no more than that for *political* justification. But we agree that “within the bounds of justice, there is nothing offensive about the compatriot priority claim in itself, and any theory of justice must recognize the fact that forming and pursuing local attachments is part of what it means to live a meaningful human life” (Tan, 2004a). That last statement can be and has been challenged, but we think it can be sustained.

Without retracting any of the criticisms we have so far made of his account, we think this characterization by Tan goes some distance towards meeting what he calls the real challenge for anyone wanting to defend a cosmopolitan position while taking nationalism seriously. To meet that challenge “is to show how the irreducible moral significance of national attachments can be acknowledged and endorsed without surrendering the cosmopolitan commitment to equal respect and concern for all persons” (Tan, 2004a). Compatibility between cosmopolitanism and

liberal nationalism all the way along from the most general contexts to concrete ones is maintained and the independent significance of the compatriot priority principle is also maintained while (a) stressing that priority for compatriots can only be allowed where global justice obtains and (b) where it is useful for social justice. We are not sure that we must appeal to (b) as well as (a) but either way we have a meeting of that central challenge to a liberal nationalist who would also be a cosmopolitan *though within the limits of ideal theory alone*. We generally (but not in all particular instances) have compatibility between cosmopolitanism and liberal nationalism.

## VI

We now want to bring out something of our rationale for saying why we attach, while remaining serious liberal nationalists, less importance to the compatriot priority principle than does Tan and indeed many others. We will set forth two sorts of considerations.

First, and here it is hard to know whether we are talking about ideal theory or not, Tan argues in effect that the compatriot priority principle comes into play within the limits of *global* justice alone. A rich country cannot rightly appeal to the compatriot priority principle in deciding how things are to be distributed between countries. This will later be questioned with respect to open borders. We are inclined to think *au contraire* that the compatriot priority principle only gains much significance when we have to make such choices, that is, when, in such situations, we are concerned with a *non-ideal* theory of global justice.

Consider a case. Suppose a family, say a family of academics, wishes to send their very talented, earnest, and eager daughter to Yale to study art history, something which she has a considerable talent for and is committed to. She very much wants to study at Yale, which is, let us assume, the best place in the world to study art history. But Yale is very expensive. Further, suppose they live in Belgium and that she could study there and get a decent education, including the study of art history at much less expense, but education-wise, Yale is still the perfect place for her given her interests and talents. Further suppose the Belgium government is social democratic and has once again raised taxes in part to direct more money to foreign aid. The Belgium government, let us say, among other things, supports plans for building wells to yield clean water in an impoverished country, say, Sierra Leone. It would like also to provide adequate aid to partially support students like the one described, but cannot afford to do

both. It must set some priorities. With our way of looking at things – indeed, we think, with any cosmopolitan and egalitarian way of looking at things – the money should go on the wells. But some conscientious people with a strong conception of the compatriot priority principle would resist that. Is it so obvious what justice mandates here? This is where the compatriot priority has a rationale and some bite even in a world that is anything but just. Even some, like ourselves, who would go for the wells, still feel its force. Should not the compatriot priority principle be overridden in such situations? Here we have something that is up for debate and not just in ideal theory. Our considered judgement is that we should not here give much weight to the compatriot priority principle. But can we get this into wide reflective equilibrium? What should be said here is not evident.

Let us turn to our second importantly different case. Here what we shall say is particularly conjectural and we end up at risk of unsaying what we started by saying. Giving determinate content to our earlier gnomic remarks, we contend that once one leaves the protections of ideal theory, the compatriot priority principle becomes less important though, paradoxically, that is the only place where it could do any non-truistic work.

The best way we can think of bringing this out is by translating this into the concrete and telling a story. The story we give is about Quebec but it could apply to any nation trying to gain sovereignty. We use Quebec only because we are more familiar with it. The first part of this story is realistic; the second is pure fantasy, but with no damage to its force. Now, for the story. It has been widely thought in the last few years that the issue of Quebec sovereignty has finally been laid to rest. With the election in Quebec about a year ago of the provincial Liberals (actually a very conservative party headed by a former Tory federal MP recycled as a provincial Liberal), we have a government that has extensively dismantled many of the social programs (such as, health provisions, day-care provisions, educational provisions, and environmental protection laws) that it took years of struggle to attain. This, along with the heavy-handedness of the federal government, has rekindled the embers of the quest for sovereignty in Quebec. Quite contrary to their intent, the provincial Liberals and the federal Liberals put the issue of sovereignty on the agenda again. It is not unreasonable to expect that the next provincial election will sweep the major sovereigntist party (the *Parti Québécois*) into power and that will be followed by a new referendum and that the vote this time will be *Oui*. It might not happen, but it realistically could.

