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Citizenship and Partiality: Group Membership and the Bounds of Morality

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Introduction

The world today is made up of close to 200 countries, which are home to approximately seven billion people. Each of these individuals has a life—families, friends, communities, projects, goals, and attachments. Among these attachments is that of nation, one of nearly 200 options. More than simply a home, a nation provides many people with a sense of belonging, a distinct identity as part of the group. Such group identities associated with place of citizenship provide people with obligations and permissions that they see as important. When Hurricane Katrina destroyed New Orleans, displacing hundreds of thousands of people, Americans rallied together, donating their individual money and energy on providing aid.

On the other hand, 9 million people die annually of hunger worldwide.¹ Most people see that figure and grimace slightly, maybe shaking their heads, but that is the extent of it. Mass hunger for most of us living in the developed world is not a reality that we face, or that our loved ones face. The fact is, then, that people are significantly more likely to be moved to action by the plight of their fellow citizen than they are by the daily suffering of those around the world. This might be explainable by the power of geographic distance, but I would venture to guess that an American abroad faced with injustice is more likely to garner American outrage than is a foreigner faced with the same problems repeatedly.

The tension that such stories of favoritism for our own points out is that between group attachment and moral impartiality. Each person, we are inclined to think, share basic moral equality. The tendency to favor some of these people over others, however, is a central and unavoidable human behavior. Rather than condemn this behavior outright, some theorists have attempted to integrate caring for those closest to us into an acceptable moral framework. This permissible partiality, as it is called, justifies the intuition we have to act on behalf of our family

¹ Chasen Turk, "15 World Hunger Statistics," *The Borgen Project* (2017), <https://borgenproject.org/15-world-hunger-statistics/>.

and our friends. In the case of group loyalty, however, the tendency toward partiality has more often than not been seen as a failing, especially given the abhorrent ideologies that stem from favoring some groups over others for arbitrary and false reasons.

In this project, I will attempt to present a theory of group partiality that avoids the possibility for the dark side of citizenship while justifying group attachment. I present my argument in three parts. In Part I, I survey the main suggestions for a theory of partiality. If partiality is a viable stance, then it must have a concrete basis in something more than mere whim. The theories I discuss attempt to ground partiality in facts about the nature of interpersonal interactions. I ultimately find that relationships themselves provide a ground for partiality.

In Part II, I move from individual-based partiality to group partiality in order to show how partiality might play an important role in the way citizenship functions. I again support a view that acknowledges the importance of relationships, but sketch a hybrid view that integrates other factors into how people create permissible attachments to fellow group members despite the lack of close personal relationships. In my theory, I suggest that partiality must stay within the boundaries of basic morality, thus avoiding blatant moral transgressions in the name of group loyalty.

In Part III, I address potential objections to partiality in citizenship from liberalism. I conclude that liberalism can, in fact, justify partiality rather than invalidate it. In addressing the issue of partiality in a group context, I spell out some of the difficulties that existing theories face. The result of my inquiry is a conception of morality and group identity that acknowledges the real complexities involved in the experience of being an individual in a world of nation-states. In today's political climate, it is of tantamount importance that we continue to question and examine the nature of attachments and issues of immigration, citizenship, and belonging in an increasingly globalized context.

Part I: Partiality

In moral theory, partiality refers to the idea that individuals value those with whom they have special relationships over unrelated strangers in making decisions. Traditional moral theories have generally disavowed partiality on its own as morally permissible. Any partial behavior is justified on these theories if it conforms to a more fundamental moral principle. For example, a utilitarian might justify partiality toward one's children because it increases the overall utility of society if parents pay attention to their children. By thus subsuming partiality under the greater moral principle rather than valuing it on its own, these theories cannot satisfactorily account for the real moral weight that intuition places upon partial relationships. For instance, to return to a utilitarian account, ignoring one's child in order to do charity work to save the lives of strangers' children is easy to justify using the principle of utility. It does seem, however, that the charitable but absent parent is failing to uphold an important duty—i.e. the duty a parent has to his or her child. Partiality, then, aims to provide a justification for why these duties, as well as moral permissions, arise and how they can be justified.

In this first section, I lay out the problem that partiality addresses and provide an account of the intuitions it aims to justify. I then survey the main approaches to justifying partial behavior found in the literature, as well as discuss the potential problems these approaches face. The three approaches analyzed are the three most prevalent views found in the literature. Many of these views are pieced together from theories of relationships more generally, thus making it somewhat difficult to find a coherent or complete articulation of a unified view. Nevertheless, the considerations put forth by the theorists discussed below illuminate the relevant aspects of the question raised, and carve out a field of extensive potential for further philosophical investigation.

The Puzzle of Partiality

Imagine that a father has a very sick child. His child is in the hospital and requires expensive treatment, round-the-clock care, and is scared and lonely. In the hospital room next door, however, there is another child who suffers from the same disease, though perhaps has a slightly more advanced case. The other child has no parents to comfort him or to help him through his illness. If the father devotes significant time, energy, and money to caring for the orphaned child at the expense of caring for his own child, moral intuition dictates that he is somehow failing to fulfill his duty. According to impartialist accounts of morality, however, the father is not failing to fulfill a duty because of the moral equality of his child and the orphan. Both need and deserve care equally—in fact, the orphan arguably needs it more. The father is equally able to provide care to both children.

Further, the case could be adjusted as follows: the father sees significantly more worth in the orphan than in his own child. His child is not very ill, mean-spirited, and selfish while the orphan has more morally admirable qualities. It still seems that the father fails morally if he neglects his child. In the first case, strict impartiality cannot account for the fact that the father favors his child, given that both children have the same worth and thus deserve the same treatment. In the second case, intuition dictates that the father value the morally inferior agent over the other, which blatantly contradicts impartialist theories. Impartiality treats morality more like a calculation than a weighing of valid options—the worth of the individual yields a certain appropriate treatment. Such a cold and detached method, however, does not give any position to the personal attachments that make life meaningful. Partiality gives the importance of such relationships, despite the objective worth of various individuals, a central position in moral reasoning.

Additionally, intuition seems to set up a *duty* to value certain agents over others regardless of their objective moral worth. The father who neglects his child, the friend who does not do a favor for a friend, the child who does not care for her elderly parents all seem to *fail*

morally. Without allowing for partiality, these cases cannot be considered moral failures because there cannot be a duty to treat those in certain relationships differently than any other person. Certain relationships, then, change an agent's normative situation. The presence of one of these special relationships "can make a difference to what you are *required* to do" as well as to "what you are *allowed* to do."² Relationships of partiality, then, can create both duties and permissions. For example, the father has a duty to care for his sick child, and he perhaps has the permission to pay for piano lessons for his own child rather than another child.

Special relationships thus create reasons of partiality: that is, being in a certain relationship makes some actions intelligible where they might not make sense without the presence of the relationship. For instance, it might make sense for me to drive three hours to pick up my best friend from the airport, while it might seem odd for me to take the time to pick up a complete stranger without compensation. The puzzle of partiality, then, is the tension between the reasons, permissions, and duties that are created by special relationships and the fact that none of the individuals in these relationships are worth any more than any other person. It is thus the task of the partialist to explain this tension, and ground the partial intuition in a morally permissible factor.

