

**In Defense of National Partiality:
An Argument Refuting Claims of Nationalism's Inherent Immorality**

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Introduction and Political Context:

Political analysts around the globe have witnessed an astonishing resurgence of nationalism in several of the world's leading western democracies. The United Kingdom's decision to leave the European Union demonstrated the gravity of 21st-century Euroskepticism, especially when placed in the crucible of the European migrant crisis.¹ Donald J. Trump's shocking ascension to the presidency of the United States has reinvigorated debates over economic globalization, American military involvement abroad, and immigration from foreign nations. Marine Le Pen's successful performance in the first round of France's 2017 presidential election confirms her electorate's profound fear of a waning French cultural identity, which remains in perpetual conflict with Middle-Eastern refugees and their own cultural practices.² Each of these instances pits the humanitarian, economic, and political needs of foreigners against longstanding notions of nationality, citizenship, fraternity, and equality, begging the question, what do people of various nationalities owe one another, if anything at all?

Conservative grassroots organizations around the planet have answered this question by mobilizing an incredible backlash to the liberal notion of cosmopolitanism. They have demonstrated a lingering desire for strong national culture, as well as an enduring intuition that governments ought to benefit their own citizens before benefiting the nationals of any other country. During Brexit, this was seen in the alluring slogan, "Take Back Control." For President Donald J. Trump, this is the "America First" doctrine of governance. For Marine Le Pen, this is

¹ "The vote for Brexit followed a campaign by several Eurosceptic groups—notably Vote Leave, Leave. EU and Grassroots Out—that had focused heavily on mobilizing public anxiety over immigration, the free movement of EU nationals and the further enlargement of the EU to encompass Albania, Montenegro and Serbia, and possibly Turkey." (Clarke et al., 2).

² For example, the contentious "burqa ban." See: *Loi interdisant la dissimulation du visage dans l'espace public*: 14 September 2010.

the *Front National*'s unofficial slogan, "*on est chez nous*" (roughly, "we are at our home," or "this is *our* home").

This paper will be addressing the morality of the aforementioned issues at their common denominator: the ethical justification of national partiality. National partiality has become an increasingly controversial concept, especially in leftist political spheres, but what is most intriguing is that despite liberals' widespread distaste for partiality, nearly everyone is guilty of exercising it in some capacity or another. In instances of war, compatriots unapologetically prefer that combatants of other nations die instead of combatants from their own nation. In instances of distributive justice, compatriots tend to believe that solving economic disparities at home is more important than solving broader global injustices.³ In the case of governments, it is almost universally expected that leaders of a nation do what is best for their compatriots: after all, governments are entities representing the common good of a collective, and those outside that collective group are necessarily absent the partiality of that nation's government. Indeed, the very concept of the nationstate itself seems to be fundamentally dependent on the practice of at least *some* national partiality, demonstrating an inconsistency in those liberal philosophies which adopt the nationstate as a morally permissible structure. As Michael Blake aptly describes, "Liberalism [cosmopolitanism] has difficulty with the fact of state borders" (Blake, 257).

³ Michael Blake argues that this form of partiality is morally justifiable, "because [of] the political and legal institutions we share at the national level. A concern with relative economic shares... is a plausible interpretation of liberal principles only when those principles are applied to individuals who share liability to the coercive network of state governance... [perhaps] liberalism can concern itself with absolute deprivation abroad, and reserve concern for relative deprivation for the local arena" (Blake, 258-9). Daniel Weinstock also suggests that consequentialist arguments will support this position: "consequentialists will try to show that, for epistemic as well as for organizational reasons, the needs and preferences of all persons are better satisfied if we each attend to those whose needs and preferences we best understand, and to whom we can deliver goods and resources most reliably and efficiently, namely, our compatriots" (Weinstock, 516). Therefore, it is safe to conclude that an intersecting cleavage consisting of both liberals and consequentialists would find this commonly held moral intuition to be morally justifiable.