Now comes the pure fantasy, but still useful part of the story. Suppose that happened and suppose we, as elected MPs, are in the cabinet and are among those responsible for policy formation in the new state. We would centrally recommend five things: first, the restoration and extension, though perhaps in somewhat different forms, of the abolished as well as other social welfare provisions. Second, the securing and extension of the French language as the official language of Quebec and its protection particularly in Montreal where it is demographically threatened. There would also be enhanced provision for English instruction as a *second language*. Quebec, mainly a French-speaking nation of 7 million, is surrounded by 280 million English speakers. For all kinds of practical reasons *Québécois* need to learn English and learn it well, but as a *second language*. But the lingua franca of Quebec should be firmly French. Third, the protection of the culture, traditions, and institutions that go with Quebec's culture. They, of course, would change where people (the citizens of the new country) want them to change, as they surely will, but these changes would not be forced on them from the outside but should be collectively and democratically decided by the Quebec citizens. There would also remain in place at least the traditional protections for the First Nations and the English-speaking national minority. Fourth, the protection of the multicultural nature of the vibrant urban center that is Montreal. Montreal, like many large urban centers around the world, is a culturally rich center where many cultures meet, culturally borrow from each other, and where people of those different cultures frequently intermingle and intermarry. Around our universities, for example, you can, besides French and English, hear on the streets, and often, Chinese, Italian, Arabic, Hebrew, and Hindi. Sometimes these cultures clash usually due to exogenous factors but for the most part they get along, become part of the broader culture – encompassing (societal) culture – and constantly intermingle at work, in school and in university classrooms, and at play. Here we, as does Jeremy Waldron following Salman Rushdie, celebrate our mongrelized, bastardized selves (Waldron, 1992). We gain from hybrid-vigor and our society is enriched from it. Any liberal nationalist should recognize that and seek to preserve and further it in the nation to which she or he is attached in a way such that these minority cultures are accepted and enhanced, and that they neither come into conflict with each other, nor are any of them excluded from access to the long engrained, though ever-changing traditional culture – the (encompassing) societal culture – of the nation. Finally, fifth, we would recommend, consistently with our liberal, nationalist, and cosmopolitan commitments, for the new

state of Quebec to have progressive policies of foreign aid, to support international institutions for global justice and peace, to favor cultural exchanges with other countries and cultures, and to adopt external policies that support democratic struggles for national emancipation and national independence wherever they occur in the world.

It is such things that would be the concern of the serious liberal nationalist. Compatriot priority does not come to the fore, at least not in any major way, here. To this it may be responded: but it does, though, not in the way that it is usually thought. To see this, consider the vexing problem of *open borders*. As we have seen, any nationalist (liberal or otherwise) is concerned to protect the cultural integrity of her nation: its language and societal (encompassing) culture. But the liberal nationalist is also a cosmopolitan, an internationalist, and an egalitarian. She has, as Tan puts it, “a cosmopolitan view of global justice, the fundamental premise of which is that individuals are entitled to equal respect and concern regardless of citizenship or nationality, and that global institutions should be arranged such that each person’s interests are given equal due” (Tan, 2004a). But the liberal nationalist, if she lives in a rich nation, will have many people clamoring for entry. Many of them will not be political refugees but simply *economic* ones. A country, particularly a small country, could not have a policy of fully open borders without coming to lose any cultural distinctiveness that it may have. Think of Iceland or New Zealand here. Hybrid-vigor is one thing; complete loss of identity along with becoming a tower of Babel and an economic slum is another. Does justice or a commitment to humanity require that?