To further complicate the puzzle, the reasons, permissions, and duties that arise from certain relationships must be ones that apply only to the acting agent rather than to any moral being. For instance, Simon Keller provides the example of witnesses to a car accident.³ Mary and Peter are both present and both arguably have a duty to assist. The duty to assist when witness to an accident, then, is agent-neutral: nothing specific to Mary and Peter affects the moral duty they have, and any other witness to a similar event would share such a duty. If, however, Mary is an emergency room doctor while Peter is a philosophy professor, Mary has

² Simon Keller, *Partiality* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), 2. Emphasis added.

³ See Keller, *Partiality*, 16-19. It should be noted that Keller's specific formulation of agent-relativity does not go uncontested. I will discuss this as an objection to his view later.

more of a duty to begin administering CPR to the victim than Peter does. If Peter has a cell phone while Mary left her cell phone in the car, Peter has more of a reason to call 911 than Mary does. The normative situation that Mary and Peter find themselves in, then, are *agent-relative*: their individual characteristics and abilities change what they are reasonably expected to do. Similarly, the reasons, permissions, and duties that arise from special relationships have to be agent-relative. The fact that my mother is in the hospital gives me a reason to go visit her, while it does not give the barista who makes my coffee a reason to visit her. Theories of partiality, then, have to explain the agent-relative differences in moral behavior that are created by certain special relationships.

The Three Main Approaches to Partiality

The main approaches to partiality attempt to solve the puzzle of partiality in one of two ways: either “by adding to the impartialist picture an additional source of reasons... and saying that it is from this extra source of reasons that our reasons of partiality arise,” or by challenging the assumption that “if two things have the same value, then we ought to give those two things the same treatment.”⁴ While there is no particular reason to believe that any one person is more important simply because they are important to the acting agent, an additional source of value could very well change the calculation behind a moral decision. The first two views that I survey—the projects view and the relationships view—take this approach. While these positions maintain that the individuals in question are not inherently more valuable, they add an external source that provides a reason for partiality. The third view that I discuss—the individuals view—takes the second approach. The proper valuation of an individual, the view suggests, recognizes that the same moral value of two people does not necessarily provide the acting agent with the same reason to act in two different situations. There are several arguments for

⁴ Keller, *Partiality*, 20.

challenging the assumption of equivalent reasons, which I will discuss in the subsection on the individuals view.

The Projects View

The special reason to treat someone partially, on the projects view, is located within the acting agent and arises from his particular constitution. In *Moral Luck*, Bernard Williams takes up the question of what constitutes the self, and how a coherent conception of the self motivates the agent and gives him a reason to keep living. Williams' consideration of these issues begins by examining how personal identity might be connected to moral issues. Williams presents the question of promise keeping. If I make a promise to agent A, should I keep that promise to agent A'? The answer seems to be related to whether or not A and A' share a personal identity.

Williams then extends his argument to decision-making regarding the self in different temporal situations—i.e. future selves.⁵ A significant factor that ties the agent as he is now to the person that he will be in, say, ten years, is “that some very general desire or project or concern of his now relate[s] to desires or projects which he will have then.”⁶ It is this “conatus of desire, project and interest” that gives a reason “why I should go on at all.”⁷ Such a ground project thus “provid[es] the motive force which propels [the agent] into the future, and gives him a reason for living.”⁸ These ground projects, a sort of commitment, are so important to who the individual is that they constitute a necessary component of his or her very identity. Because of this, Williams argues, these ground projects have to generate reasons. These reasons, further, are agent-relative in that they are dependent on the specific ground projects than any given

⁵ It should be noted that Williams believes that discussing future selves misconstrues the issue at hand, but it provides a terminology that makes it somewhat simpler to conceptualize the problem. See Williams “Persons, Character and Morality” in *Moral Luck* for an in-depth discussion.

⁶ Bernard Williams, “Persons, Character and Morality,” in *Moral Luck* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 8.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 12.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 13.

individual holds. If, for example, it is one of my ground projects to play the violin incredibly well, then I have a reason to practice the violin that someone else does not have.

Further, Williams points out that these ground projects that give an agent a purpose that differs from agent to agent. These “differences of character give substance to the idea that individuals are not inter-substitutable.”⁹ Moreover, other people can and do serve as part of an individual’s ground projects. “A commitment or involvement with a particular other person,” Williams asserts, “might be one of the kinds of project which figured basically in a man’s life” and motivate him to keep living.¹⁰ This fact, Williams claims, is a strong argument against accepting an impartialist conception of personal relationships, where personal characteristics cannot justify unequal moral consideration. If it is the case that investing in the success and happiness of another person is an essential part of what makes me who I am and gives meaning to my life, then I have an agent-relative reason to further that project. Williams thus grounds partiality in the ground projects of the acting individual.

In her essay “Permissible Partiality, Projects, and Plural Agency,” Sarah Stroud raises an objection of remoteness against Williams’ ground projects view, arguing for a narrower conception of what constitutes a project that can justify partiality. Williams’ suggestion, Stroud argues, allows an agent to act partially according to his or her “entire evaluative, desiderative, and motivational outlook.”¹¹ This is what Williams refers to as an agent’s subjective motivational set, also referred to as his *S*.¹² Williams’ conception of an agent’s ground projects, Stroud argues, can include anything in the agent’s *S*. As ground projects are only defined by their ability to provide the agent with motivating reasons to go on, anything included in the individual’s

⁹ *Ibid.*, 15.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 16.

¹¹ Sarah Stroud. “Permissible Partiality, Projects, and Plural Agency,” in *Partiality and Impartiality: Morality, Special Relationships, and the Wider World*, edited by Brian Feltham and John Cottingham (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 139.

¹² Bernard Williams, “Internal and External Reasons” in *Moral Luck* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 102.

S could be a ground project. For example, Stroud points out the dangers of extending moral protection to trivial matters by illustrating the case of Jerry, a committed Red Sox fan.¹³ Though Jerry plays no part in whether or not the Red Sox win the World Series—he is not, for instance, part of the team or even the family member or friend of a player—he very much desires that the team win. Further, suppose that Jerry very much cares about the well-being of the members of the team even if this does not increase their chances of winning, a desire many die-hard fans of celebrities feel. These desires, which are part of Jerry's *S*, motivate him to spend a significant amount of time, energy, and resources on the Red Sox. According to Stroud, Williams' conception of ground project-based partiality allows Jerry to give such moral weight to the needs of the Red Sox over the more pressing needs of others, just as any other unimportant desire of any agent can count as part of his *S*.