And so, despite the widespread prevalence of national partiality, the question remains: is this sort of partiality morally justified in the 21st century? Is the nationstate an outdated entity in need of amending? Do liberal criticisms of national partiality adequately demonstrate its immorality? This paper explores these subjects in greater detail with the primary aim of proving national partiality's status as a morally justifiable philosophical concept, akin to the upholding of important social contracts. It is important to clarify that this paper makes no claim suggesting that national partiality is in any way morally superior to liberal philosophies of cosmopolitanism. Similarly, it makes no claim suggesting that liberal cosmopolitanism is morally inferior to national partiality. Its only goal is to demonstrate the inadequacies of those arguments which suggest national partiality is somehow *not* morally justifiable.⁴ Instead, I will suggest that partiality is an important philosophical concept that deserves careful consideration in the studies of philosophy, politics, economics, law, and international human rights.

Brief History and Literature Review:

This work is written in the wake of decades of universalist progress. Supranational institutions, especially the United Nations, have worked for the common advancement of all humankind rather than the advancement of one particular nation or set of nations. The UN's

⁴ And indeed, this is the only plausible thesis. To quote Daniel Weinstock, "If the nationalist claim is that we *must* give more importance to the needs and preferences of our compatriots than to those of others, then it is implausible. But if the claim is simply that we *may* do so, it is far less ambitious and far-reaching than it is standardly advertised to be" (Weinstock, 518). Suggesting that one *must* adopt a nationalist philosophy neither advances nor credits the argument for partiality itself, in which it is implied that individuals are allowed to have partiality for any variety of reasons. For example, one may be partial to one's country for a whole host of legitimate justifications (shared history, culture, government, etc.), but one who does not value their country is similarly allowed to be partial towards another group or entity. Arguments which suggest nationalism is a special obligation must have some additional causal mechanism other than partiality itself to advance its argument. Michael Blake (*state coercion*) and Andrea Sangiovanni (*reciprocity*) do an excellent job advancing theses with separate causal mechanisms.

milestone *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (1948) informally marked the beginning of what some have called the “New World Order,” or humankind’s potential transition from the nationstate to global governance. It perpetuated the dissolution of state autonomy by suggesting that there are certain human rights that do not need to be guaranteed by one’s own government. Instead, the UDHR suggests that there are particular things which are intrinsic to humanity itself: assurances which transcend national borders and apply to people of all nations. It essentially introduced the revolutionary concept of international human rights, strengthening multinational institutions and weakening the traditional nationstate. It was the first global acknowledgement of cosmopolitan principle, implicitly likening the idea of national partiality to an ignorant bias dependent on the coincidental location of one’s birth.⁵

Major historical events contributed to the development of these supranational structures. In the wake of the Holocaust’s humanitarian atrocities, the notion of supranational intervention was more explicitly defined in the *Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide* (1948); after the proliferation of the nuclear bomb, multilateral treaties were ratified to prevent future global disasters, especially the *Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons* (1968); after decades of 20th-century decolonization, global foreign aid spending increased drastically, especially during the 1960’s and 1970’s.⁶ The increasing complexity of these and other issues has led to an unparalleled period of international cooperation, obscuring

⁵ For the purposes of this paper, cosmopolitanism will be understood as an ambivalence for the concept of the nationstate; rather, cosmopolitan principle places moral significance on humankind’s common identity. This common identity defies borders, political affiliation, religious affiliation, economic strata, geographic proximity, ethnic identity, and national identity.

⁶ Though, economists tend to disagree on whether or not this is truly for humanitarian reasons. Some theorize that this increase in foreign aid served more strategic aims. One might suggest that an increase in aid spending can instead be attributed to the Cold War.

the significance of national borders and leading some to question the morality of nationalism altogether.

