Global Political Issues

Lecture 4: Cosmopolitanism

§1. Justice beyond borders

Normative Realism

States have the right to do whatever is in the national interest.

T1 ‘...every Sovereign hath the same Right, in procuring the safety of his People, that any particular man can have, in procuring his own safety.’

(Thomas Hobbes, Leviathan, p.244)

Explanatory Realism

States always do whatever they think is in the national interest.

T2 ‘[We are,] in the first instance, human beings living in a world of human beings and only incidentally members of polities.’

(Brian Barry, Statism and Nationalism, p.35)

T3 ‘[Cosmopolitanism] does not recognize any categories of people as having more or less moral weight; and it includes all human beings.’

(Brian Barry, Statism and Nationalism, p.36)

Institutional Cosmopolitanism

We ought to create international political institutions...

Moderate Cultural Cosmopolitanism

A good life may involve experience of diverse cultures, languages, etc.

Extreme Cultural Cosmopolitanism

A good life must involve experience of diverse cultures, languages, etc.

Nationalism

Just as we have special duties to our friends and to members of our family, so we have special duties to members of the same nation as ourselves.
Society of states

States have duties to other states, but these are not reducible to the duties that individuals have to one another…

§2. Cosmopolitanism

Moderate Distributive Justice Cosmopolitanism

There are principles of justice governing the distribution of goods among people in the world.

Extreme Distributive Justice Cosmopolitanism

There are no principles of justice governing the distribution of goods among British people that are not also principles governing the distribution of goods among people in the world.

§3. The law of peoples

T4 ‘Peoples are to observe treaties and undertakings… Peoples have the right of self-defense but no right to instigate war for reasons other than self-defense… Peoples are to honor human rights… Peoples have a duty to assist other peoples living under unfavorable conditions that prevent their having a just or decent political and social regime.’

(John Rawls, Law of Peoples, p.37)

C We should accept the Equal Liberties Principle and the Difference Principle.

P1 The Equal Liberties Principle and the Difference Principle are the principles of social justice that would be chosen in the Original Position.

P2 We should choose whichever principles of social justice would be chosen in the Original Position.

C We should choose whichever principles of social justice would be chosen in the Original Position.

P1 The principles of social justice that would be chosen in the Original Position are the fair principles of social justice.

P2 We should choose the fair principles of social justice.

T5 ‘…a society is a cooperative venture for mutual advantage… typically marked by a conflict as well as by an identity of interests…’

(John Rawls, Theory of Justice, p.4)
Is the global application of the difference principle inappropriate because there is no global society in this sense…?

T6 ‘…evidence of global economic and political interdependence shows the existence of a global scheme of social cooperation…’

(Charles Beitz, Justice and International Relations, p.376)

Rawls is looking for a political conception of global justice…

One feature of a political conception of social justice is that it exploits…

T7 ‘…certain fundamental ideas seen as implicit in the public political culture of a democratic society…’

(John Rawls, Political Liberalism, p.13)

Cosmopolitanism is a comprehensive moral doctrine… It is not widely shared… So the idea of a global society of world citizens cannot guide the selection of a political conception of global justice…

§4. Moral equality

P1 Human beings have equal moral worth.

P2 If human beings have equal moral worth, then if it is unjust that one British person is less well off than another as a result of brute bad luck, it is also unjust that a Congolese person is less well off than a British person as a result of brute bad luck.

C It is unjust that a Congolese person is less well off than a British person as a result of brute bad luck.

What does P1 mean…? That we have precisely the same moral obligations towards every human being…? That we have precisely the same basic moral obligations towards every human being…?

T8 ‘An equal consideration principle that would rule out [these] kinds of behaviour… would be accepted by almost everyone (with the exception perhaps of a few extreme racists), so if that were all moral cosmopolitanism meant, we could safely say that we are all cosmopolitans now.’

(David Miller, National Responsibility and Global Justice, p.27)

T9 ‘…compatriotism makes no difference to our most important negative duties…’

(Thomas Pogge, Cosmopolitanism: A Defence, p.87)
‘As citizens, we have a fundamental duty of justice: not to collaborate in imposing an unjust institutional order upon them.’

(Thomas Pogge, *Cosmopolitanism: A Defence*, p.88)

We have the same negative duties towards all human beings.

We have a negative duty towards other British people not to collaborate in imposing upon them human-rights-violating or gross-inequality-producing institutions.

We have a negative duty towards Congolese people not to collaborate in imposing upon them human-rights-violating or gross-inequality-producing institutions.

‘The accident of where one is born is just that, an accident; any human being might have been born in any nation… Recognizing this… we should not allow differences of nationality or class or ethnic membership or even gender to erect barriers between us and our fellow human beings… We should recognize humanity wherever it occurs, and give its fundamental ingredients, reason and moral capacity, our first allegiance and respect.’

(Martha Nussbaum, *Patriotism and Cosmopolitanism*)

That a person is Congolese rather than British is morally arbitrary.

It is unjust if people’s distributive shares are influenced by morally arbitrary factors.

It is unjust if a person’s distributive share is influenced by their being Congolese rather than British.

References