Stroud, then, attempts to save the projects view from this remoteness objection by narrowing what counts as a ground project for an agent. Rather than including any and all preferences of an agent, Stroud suggests that a project must involve the agent having the project as a goal or an aim, rather than merely a preference. In order for project *p* to count as an appropriate project, it must not simply be something that “you want... to come to pass, but that you intend to bring it about through your own efforts.”¹⁴ For example, it might be my preference that Congress pass a bill instituting gun regulations, but gun regulations would only count as a project of mine that warrants moral weight if I, for example, spent a significant amount of time at demonstrations, lobbying members of Congress, and raising money for the campaign. In other words, for a preference to provide a ground for moral partiality, it must become a project through the agent's conscious *effort* to bring about that state of affairs. In order to justify partiality toward other people, the acting agent must be invested in bringing about the success of that person rather than merely preferring that they succeed. In this way, Stroud's suggestion limits

¹³ See Stroud, “Permissible Partiality,” 140.

¹⁴ Stroud, “Permissible Partiality,” 141.

permissible partiality to those with whom the acting agent shares an active relationship, one that involves significant effort and agency.

Simon Keller provides three main objections against the projects view in *Partiality*. For one, he argues, ground projects generate reasons, but not necessarily duties. When discussing partiality, Keller claims, it is essential to account for duties rather than mere permissions. There must be some framework for understanding when people fail to act as they are required to. For example, a mother who refuses to care for her child would be seen as failing to fulfill a duty—more specifically, a duty of partiality. If a project is the basis for partiality, however, it seems that the project at best produces a reason or permission for partiality. If an agent fails to uphold a duty, it does not always matter whether or not he considered the object of the duty to be one of his projects. It thus appears that “your investment [in a project] itself cannot bind you morally to the project.”¹⁵ To return to the example of investing in gun regulation legislation, the fact that I may have this as a project does not mean that I am morally at fault for, perhaps, not attending a rally because I would rather spend the day with my family. I would, however, be morally blameworthy for not caring for my children, or failing to take care of my parents as they age.

Furthermore, partiality may be permissible and even required in cases where the object of the partial consideration is not a part of the agent’s ground projects. For instance, it is permissible, Keller claims, for me to assist a coworker visiting from overseas move, even though this individual is not a permanent or particularly significant presence in my life or projects. Additionally, there are cases in which the agent does not consider a morally relevant duty part of his projects. For example, a mother who never wanted children and does not have caring for her children as a project of hers would nonetheless be morally blameworthy for failing to care for her child, as is her duty. The projects view thus does not account for cases in which partiality is appropriate without the relationship figuring centrally in the agent’s projects.

¹⁵ Keller, *Partiality*, 37.

Finally, Keller provides an objection based on the phenomenology of partiality. While projects may in some cases provide reasons, they fail to actually motivate action in a meaningful way. If I act to save the life of my brother, for example, I am motivated not by the place that he holds in my ground projects; rather, I act selflessly, not thinking of what he means to me but why he himself is important. The experience of partiality, then, is not felt as a calculated assessment of what actions best fulfil the goals of my central projects, but as something phenomenologically distinct from my projects. Keller thus concludes that though it holds some attractions, the projects view nevertheless is subject to some severe objections that lessen its appeal.¹⁶

Relationships View

In contrast to the projects view, the relationships view grounds partiality in the relationship itself, rather than in the acting agent. Relationships, on this view, “carry ethical significance in their own right, and this ethical significance explains why relationships are sources of special reasons.”¹⁷ Keller distinguishes between a value-based relationships view and a reasons-based relationships view found in the literature. On the value-based view, relationships have inherent, non-instrumental value. When the relationship is valued properly, it generates special reasons and duties inherently. It is precisely this intrinsic value of relationships themselves that provides the reasons of partiality. In contrast, the reasons-based view argues that relationships have ethical significance because they function fundamentally, without a reference to their intrinsic value. Simply because my brother is my brother, I have a reason to give him special treatment.¹⁸

There are various formulations of value-based relationships views. These various formulations share a commitment to the idea that “we do and should value relationships not only

¹⁶ Ibid., 35-44.

¹⁷ Ibid., 45.

¹⁸ See Keller, *Partiality*, 45 and chapter 3.

for the good things they provide but also for their own sakes.”¹⁹ In his paper “Liberating Duties,” Joseph Raz attempts to show exactly how relationships have intrinsic value in his discussion of duties in friendships. Raz rejects the “widespread misunderstanding of the role of duties [which] is the assumption that all duties are justified by an external relation to a justifying good.”²⁰ Some relationships or activities that have intrinsic value; additionally, there are relationships and activities that “cannot be specified except by reference to duties.”²¹ For example, paying a debt is “the paying of money one had a duty to repay.”²² Friendship, he claims, is both an intrinsic and a duty-referencing good. Cultivating meaningful friendships is intrinsically good, but it also involves reference to duties of friendship.²³ These duties of friendship are special—that is, they go above and beyond the duties individuals owe strangers. Raz thus ties together the intrinsically good nature of certain relationships and duties.

Samuel Scheffler also presents a case for the intrinsic goodness of relationships and their relation to duties. Valuing a relationship non-instrumentally, Scheffler argues, involves seeing that the other individual’s needs and desires provide reasons for action that are dependent on the presence of the relationship.²⁴ If, on the other hand, someone values a relationship solely instrumentally, he will only be concerned with how the relationship fulfills his own needs and desires. It would not provide reasons independent of the acting individual. A purely instrumental valuation of a relationship, however, does not seem to capture the reality of what loving relationships entail. Non-instrumentally valued relationships, then, are reason-giving. Scheffler further argues, however, that relationships that are valued non-instrumentally

¹⁹ Keller, *Partiality*, 47.

²⁰ Joseph Raz, “Liberating Duties,” *Law and Philosophy* 8, no. 1 (1989): 18.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 19.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ As in, a relationship between two people becomes defined as a friendship when they share mutual duties to each other. Duties are necessary conditions of friendship relationships.

²⁴ See Samuel Scheffler, “Morality and Reasonable Partiality,” in *Partiality and Impartiality: Morality, Special Relationships, and the Wider World*, edited by Brian Feltham and John Cottingham (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 103-104.

give rise to special responsibilities, or duties. The relationship-dependence of Scheffler's definition of non-instrumental valuing of relationships entails that the reasons created by these relationships are reasons *beyond* those generated by strangers. Non-instrumentally valued relationships, then, are "capable of making additional claims on me."²⁵ Scheffler calls these additional claims *presumptively decisive reasons*, which are "considerations upon which I must act."²⁶ According to Scheffler's argument, then, these presumptively decisive reasons created by non-instrumentally valuing a relationship amount to a responsibility generated by a relationship of a certain nature. Relationships thus generate duties.