I argue that such developments, while potentially promising for the future of all humankind, have nevertheless diminished the significance of national identity, and indeed, the significance of the nationstate itself. They have pushed liberal theory to favor universal humanitarianism over the favoritism of one's compatriots. By contrast, policies which have reinforced traditional notions of national partiality are unjustly characterized as unsympathetic, uncharitable, uncaring, and privileged.⁷ Nationalists have been arbitrarily compared to racists, fascists, and colonialists for a variety of historically dishonest reasons, blurring the lines between morally justified national partiality and other distinct and more deplorable philosophies. I argue that the historical developments of the last seven decades, and the perpetual conflation of nationalism with other ideologies, have severely oversimplified the multi-faceted complexities of nationality itself, and that they have directly impacted modern conceptualizations of citizenship, humanitarianism, and conationalism, needlessly making national partiality a subject of tremendous contentiousness.

The basis of these faulty comparisons appears to come from oversimplified explanations of what national partiality truly *is* and how it can come to be justified. Those who defend national partiality have generally failed to offer much more than simplistic arguments which discuss the significance of compatriotic relationships, citing common heritage, language, history,

⁷ Consider, for example, the United States' decision not to intervene in the Rwandan genocide. President Bill Clinton retroactively cited this decision as a failure of leadership, and the single greatest regret of his administration. However, intervention would have meant risking American lives to save Tutsi lives. Whether he truly regretted this decision or not, it was assumed that he would intervene despite potential US casualties, demonstrating the world community's disinterest in the application of national partiality.

culture, etc. While it is true that these factors are not entirely insignificant, critics of these justifications are quick to suggest that the mere existence of a relationship is not justification enough for special obligations within that relationship. In other words, simply explaining *that* something exists or *why* something exists is not evidence enough to suggest that it *ought* to exist. These criticisms are well-warranted, and so for many nationalists, the debate is over before it even begins. Furthermore, conversations about national partiality typically divide ethicists into two camps with a dependence on different analogies that only further oversimplify the issue. The first camp, which aims to justify the morality of national partiality, tends to liken compatriots to members of one's extended family. Thomas Hurka, who suggests that partiality to one's family is morally defensible, relies heavily on this analogy to defend the ethics of national partiality:

Familial partiality is used as a point of comparison, if only to justify national partiality as distinctly familial ... Both aspects consider the rights of the members of their group. Their partiality is justified when it produces significant benefits ... national partiality is not [necessarily] equivalent to familial partiality, but neither is it [necessarily] as constrained as it is generally thought to be.

(Hurka, 1)

Unfortunately, this comparison operates at the exclusion of a few essential distinctions between families and conationals. For example, citizenship in a pluralist democracy means belonging to a community of many distinct cross-cutting cleavages. Therefore, citizenship has far weaker cultural homogeneity than most family groups, which necessarily implies that you have

compatriots with whom you will more fundamentally disagree.⁸ Similarly, the majority of your compatriots are complete strangers, while family members are generally people with whom you have some sort of substantive relationship. The inevitable fault of this argument is the idea that you could somehow owe something more to a complete stranger than you owe to a family member, based solely on national identity. These are only a few of the many examples demonstrating the inviability of this compatriot-family comparison, though Burka's work makes thoroughly convincing arguments for familial partiality as an example of justified partiality.

The second camp, which is opposed to the concept of national partiality, likens it to racism. Many argue that national identity and racial identity are inescapably linked, and therefore, the defense of national partiality is necessarily a defense for racism. There is a similar fear that placing too much value on shared heritage, language, history, and culture might easily extend to a separate argument which aims to justify ethnic partiality.⁹ Again, this comparison is certainly valuable to a degree, but I remain unconvinced that this current two-camp framework adequately accounts for all of the complexities of conationalism and special obligations. Michael Blake expresses a similar concern:

⁸ While it is entirely possible to fiercely disagree with someone in your own family, I only mean to suggest that because families tend to pass down values, and because family groups are smaller than entire nations, you are far more likely to fundamentally disagree with someone outside of your family than inside your family.

⁹ And indeed, this is a troubling notion. Many white supremacists attempt to justify their racist beliefs with similar, if not identical arguments. Perhaps there is a distinction between the notions of cultural superiority and a somewhat natural preference for one's own culture, but this will not be explored here — it would only serve to distract from the more significant components of my argument.