We are inclined to think that the answer to that question is: no. And that answer does not appeal to the compatriot priority principle or, for that matter, to any *principle*, but instead to factual matters. First, cosmopolitans respect cultural diversity and what they deny is that national attachments should have a priority over our commitments toward the whole of humanity; but in doing so they need not deny that national attachments have a moral value. What they might recommend, in the case we are considering, might be a careful balance between a reasonable opening of their borders and strong measures to protect the culture of their country. Where it does so it also must fully respect the rights of the immigrants. Second, cosmopolitans value equality and this includes economic equality, but economic equality need not be for them an intrinsic and absolute value so that opening the borders will be a good thing even when it reduces the general population in a country to dire poverty. What should be known in order to arrive at a sound decision about opening the

borders are, among other things, facts concerning what has been called the “carrying capacity” of a country (Nielsen, 2003, pp. 226–31).

Nationalists could also argue against opening the borders of their country without appealing to the compatriot priority principle. In non-ideal situations where generally rich and powerful countries still keep their borders closed, the liberal nationalist might argue that his country is not morally required to assume *alone* the burdens of global justice. Cosmopolitans can agree with nationalists on that and both can work at changing the world so as to have a better distribution of the burdens of global justice. We tend to agree with Tan when he implies that the appeal to the compatriot priority principle (to oppose the opening of borders, for instance) is not justified in non-ideal cases, but we also want to point out that it is not what ideal theory tells us about a compatriot priority principle that could help us to see what to do – to open the borders or not – when the demands of justice are not met.

On that point, questions can be raised about whether opening the borders is the best strategy to be advocated by cosmopolitans and liberal nationalists when global justice is concerned. Are there any other feasible devices that could yield a worldwide democratic and economic equality (or at least something approximating it) and that both cosmopolitan and liberal nationalists could agree on? Thomas Pogge, in his practical-concrete fashion, has suggested some that would satisfy, as far as we can see, the stringent moral requirements of both liberal nationalism and cosmopolitanism (Pogge, 2002). Here, we have good reasons to think that liberal nationalism and cosmopolitanism are consistent with each other and could be put in *wide and general* reflective equilibrium.

#### CONCLUSION

We are not trying to solve the morally important and intellectually demanding problem of open borders here. We rather use it to probe the problem of the compatibility of liberal nationalism and cosmopolitanism. Must not cosmopolitans, trying to get their views into wide reflective equilibrium with those of liberal nationalists, be committed, perhaps their gut reactions to the contrary notwithstanding, to some form of compatriot priority principle? In closing, but with no very considerable confidence, we will attempt to sketch a solution.

Once we get to the hurly-burly world and must deal with an actual problem, such as that of open borders, it gives us a new form of the challenge that both Tan and we try in our distinct ways to meet. It would

seem that a consistent cosmopolitan *in that context* (i.e. the open-borders context), and perhaps in other *such contexts* as well, would reject the compatriot priority principle and that in *that context* (such contexts) a consistent liberal nationalist would do the same. So it would seem at least that one can be a consistent liberal nationalist cosmopolitan.

However, note the qualifier “in that context” and “in such contexts.” That leads us to understand that there are some contexts in which cosmopolitanism and liberal nationalism may conflict but that says nothing about “most contexts” or “many contexts” or even “nearly all contexts.” That there are a few *extreme contexts* (if there are) where they cannot consistently go together says nothing about whether they could not massively go together. And that, we think, is what is important. There will always be, as things go, some particular moral and moral-political conflicts and incompatibilities. They will often be very important in the situation to which they apply, but they are not the whole of the matter and they do not gainsay what we have just said. Moral principles and moral-political doctrines like cosmopolitanism or liberal nationalism should not be taken as *unexceptionally* universal in such moral-political discourses. In spite of their often universal form, they will have exceptions. We should not look at moral and political principles as if they were axioms in axiomatic systems and always expect them to yield determinate and non-context-dependent claims. *Normally* cosmopolitanism and liberal nationalism can consistently and peacefully co-exist. There may be *some* cases where they conflict, and where this conflict is not clearly resolvable, if resolvable at all. This is to be expected. It is like both Rawls and Habermas on the liberties of the ancients and the liberties of the moderns; they both take them to be co-original and compatible without it being the case that there will not be *particular* instances where they will conflict. We should not think there is a principle of sufficient reason in moral and normative political discourse. That would be rationalism and non-contextualism raising their ugly heads.