Niko Kolodny also argues for a value-based relationship view in his paper "Love as Valuing a Relationship." Rather than arguing for a distinction between instrumental and non-instrumental, however, he distinguishes between final and non-final values. Non-final valuation occurs when "one values X, but one sees some distinct Y as the source of one's reasons for valuing X."²⁷ A final valuation, on the other hand, is when one values X and sees "X as the source of one's reasons for valuing X."²⁸ Kolodny then argues that "love consists (a) in seeing a relationship... as a reason for valuing both one's relationship and the person with whom one has that relationship, and (b) in valuing that relationship and person accordingly."²⁹ He then further elaborates what it means to value the relationship accordingly, importantly noting that it includes A's viewing the relationship as a non-instrumental reason to act in the interest of B, and on that basis having a "standing intention" to do so.³⁰ This standing intention to act in the interest of another is how a proper valuation of a relationship creates special reasons, though

²⁵ Samuel Scheffler, "Relationships and Responsibilities," *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 26, no. 3 (1997): 196.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ Niko Kolodny, "Love as Valuing a Relationship," *The Philosophical Review* 112, no. 2 (2003): 150.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 151.

he does not go as far as Raz and Scheffler in arguing for a properly valued relationship as a source of duties.

Diane Jeske argues for different kind of relationships view based on the idea that relationships hold a fundamental place in an agent's reasons for action. She calls these reasons of intimacy, pointing out that "we take ourselves to have further or extra reasons to care for those who stand in various sorts of special relations to us."³¹ These reasons of intimacy, she argues, are both objective and agent-relative. In order for these reasons to be both objective and agent-relative, they must be "not constituted by an agent's subjective intentional states" and "not necessarily a reason for everyone, and, therefore, not grounded in some intrinsic feature of the state of affairs to be promoted."³² In order to understand this category of reasons, Jeske discusses reasons of fidelity and of prudence. In the cases of both reasons of fidelity and reasons of intimacy, there is "a certain type of interaction, typically caused by the subjective valuing of the parties involved, [which] generates reasons that outlive those subjective valuing."³³ It is thus "some fact about the relationship" that grounds these types of reasons.³⁴ Additionally, Jeske points to the fact that reasons of prudence are "objective agent-relative reasons to take account, in my deliberations, of subjective agent-relative reasons that are not yet my own."³⁵ Similarly, reasons of intimacy function the same way, in that they involve a reason-giving role for subjective agent-relative reasons that are not those of the agent acting right now. Jeske's discussion of objective agent-relative reasons of intimacy, then, establishes relationships as, metaphysically speaking, fundamental reasons and, epistemically speaking, knowable "without making inferences from the existence of other reasons."³⁶

³¹ Diane Jeske, *Rationality and Moral Theory: How Intimacy Generates Reasons* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 2.

³² Diane Jeske, "Friendship and Reasons of Intimacy," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 63, no. 2 (2001): 333-334.

³³ *Ibid.*, 339.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 342.

³⁶ Keller, *Partiality*, 69.

Keller raises several objections to a relationships view. For one, a value-based view cannot guarantee that valuable special relationships produce duties. There are many valuable relationships that do not produce any duties. Casual friendships, though important to our happiness, do not give us special duties to fulfill outside of those owed to everyone. Additionally, reasons of partiality can exist within relationships that are not valuable, and “not valued by those within them.”³⁷ And finally, many of the reasons we value relationships come from their extrinsic, rather than intrinsic, value.

Keller provides five examples of this final class of objection to the relationships view. Firstly, someone in an abusive marriage³⁸ may not be seen to have any duties to maintain the marriage because it is harmful. By this logic, then, we have a duty to maintain only a good marriage, but this appeals to the extrinsic value of the relationship—for instance, that it brings happiness and stability to both partners. Secondly, assuming the intrinsic value of a relationship adds a source of value that is not necessary. To illustrate, Keller suggests that there might be a society in which there are no parent-child relationships, perhaps due to communal upbringing of children. If this system works, and the society functions just as well if not better than one in which there are parent-child relationships, then there is no reason to think that the alternative society is lacking in the value added by the intrinsic value of a certain type of relationship. Thirdly, when determining whether or not a certain relationship justifiably generates special reasons or duties, it is necessary to consider the extrinsic value associated with the relationship rather than separating the relationship from other values as is appropriate for determining the value of other intrinsic values. Fourthly, sometimes the special reasons generated by relationships are reasons to end the relationship in question. If a relationship is intrinsically valuable, it is difficult to see how it could generate a reason to lose that value. Finally, Keller reiterates his phenomenological objection, claiming that people do not act partially because they

³⁷ Ibid., 70.

³⁸ Or any relationship that might involve partiality—parental relationships, friendships, etc.

consider how much value the relationship holds; rather, they act partially for some other reasons.³⁹ The relationships view in any of its formulations must thus address these objections.

Individuals View

A third view of partiality, supported by Keller, is the individuals view. The individuals view attempts to solve the puzzle of partiality by challenging the assumption that two things that have the same value should be treated the same. On Keller's individuals view, "norms of partiality arise from facts about the individuals with whom our special relationships are shared."⁴⁰ He argues that the individuals view better solves the problems of the other two views in terms of the phenomenology of partiality in answering why other people generate special reasons. Where the other two views provide counterintuitive motivational stories behind partiality, the individuals view bases the reasons any individual has for acting partially more in line with common sense.

Individuals have value, and when we act partially towards those who are special to us, we are motivated by our desire to add to their value (or to protect it). The value of the individual, Keller argues, has "the power to change the normative situation of other agents."⁴¹ In other words, the fact that we find there to be value to particular individuals generates treatment that we think that person merits. When an individual acts out of love, the "experience involves being moved to perform certain actions, and incorporated within it is a sense of why those actions are worth performing."⁴² In coming to understand the motivation behind actions of partiality, Keller argues, the agent has to reference a *particular* individual with whom he shares some connection. Just knowing that someone is important to me or adds value to my life, in other words, is not enough for me to fully understand why I feel motivated to help *my brother* or *my friend*. Keller further argues that it is possible to consider an object's value as separate from the

³⁹ The five arguments against the relationships view were summarized and adapted from Keller, *Partiality*, 56-64.

⁴⁰ Keller, *Partiality*, 79.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 100.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 93.

particular object, but nevertheless in a way that involves the particular. For instance, “we may say...that there is value held by the state of affairs of *Donald’s* being happy, without necessarily saying that its value comes down to the value of someone’s being happy (no matter who it is).”⁴³

How does individual value, however, generate *special* reasons? For some types of goods, called special goods, there is only one individual or only a small group of individuals who can provide that good. For instance, only I can provide my mother with the comfort of her daughter. In the case of special goods, it makes sense why I might have more of a duty to provide that good than someone else—i.e. I am able to, while it is impossible for someone else to provide the good.