The debate between the partialist and the cosmopolitan thus turns on the legitimacy of preferring one's own—a debate, I think, that tends to turn more than it should upon the choice of a metaphor: the cosmopolitans interpreting nationality as a morally arbitrary fact of persons, which is akin to race, and the partialists interpreting nationality as more akin to familial relationships...

(Blake, 260)

Daniel Weinstock further suggests that nationalists have failed to adequately define the terms which would justify their view from a purely rational standpoint: “nationalist defenders of special obligations owe us a much more complicated story than that which they have thus far put forward to justify national partiality ... They will first have to disambiguate both the concepts of *obligation* and that of *compatriot*” (Weinstock, 538).

Weinstock is right to challenge the defenders of national partiality in this way. Liberals have done a much better job demonstrating the ways in which cosmopolitanism is consistent with Richard J. Arneson's conceptualization of the Moral Status of Persons (hereafter, MSP), as well as the impartial principle.¹⁰ Meanwhile, partiality appears to be in conflict with MSP and its most basic tenants. Far too many partialists have made the mistake of attempting to side-step this supposed inconsistency between nationalism and MSP by arguing that nationalism need not truly be considered an example of partiality. William Blake, who virtuously suggests that coercive governmental institutions create systems of shared liability within a nationstate, erroneously suggests that what only “looks like partiality is in fact the implication of an impartial principle

¹⁰ “All humans have an equal basic moral status. They possess the same fundamental rights, and the comparable interests of each person should count the same in calculations that determine social policy. Neither supposed racial differences, nor skin color, sex, sexual orientation, ethnicity, intelligence, nor any other differences among humans negate their fundamental equal worth and dignity... all humans are equally human, after all” (Arneson, 1).

under a different set of circumstances” (Blake, 260). In other words, he suggests that the coercive government itself does not establish a system of partiality, but instead establishes an implicit network of shared responsibility for that government structure. He appears to believe that the relationship between the government and its citizenry involves us in some broader national relationship, which can only be adequately fulfilled not through partiality, but by meeting certain obligations we have to each other through broader coercive relationships. Of course, this was his strategy all along. He aspired to demonstrate partiality’s efficacy using the seemingly contradictory impartial principle: “The second strategy, however, would be to abandon this attempt to find a legitimate source of partiality. This strategy would, instead, seek to explain the apparent [special obligation] inequality as a valid implication of the impartial principle” (Blake, 260).

Andrea Sangiovanni makes a similar argument by suggesting that reciprocity in the mutual provision of collective goods and economic development can also justify a partial approach to distributive justice. Where Blake and Sangiovanni disagree, I offer no contest. Both *coercion* and *reciprocity* arguments seem to successfully justify approaching global economic justice with apt consideration for our obligations to conationals. However, Blake and Sangiovanni appear to have a common dislike of the term partiality and actively avoid using it in their arguments. This is because favoring an individual for certain social characteristics appears to violate MSP’s view that we all have equal intrinsic worth, and that partiality cannot be a just consideration with regards to resource distribution. In my view, Blake’s determination to argue that national partiality is somehow consistent with MSP (and broader cosmopolitan principles) has forced him to make semantic distinctions which avoid the inevitable consequences of his

argument. I charge that fulfilling special obligations through larger contractual relationships, such as a contractual relationship with one's government, is consistent with the very notion of partiality, and that Blake's methods are inherently contradictory despite his valiant effort to redefine the reader's understanding of partiality outright. I will argue that partiality for others can, in fact, be considered in the terms of contractual relationships. Solving this discrepancy would not only make Blake's argument more consistent, but it would establish a foundation from which any national partialist could justify the morality of partiality itself. The following section will outline my argument in such a way as to illustrate the important relationship between contracts and partiality, and I further aim to demonstrate that these seemingly distinct concepts may actually be one and the same.