The case of general goods, however, presents Keller with more problems. In a relationship involving partiality, there is also a reason for the acting agent to provide the receiving individual with generic goods, and this reason is stronger than it would be in a situation involving an unrelated stranger. Just as I have a duty to save a drowning child by throwing a life preserver into the water, which is a generic good, I am likely to feel even more obligated if the drowning child is mine. One suggestion Keller makes is to locate this urge within a social context: that is, “the standards to which we are subject within our special relationships are, partly, social standards and can be evaluated as such.”⁴⁴ What someone ought to do is determined by what kind of social conventions to which he or she is subject, and motivations are born out of socialization into certain relational norms. Another suggestion he makes is that the value of different individuals, and in turn the demands that value makes on the acting agent, is beyond comparison. It is thus incorrect to attempt to weigh the value of acting partially toward one person against the value of acting differently toward another person. Finally, he suggests that perhaps “reasons of partiality are facts about the good of particular persons, and that those

⁴³ Ibid., 100. Emphasis in original.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 127.

facts are enabled to be special reasons for particular people by facts about how people are related.”⁴⁵

In “Partiality, Agent-Relative Reasons, and the Individuals View,” Jörg Löschke raises three objections to Keller’s individuals view. First, Löschke argues that Keller’s conception of agent-relativity differs from the standard account, allowing him to incorrectly convert agent-neutral reasons into agent-relative ones by virtue of circumstance. In contrast to Keller’s version, the standard version of agent-relativity necessarily involves a “back-reference to the agent.”⁴⁶ For instance, Anna has an agent-relative reason to take care of her children because they are *her children*, which involves a reference back to Anna herself.⁴⁷ According to the accepted view of agent-relativity, there is a philosophically relevant difference between the fact that Anna has a reason to care for her children and the fact that parents have reasons to care for their children. Keller’s conception of agent-relative reasons erases this distinction, thus rendering considerations of agent-relativity impartial, in a sense.

Second, Löschke argues that using Keller’s unsatisfactory conception of agent-relativity has the implication of requiring agents to “sacrifice their own relationships for the sake of the relationships of others.”⁴⁸ For instance, in Anna’s case, the agent-relative reason is reduced to a general obligation for parents to care for their children. If, however, the agent-neutral obligation is the only salient one, then it is plausible that Anna should sacrifice caring for her children if it would maximize the number of parents generally who care for their children. On the standard formulation of agent-relativity, in contrast, Anna has an obligation to her children no matter what that means for the relationships of other parent-child groupings. This more accurately captures the aim of partiality than Keller’s version.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 138.

⁴⁶ Jörg Löschke, “Partiality, Agent-Relative Reasons, and the Individuals View,” *Social Theory and Practice* 40, no. 4 (2014): 676.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 673.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 676.

Finally, Löschke attacks Keller's main argument for the individuals view—namely, that it better fits the phenomenology of partiality than any of the other views. In making this claim, Löschke distinguishes between reasons *for* partiality and reasons *from* partiality. He explains this distinction by explaining the analogous case of reasons involving love. The reasons a man has for loving his wife might be her intelligence, wit, and kindness; the reason he has to drive to the drugstore to buy her medicine when she is sick, on the other hand, is a reason that comes *from* his love *for* her.⁴⁹ It is important to note here that the love is established first through reasons for it, and only after the love is established does the man have a reason to act from love. In the same way, someone can only act from partiality—that is, he has a reason for an action because of a relationship of partiality—after a relationship of partiality has already been established. The phenomenology of the individuals view explains actions *from* partiality. An individual's value, then, might be my reason to act on her behalf. This does not, however, address reasons I might have to be partial toward someone in the first place. Löschke argues that the phenomenology of partiality can only tell the agent something about reasons from partiality, and thus concludes that the individuals view is not better able to explain reasons for partiality than either of the other two theories.

In Defense of Relationships

I find that the relationships view is, on the whole, the best explanation of partiality. I will now address Keller's main objection in order to show that the view is not quite as problematic as Keller claims. I find that Keller's objection that relationships do not provide the kind of value that the view's proponents claim it does appeals to a concept of externality that misunderstands the place of relationships within the view. It should be noted that despite my defense of the relationships view, I concede that it has several problems which I address in my own suggestion for a hybrid view in Part II.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 681.

To begin, Keller claims that the relationships view only requires that people maintain good relationships. A bad relationship, Keller argues, does not provide any intrinsic value. The value of the relationship is thus tied to some external factor. Here, I think Keller misunderstands what is meant by the intrinsic value of a relationship. Value, in this context, is more properly understood as some kind of positive weight in a moral consideration. When a relationship is said to have value, on a relationships view, it is a content-independent statement. That is, the parent-child relationship can be said to have intrinsic value without a reference to a specific parent-child pair. In fact, it is this content-independence that seems to make the relationships view one of partiality. The relationships view uses an appeal to the relationship itself as the grounds for partiality, not to the goodness that results from a particular relationship; otherwise, the view collapses into an appeal to a different source of partiality.

In his second iteration of the extrinsicality objection, Keller claims that claiming the intrinsic value of relationships leads to the conclusion that alternate arrangements that omit a certain relationship are lacking in value. For instance, if the parent-child relationship has intrinsic value, then a society that does not recognize such a relationship is objectively worse off because it lacks a source of intrinsic value. If this objection is true, however, then any possible source of intrinsic value must be present in a given society in order for its members to be living a full life. I do not think this is the case—the standard is too high. Further, there may be sources of intrinsic value that have not yet been discovered, yet we do not feel these as a lack. Additionally, this objection seems to define having a good life as having all sources of intrinsic value present. This seems less than obvious to me, and Keller does not justify any such claim.

In another one of these objections, the final one I will address here, Keller claims that the special reasons that relationships generate are sometimes reasons to end the relationship, which is contradictory given the intrinsic value of the relationship. “Though I love my friend and he loves me,” Keller argues, “we may realize that we are incompatible, always interacting in

ways that leave each of us bitter and depressed.”⁵⁰ Here, Keller seems to be accepting his own conclusion as a premise, and ignoring the fact that the intrinsic value of the relationship might not be the only value at play. The reason that the relationship should be ended—that it leaves both parties worse off—appeals to external effects of the relationship. It seems more appropriate to say that these negative effects of maintaining the relationship present a compelling reason that outweighs the intrinsic value of the relationship itself. This evaluation is more in line with the experience of a bad relationship—the relationship, in many cases, is the only factor keeping two people together. Even when the external factors line up, the value of the relationship gives people reasons to stay. Having reasons to maintain the relationship, however, does not mean that the intrinsic value of the relationship is the only, or even the most important, factor in the decision process. It is very possible that the fact that the relationship makes both people miserable is a very good reason to end the relationship, but this fact does not mean that the relationship itself has no intrinsic value, and that this intrinsic value is also at play.

Conclusion of Part I

Thus far, I have discussed the three most prominent views for explaining and justifying partiality. While they all provide compelling considerations, they also all face significant challenges in explaining the intuition of partiality. Ultimately, I find the relationships view the most compelling, and Keller’s objections are not insurmountable. I do, however, contend that a hybrid approach can solve some of the more difficult objections, an idea I will develop and defend in the next part. In addition to a positive defense of a hybrid view, Part II will present an argument for extending the framework of partiality from one-to-one relationships to group relationships. I will use the three views discussed above in order to discuss how such group partiality might function, concluding with my defense of the hybrid view.

⁵⁰ Keller, *Partiality*, 61.

Part II: Citizenship as a Partial Relationship

The intuition toward partiality is a strong one, and, as discussed in Part I, there are several attempts to justify this intuition that, at the very least, provide compelling ideas about the nature of interpersonal relationships. Even granting the possibility of permissible partiality, it remains an open question as to what kind of relationships warrant such consideration. Relationships involving love and friendship are the most commonly cited examples of relationships of partiality; it seems, though, that there might be some relationships that do not involve love and friendship that nevertheless are less than impartial. Partiality, then, can be used as a framework for justifying a wide range of relationships, such as the relationship among fellow citizens. In this part, I will argue that citizenship establishes a relationship between strangers that provides the grounds for partiality.

Using Partiality to Justify Citizenship: The Scope of the Question

The problem of justifying citizenship can be seen as a reformulation of the basic Puzzle of Partiality outlined in Part I. On the one hand, morality seems to rightly dictate that “all persons are equally deserving of well-being and respect.”⁵¹ It is not clear, however, that this “Impartialist Insight,”⁵² as Susan Wolf calls it, considers where individuals are born, or to what nation they pledge their allegiance. The basic assumption of impartialism seems to require that all people, regardless of citizenship or national loyalty, have their needs considered equally. In many cases, however, those who share a common citizenship value the needs of their compatriots over the arguably equally important needs of foreigners. In fact, this partial consideration of members of the same group is often seen as obligatory. In this way, theories of partiality can be used to ground this intuition of citizenship-based consideration, just as they can in the cases of other types of relationships.

⁵¹ Susan Wolf, “Morality and Partiality,” *Philosophical Perspectives* 6, (1992): 245.

⁵² *Ibid.*

Citizenship as Group Membership

In Part I, the relationships I considered as grounded by partiality generally involved either love or friendship. Partial consideration for co-citizens, however, falls apart quickly if love and friendship are necessary conditions. In most cases where shared citizenship is the deciding factor, as opposed to a closer relationship, the acting agent has no personal relationship with the receiving agent. In fact, most co-citizens will never meet each other, let alone form bonds of love and friendship. These bonds nevertheless seem to exert more influence over decision-making than strict impartialism would allow. There must, then, be a third kind of bond that gives rise to partial intuitions in large groups. George Fletcher identifies this bond as that of group loyalty.⁵³

Loyalty, like love and friendship, is a “self-dependent normative judgment,” involving some “uneliminable egocentric particulars.”⁵⁴ In other words, in determining what one ought to do in the context of a group, one cannot avoid referring back in some way to the self. Without such a back-reference, there is no motivation to distinguish among similar particulars. For instance, a citizen’s loyalty to America involves a reference to *his* country. If, however, the citizen in question were able to replace *his country* with “e.g. ‘a democratic country’ or ‘a Christian country’, [he has] not loyalty but an ideal.”⁵⁵ Relationships of group loyalty can thus not be considered impartial. If they were truly impartial, then loyalty would shift from one particular to another if the new object were shown to be superior. But this is not the phenomenology of group loyalty—a citizen who abandoned his country because another country proved more democratic or better at providing health care or whatever the relevant impartial factor might be would nevertheless be seen as a traitor, failing in his duty to be loyal.

⁵³ See George Fletcher, *Loyalty: An Essay on the Morality of Relationships* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), especially chapters 1 and 2.

⁵⁴ Andrew Oldenquist, “Loyalties,” *The Journal of Philosophy* 79, no. 4 (1982): 175.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

It should be noted, further, that loyalty can be used to refer to the obligations that citizens owe to the state, as in the case above. There is, however, also a second sense in which group loyalty can function—namely, as a bond of mutual permission and obligation among members themselves. It is this second kind of loyalty with which I am concerned. The relationship between state and citizen addresses many other considerations, other than partiality (e.g. the nature of legitimacy, the role of government, etc.). The partiality I am addressing within the citizen-citizen relationship does not require an assessment of the citizen-state relationship. Rather, I am concerned with the problem of giving more concern, care, and other personal resources into a stranger who happens to be a citizen of the same country as the acting agent instead of a stranger who does not. The range of actions that this kind of group loyalty might engender is not necessarily defined, but anything that might be classified as patriotism (whether used positively or negatively) provides an idea of what the content of such partiality might be.

Group membership, then, is similar to other relationships that cannot be fully explained impartially; however, it is significantly different in a few ways. For one, group membership generally involves many more people than relationships of love and friendship. I think it is also fair to say that it plays a less important and less frequent role in the day-to-day considerations of any particular member. Finally, group loyalties, as distinct from relationships of love and friendship, generally involve both reciprocal dependence and some kind of ideological commitment. As Fletcher points out, “political loyalties display intricate reciprocity... the leadership can act in reliance on their followers, and the followers acquire a sense of themselves as serving a goal larger than a single life... they are tied to the group by a shared understanding that they are members of the union or party, or citizens of the nation.”⁵⁶ As noted

⁵⁶ Fletcher, *Loyalty*, 33.

above, the group members have loyalty to each other, not just the leadership, in an important sense.

Justifying Group Partiality: Traditional Approaches Repurposed

Just as with one-to-one relationships of partiality, it is necessary to discuss how exactly partiality permissibly grounds special obligations and permissions within groups. Here, the difficulty is justifying special consideration for those that hold a place in the individual's life that is not particularly *special* in an obvious way. Determining who gets access to the privileges associated with being a member of the group, additionally, is particularly important because of its significant implications. Accepting a modified relationships view, as I will suggest is the most successful strategy, could significantly alter the way that citizenship should properly be conceived. In order to argue for this conclusion, I will return to the major theories of partiality, applying each in turn to group loyalty. I will close the section with an argument for an impartial caveat to the relationships view based on Susan Wolf's Moderate Impartialist View.

Individuals View

Despite the terminological infelicity in applying the individuals view to a group, the appeals of Keller's view transfer from the one to the many. On Keller's view, there is some value to the object of the acting agent's partiality, and it is this value that grounds the partiality. This respect for the value of the object is, in my view, the most attractive feature of Keller's suggestion. In the case of citizenship, Keller would likely claim that each individual member of the group of people constituting a country's citizenry has a value that warrants respect. By emphasizing that the source of the special consideration is some value in the object, the individuals view recognizes the fact that things can be valuable in many different ways, and that this value is not always commensurable. On Keller's view, it would thus be permissible to act upon the desires and needs of a stranger who shares my citizenship rather than a stranger who does not because my fellow citizen has a value that is worthy of consideration.

The problem for the individuals view here, as it was in the case of one-to-one relationships of love and friendship, is how the value of the individual creates special reasons. If Keller's only insight is that people have value and this value justifies considering their needs, then he does not actually provide any reason to accept partiality. In most cases, especially in those involving unknown strangers, there is no reason to think that one individual has more value than another. The individuals view, then, must be able to explain how an individual's value can create special reasons without an appeal to special value. As discussed in Part I, Keller himself provides three suggestions for how the view can justify partiality in the case of general goods: by appealing to "facts about how people are related,"⁵⁷ the supposed incommensurability of value of individuals, or social convention.