Partiality and Contracts:

My argument is dependent on the acceptance of three essential premises. Should any one of these premises fail to stand, the argument itself will be rendered useless. However, it is my intuition that these premises will be widely accepted by readers of all perspectives, and therefore, I confidently propose them as the bases of my argument:

- ***Essential premise #1:*** Individuals have an absolute moral responsibility to uphold contracts whenever possible. If one engages in a contract, whether explicit or implicit, I suggest that they have a moral obligation to either 1) uphold that contract, or 2) if they cannot uphold it, explicitly redefine the terms of that contract to the best of their ability.¹¹

As rational actors, we have the capacity to engage in cooperative arrangements with one another, and these arrangements are usually heavily dependent on the notion of consent. Contracts with terms to which both parties consent can be referred to as explicit contracts (i.e. verbal or written, carefully defined, etc.). However, I would also like to suggest that there is room for moral theorists to consider the merits of implicit contracts (i.e. assumed or implied, inherited by existing cultural or societal structures, etc.). This second type of contract is especially difficult to qualify. Culturally distinct perceptions of what one individual owes another are certainly points of contestation and the unconvinced reader may be quick to call this component of relationships into question. It is true that nuanced views defining relationships or social obligations differ from culture to culture, and in fact, among individuals of the same culture, but my arguments will focus exclusively on the wide commonalities of these cultural views and such nuances should not seriously hinder my argument.

For example, let's suppose that a woman has permission from her husband to use their joint estate as collateral in the acquisition of a large loan. In other words, she has explicit permission to use their home for collateral. However, even without explicitly stating the

¹¹ Should two differing contracts come into conflict with each other, it is the responsibility of the individual to uphold the contract which causes the least possible moral harm to the other beneficiaries of all contracts. After all, contracts of varying moral significance require distinct and sometimes competing actions, especially in relationships: "To claim that nationality is the *only* relationship which by its nature requires members to recognize obligations to one another... is to ignore the varied nature of commitments which constitute people's identities by definitional fiat" (Weinstock, 533).

husband's perfect knowledge as a condition of their arrangement, it is implied that any major financial decision the wife makes that could potentially effect the possession of their joint estate ought to be made only after a discussion with her husband. This is because they are bound in an explicit agreement with implicit consequences. It is likely that the husband reasonably expects that he will be informed of any major developments regarding his home, even though he has already stated that he is comfortable with it being used as collateral. Of course, this is a very basic example. More examples will follow once we introduce our other premises:

- ***Essential premise #2:*** People are social by nature and relationships are an essential part of a satisfactory human experience. This is made evident in friendships, group affiliations, familial relationships, and communities.

Philosophically, psychologically, biologically, economically, or otherwise, human beings are deeply dependent on one another to enrich the experience of existing. Just as one might argue that there is something intrinsically sacred about human life or the human body, I argue that given our deep emotional need to foster relationships, social practices of love, disdain, and indeed, partiality, fall in this same vein. They too are sacred components of the human experience. The nature of relationships can be simplistically described as analogous to partiality: relationships demand favorability of certain individuals over others. While simply having a need for something does not necessarily justify the morality of the thing, I nevertheless believe that

the nature of human beings demands certain consideration in questions of morality, and I will therefore acknowledge it as a tenant of my argument.¹²

- ***Essential premise #3:*** Relationships could be reasonably qualified as social contracts. Social contracts can be explicitly defined or implicitly defined. These implications will be explained in greater detail below.

For example, if a man and a woman are dating in the suburban United States, they have explicitly agreed to see each one another. They have set terms for their date (what time to meet, what location, etc.) and owe it to each other to show up, if possible. If the man is running ten minutes late, he owes it to the woman to explicitly redefine the arrangement with a text message informing her that he is running behind. However, if the man cheats on the woman, even if he never agreed *not* to cheat, he has violated a term of relationships which is implicit to American culture. The very nature of monogamous dating culture dictates that he not cheat, and therefore, I suggest that he has a contractual obligation *not* to cheat. I argue that relationships of many varieties, including familial and conational relationships, carry certain implied contracts. Similarly, the cosmopolitan might argue that simply being a fellow-human also carries an implicit contract of certain value. These explicit and implicit contracts inform all the *oughts* and *ought-nots* of our lives, simply because it is expected we will uphold them. These various contracts absolutely have consequences for international relations, distributive justice, and even

¹² David Miller once said that, “since people generally do exhibit such allegiances and attachments, [we should] try to build on a political philosophy which incorporates them” (Weinstock, 518).

ethical decision-making. The following section will offer examples of social contracts in practice when confronted with dilemmas of partiality.

Justifying Partiality:

Let us assume that you are standing on the beach and see two individuals drowning. You immediately identify the first individual as your mother. After a prolonged glance, you are absolutely certain that the second individual is a stranger. All other factors, including age, health, and nationality being held constant, which individual should you save? Those of a truly egalitarian nature will find this question difficult to answer. The exercise of partiality means that as an individual, you have effectively determined that your mother's life is more significant to you than the life of the stranger. How might we justify this decision? We must first realize that, regardless of your course of action, one individual will die. Whether it is your mother or the stranger, there will be a tragedy of equal moral significance (in accordance with MSP). However, many of us still have the inclination to save our mothers because of an implied social contract inherent in personal relationships. You love your mother and your mother loves you — choosing to save the stranger would carry the additional moral consequence of breaking an important social contract with your mother. Therefore, in this case I will argue that there is greater moral consequence to saving the stranger than saving your mother, justifying the decision to save your mother. This does not suggest that the stranger is of lesser moral significance, only that your individual responsibility to your mother is greater than the general moral responsibility you have to your fellow human.

Of course, I acknowledge the importance of philosophy's operation outside of cultural norms and influences. Simply observing that most people would prefer to save their mothers doesn't necessarily validate my argument. Immoral natural inclinations, such as the urge to kill, also exist, but natural impulse alone cannot justify murder. This is why I refer to these relationships as contracts. Even without verbal confirmation or a signed legal document, the implicit foundation of relationships demands that your mother be granted preferential treatment. Relationships themselves serve as contracts, and unless one argues that we have no obligation to uphold contracts, it is difficult to justify not honoring them in philosophical contexts.

Still, the cosmopolitan will argue that because the stranger in this scenario is also a person, I have still broken an important social contract that ought to exist between *any* two people. The cosmopolitan may even go so far as to claim that I have broken a social contract of equal significance to the contract that exists with my mother. To the first point, we would find agreement. Just because you do not know the stranger does not mean that you do not share any form of social bond with them. After all, you are both people, and most people value human life even in the case of strangers. Similarly, there exists an implied moral contract not to commit murder against fellow persons. I would like to live, and so would you, so our implicit contractual relationship to not commit murder is upheld by the use of these broader social contracts. I have a cosmopolitan obligation to all people, which is not in conflict with the notion of partiality. This would be seen in the instance of a stranger and a martian, were they seen drowning in the ocean. You would certainly be morally compelled to save the human being by virtue of your implied human contract, even though it exceeds the "fellow-living-thing" contract maintained with the martian. In matters of familial partiality, to suggest that the bond you have with your mother

could be reasonably contested by the bond you have with a stranger diminishes the legitimacy of your personal relationship with your mother, thereby diminishing the serious moral obligations associated with maintaining social contracts. MSP has presented an apparent pitfall: to love everyone equally is to love nobody at all.

Now, let's suppose that your mother tripped on the beach and needs help getting sand off her back while the stranger is drowning. In this instance, the stranger's dire circumstances do mean that you should try to prevent her or his death, even at your mother's momentary inconvenience. There exists, in any ethical decision-making, the factor of relativity. While your love for your mother makes her an important priority in your life, the ethical consequence of not helping your mother (violating an expectation set forth by your social contract with her) is certainly of lesser severity than failing to uphold the cosmopolitan social contract of helping a dying stranger. In this respect, the cosmopolitan appears to correctly identify that we owe *some* level of protection to our fellow person through a universal human contract. I would only amend that human life still demands relative partiality precisely because relationships give human life value and contribute greatly to humankind's happiness and sense of purpose.