It seems that Keller's suggestion that "reasons of partiality are facts about the good of particular persons, and that those facts are enabled to be special reasons for particular people by facts about how people are related" is inconsistent with his own theory.⁵⁸ Keller here suggests something along the lines of an appeal to subjective value—that is, though the value of the individual in question is not objectively any different than anyone else's value, the acting agent values this particular individual more. It is, then, the subjective value that the acting agent places on the individual that generates the special reasons. This suggestion, however, does not answer the question of what grounds partiality. It simply asserts that individuals have value to others, and the value of that individual generates special reasons. As Löschke points out, these special reasons are reasons from partiality, rather than reasons for it.⁵⁹ In other words, the suggestion can be reformulated more accurately as the idea that the fact that an individual is more valuable to the acting agent than other individuals of the same objective value (i.e. is the subject of partiality) gives the acting agent a special reason to act. Keller's suggestion thus

⁵⁷ Keller, *Partiality*, 138.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ See especially Löschke, "Partiality," 680-682.

presupposes that the relationship in question involves partiality. The fact that the agent is partial toward the individual is the reason *from partiality*, but the suggestion does not address why the agent is partial toward the individual in the first place. Keller thus does not ground partiality in anything other than the whim of the agent. I thus reject this as a viable argument; it is, rather, at best a reason to accept either the projects or the relationships view to explain the reasons *for* partiality.

Keller's argument that the value of individuals is incommensurable also seems to fail at answering the question of what grounds partiality. As Keller explains, "to say that a value defies comparison is to say that you cannot properly appreciate it while also weighing up its demands against the demands made by other values."⁶⁰ To give an example from Susan Wolf's "Morality and Partiality," "if Italian food is objectively no better than Thai food, this surely does not impose a requirement that I consume equal quantities of each."⁶¹ Analogously, just like an agent who prefers to eat Thai food over Italian food, an agent is allowed to favor one individual over another of equal value. This suggestion, however, also relegates morality to mere preference. Partiality, as a stance, aims to provide a permissible reason for favoring some over others; mere subjective preference, though, is generally not considered an acceptable reason for favoring someone's interests. In fact, partiality as a position can be seen as an attempt to provide a better explanation of such behavior and integrate it into a theory of morality.

Keller's final defense of the view is that "the standards to which we are subject within our special relationships are, partly, social standards and can be evaluated as such."⁶² This strikes me as the most plausible defense, especially when it comes to citizenship and other group relationships. There is a significant amount of variance when it comes to group loyalty across different societies, and this might be explained by Keller's partiality-as-social-standard defense.

⁶⁰ Keller, *Partiality*, 129.

⁶¹ Wolf, "Morality and Partiality," 244.

⁶² Keller, *Partiality*, 127.

Ultimately, however, this formulation of the view turns into the relationships view. If, as Keller argues, the importance of an individual in an agent's motivations is determined by how society thinks one should value such an individual, it requires that there be a type of relationship that society views as valuable. In Keller's own explanation, he frequently references relationship types: parents and children, friends, etc. He likely does this because he thinks that even in the context of a relationship, the source of the partiality is the value of the individual; however, the individual only comes to be valued in this special way by entering into a relationship. The only factor that changes is that the acting agent comes to value the individual in a certain way because of an established relationship. It thus seems that the relationship is the relevant factor, not the value of the individual. At the very least, relationships play a necessary role in the justification of partiality on the individuals view.

Projects View

In the context of partiality toward co-citizens, the projects view is perhaps even more appealing than in cases only involving individuals. Keller's main objection to the projects view was that it does not properly capture the experience of the acting agent. For instance, a mother does not care for her child when he is sick because she thinks he is part of her ground project. It seems more reasonable, however, to say that citizens are partial toward their fellow citizens because they all share in a certain project, or goal—perhaps, the success of their country, the well-being of the citizenry, etc. Further, it lines up with common intuition that those who view their national loyalty as more central to their identities than others have stronger reasons to act on that loyalty. For instance, it is likely expected that a member of the military who devotes her entire life to protecting her fellow citizens out of a distinct sense of duty would feel that her national identity was an integral part of her identity. In contrast, someone who does not have such an attachment to country would be unlikely to feel such a strong duty, and vice versa.

In many ways, the projects view seems to appropriately capture why citizens are permitted to favor each other—it is for the sake of their shared project. I find that the projects view, however, is also lacking in explanatory power. For instance, there is no reason to think that I could not acquire the project of France's success in a very real manner despite the fact that I have no tie to France. Despite the fact that my commitment to the goal may be equal to—even greater than—that of a French citizen, "I may continue to appreciate French culture as an outsider, but on the fringes of the culture, looking in, I am not in a position to be either loyal or disloyal to the French people."⁶³ This shared project, however, does not provide the French with any duty toward me. If a shared project is enough to justify mutually reciprocal partiality in a group setting, then the fact that I share the project of French success could arguably provide the basis for such reciprocal duties. This does not, however, match the phenomenology of citizenship, or group partiality in other situations. A large part of group membership is exclusion and inclusion; any individual, despite any commitment to the goals of the group, must be acknowledged as a member by the other members before being included. There thus appears to be something more than merely a shared project involved in group partiality.

Relationships View

Given the restrictions of the first two views, I am now left with the relationships view, which I also supported in the case of individual partiality. In my discussion of the previous two views, I found that there was some unexplained or unexplainable factor at play. It seems like this factor is an appeal to the relationship itself. The individuals view seems to ignore the important role that a relationship plays in determining the value of the object, while the projects view seems unable to explain why not just anyone can take up the appropriate stance to count as subject to the enhanced partial consideration of the members of a certain group. Even more so than in the case of individuals, the relationship among members seems to play an integral

⁶³ Fletcher, *Loyalty*, 17.

role in grounding partiality in groups. Specifically, Samuel Scheffler's account of relationships as having non-instrumental value explains many common intuitions regarding group membership—people find it fulfilling to be a part of a group, and they feel this way because of the relationship above and beyond the external benefits of membership. I think, however, that a strict relationships view faces several objections.

For one, it seems contradictory to claim that strangers have a relationship, especially a relationship that provides supplementary reasons for acting. Further, a relationships view might present a slippery slope problem. By granting that strangers can stand in a relationship to each other that is valuable enough to exert normative force, there seems to also be reason to act partially toward strangers who are not fellow-citizens but share some other, arbitrary characteristic. For instance, I have just about as much control over the fact that I have red hair as I do over the fact that I am an American citizen—actually, I arguably have more control over the color of my hair. But it would seem strange for me to appeal to a shared hair color as a reason for donating money to one stranger in need over another. Granting that strangers can share a meaningful relationship thus undermines the weight of truly meaningful relationships.

Modified Relationships: A Hybrid View

I suggest that there is a modified relationships view that maintains the proper place of an association among individuals while also maintaining some of the strengths of the other views mentioned. Specifically, I argue that sharing a project can constitute a relationship. This combined type of relationship, then, justifies enhanced concern for fellow citizens. Further, I contend that any such relationships must maintain the boundaries of a greater impartial commitment to human rights in order to be justifiable, as per Susan Wolf. This view, I argue, assimilates the strengths of multiple views into one.