How might these views fit into a global schematic for distributive justice? As we have demonstrated, relationships are hierarchical in nature. You're partial to your mother relative to the stranger. Similarly, there are justifications for prioritizing your countrywomen and countrymen over nationals of other nations. Blake's *coercion* argument and Sangiovanni's *reciprocity* argument are certainly two examples, but more basically, common history, language, culture, interests, and status as conationals ought to qualify as the basis for some partial decision-making. If two strangers are drowning in the ocean, one American and one Frenchwoman (all

other factors being held constant), who should you save? While the relationship between you and the anonymous American is certainly weaker than a relationship you might have with a friend, I would argue that the American ought to be saved for the same reasons your mother ought to be. You have, however indirectly, engaged in some form of social contract with that American citizen by virtue of your shared government, culture, and nationality. You share a common language and history, and so there is an implied obligation to assist your conational. Similarly, there is a greater moral consequence for failing to uphold this social contract.

Suppose that a Frenchwoman and an Iranian are drowning in the ocean, all other variables being held constant. Assuming that you are reading this as an American, you truly may not care who lives and who dies. However, were you to cite your own nationality as a justification for saving the Frenchwoman, I argue that you would be morally justified. After all, France has been one of America's most consistent allies for centuries. There are shared values tracing back to our respective revolutions, common interests, countless markets for trade, and a shared love for democracy. While these factors may be considered arbitrary by some, I only suggest that your implied social contract to Frenchpersons is slightly stronger than your implied social contract to Iranians, and therefore, choosing to save the Iranian would carry marginally greater moral cost than choosing to save the Frenchwoman. Needless to say, the "all other factors being held constant" component makes these decisions much easier to make. Suppose you were friends with the Iranian and not the Frenchwoman? Suppose the Iranian is 20 and the Frenchwoman is 90. Who do you have a more substantial relationship with and what do you owe that person relative to another person? These are questions for the individual to decide, based

entirely on their own systems of partiality. I am not suggesting that nationality *must* be the basis for ethical decision-making, only that it is morally permissible to utilize it.

Conclusion:

We philosophers spend the bulk of our time trying to determine what we owe other people, if anything. I've determined that relationships *must* play a role. Partiality is, at its core, the prioritization of certain people and the establishment of social contracts. Just as I believe that legal and verbal contracts can be important considerations in the justifications of philosophical decisions, so too can social contracts be used in ethical decision-making. In the case of implied contracts, one could certainly rationalize their decision by attempting to minimize the greatest moral loss, as I have demonstrated.

However, certain liberal critics will likely argue that the prioritization of conditionals creates a "west-takes all" scenario in which western interests will always prevail over the interests of the global poor. However, my defense of partiality also demands that excessive spending and wasteful utilization of resources end in the west. Countries like the United States absolutely have the capacity to contribute to life-saving programs in impoverished nations. Too often, we are the "mother falling in the sand" relative to the "drowning stranger." Every grain of food waste or excessive luxury is the opportunity to save a human life. Decisions of necessity need to be taken more seriously in privileged countries for the benefit of the global poor, with whom we share a relatively weak, but very real social contract of common humanity.

Of course, as Blake and Sangiovanni correctly identify, the question of relativity is a constant variable that should impact decision-making on a case-by-case basis. In the case of

destabilized middle-eastern countries with an absence of water, my system of thought has determined that the west has a human obligation to relieve communities that cannot provide for themselves, precisely because the west has enough water. In the case of African countries and food shortages, my system of thought has determined that the west has a human obligation to relieve communities that cannot provide for themselves, precisely because the west has enough food. In the case of free cancer treatments for the impoverished people of the world who cannot afford western medicine, my system of thought has determined the west is justified in prioritizing the affordable treatment of conationals before the treatment of people abroad, precisely because there already exist conationals who cannot afford life-saving medical treatments. In these and many other instances, *coercion*, *reciprocity*, and even *partiality* appear to justify prioritizing national needs over global needs. However, none of these three rightfully defend national wants over global needs, and at this stage, the cosmopolitan's view of distributive justice again appears to be appropriate.

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