In her paper "Morality and Partiality," Susan Wolf argues that morality properly should involve more considerations than an exclusive commitment to impartiality. Her view, which she

calls Moderate Impartialism, addresses the debate between partialists and impartialists directly, but many of the factors she considers are relevant to my modified relationships view. Moderate Impartialism, Wolf explains, involves a significant role for the idea that “all persons are equally deserving of well-being and respect.”⁶⁴ This impartialist insight simply requires that a moral agent “act only in ways that she believes any reasonable person would allow... hold herself to the same standards that she expects of others... [and] is moved to practical effect by the thought that others—all others—are as deserving of the fundamental conditions of well-being and respect as are she and her circle of friends and loved ones.”⁶⁵ The point, then, is that the Impartialist Insight should always play a significant role in moral decision-making.

Even if this is true, however, the partialist’s complaint can be meaningfully integrated into the impartialist framework, as well as accounted for extra-morally. As long as another reasonable person would most likely approve of her special concern for her loved ones, the agent is perfectly moral in acting from partiality. This view places basic restrictions on how far people are allowed to go, which seems desirable in a moral theory. Though I may be permitted and required to care for my mother instead of someone else’s mother, I am probably not permitted to murder an innocent person simply because she asks me to. Partiality does not have to entail an utter lack of moral rules. In cases where partialists and impartialists disagree, Wolf argues, it is more appropriate to characterize the conflict as one between love and morality—a situation that many people must address, and rightfully should have to.⁶⁶

My suggestion, then, acknowledges the basic necessity of impartiality, but allows for partiality where any reasonable person would approve of permitting it. Given the range of relationships that involve some degree of partiality in practice, I suggest a view that incorporates a balance between relationships and projects to account for partiality where it is allowable. In

⁶⁴ Wolf, “Morality and Partiality,” 245.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 246.

⁶⁶ In her paper “Moral Saints,” Wolf argues that there are good reasons to think that we should not always prioritize morality in these situations, but I will not address that argument here for the sake of space.

cases involving very close personal relationships, it seems that there is no need to justify the intuition toward partiality further than the relationship. “Because she is *my daughter*” is an acceptable reason to give for acting to benefit someone. As the relationship weakens, however, partiality requires a reference to an external factor—a shared project. My view conceptualizes relationships, as Martha Nussbaum does in “Patriotism and Cosmopolitanism,” as involving “a series of concentric circles” of obligation.⁶⁷ Those individuals belonging to the innermost circle—immediate family—deserve the most special consideration. The outermost circle would be “humanity as a whole.”⁶⁸ By giving all of humankind a place, impartial morality still plays a significant role. Moving from the innermost circle toward the outermost, universal circle, the weaker the obligation and the less the relationship alone is a sufficient ground for partiality. As relationships weaken, I argue, an external project in addition to the relationship is necessary in order to justify partiality. It is, nevertheless, the existence of the relationship that is primary, making this a relationships view at heart.

Additionally, I argue, the existence of such an external project is itself a kind of relationship. For example, consider the case of the dreaded group project. In a large lecture class, any two students are unlikely to know each other. If randomly assigned to a group project, however, they instantly become partners by virtue of sharing a goal. Even before they meet, or are able to pick each other out in the crowded lecture hall, they have a relationship. This is analogous to the relationship of two fellow citizens. By having a stake in the success of their country, voluntarily so or not, they are given the relationship of (perhaps unwilling) partners. The project thus establishes the appropriate relationship.

Here, a critic is likely to point out, I run into the very objection that I gave against the projects view. There is no reason to think that this view is any different than a slightly more

⁶⁷ Martha Nussbaum, “Patriotism and Cosmopolitanism,” in *For Love of Country?* edited by Joshua Cohen (Boston: Beacon Press, 1996), 9.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

convoluted version of the projects view. But return to the group project analogy: both partners are tied together in a relationship by the shared goal—the success of the project. It is highly probable that one partner cares significantly more than the other (hence the near-universal hatred of group projects). Even in the case that one partner rationally decides that allowing the other partner to do all the work because the group is more likely to succeed that way, the free-riding partner seem to be failing to live up to his obligation because of his relationship to his partner. Even the unwilling partner is in the partnership because of the existence of the project. If the project had never existed, the two partners would have no obligations or considerations for each other. Of course, this is an imperfect analogy for the situation of the co-citizens. For one, the project in this case is externally imposed—that is, it not a personal project, part of the agent's *S* as Williams puts it. It does, however, illustrate the idea that a sharing a project, especially one which the agents both care about in at least some way, establishes them as related in a significant way that can ground reasons.

My modified relationships view, then, stipulates that there can be different grounds for different relationships. In the specific case of shared citizenship, both project and relationship are necessary because the relationship is born out of and sustained by the project. This overcomes the objection that strangers cannot have a relevant relationship. It is possible, however, that someone who is not a citizen desires the success of the country and thus could be considered to have the appropriate type of relationship from a shared project. I would argue, however, that this misconstrues the context in which the relationship develops. If I am working on a group project and my mother is extremely interested in both the topic and the success of the project, she nevertheless cannot be considered a partner on the project because she is not a student in the class. She could do the project for me and still not count as a partner on the project because she exists outside the context for partnership. Similarly, the desire to be in the project-relationship of shared citizenship does not necessarily place someone in the proper context to enter into the relationship. In this way, being a member invested in the project of the

group requires one to be a member, which is defined by conditions beyond the commitment to the project itself—i.e. the proper kind of relationship is the necessary context of group partiality.

Conclusion of Part II

All suggestions for an acceptable theory of partiality, as is the case in most areas of philosophy, face significant objections. There are, though, many compelling explanations for the intuition toward partiality. The value of relationships, the central role that people play in our identities, and the real moral worth of every individual are all important parts of moral considerations. Any life worth living is made up of a myriad of competing and messy commitments. In my modified relationships view, I attempted to maintain the possibility of this conceptual messiness within a cohesive view. I posited that relationships formed the uniting thread of the theory, but that there were significant and differing factors at play. Further, I argued that such a view is applicable to a view of citizenship that gives weight to the relationships among citizens themselves. In the next section, I will consider objections to my position from liberalism. Specifically, I will address what a liberal conception of citizenship entails, and how the liberal commitment to basic equality might accommodate a hybrid view.

Part III: Reconciling Liberalism and Partiality

In the previous part, I argued for a theory of group partiality that established a relationship based on some shared project as the ground for the partiality. Such partiality, I argue, can be used as a way of justifying the various ways in which citizens favor their fellow citizens above and beyond foreign strangers. In this argument, I have assumed that citizenship as a concept meets the standards for group partiality. In this part, I will address an objection from liberalism: namely, that a proper understanding of liberalism, the philosophical school that makes up the foundation of most contemporary democratic political theory, requires a basic commitment to impartiality. This impartial requirement of liberalism, then, would invalidate even the possibility of using partiality to understand citizenship. Further, this commitment to strict impartiality has led many liberal theorists to embrace open borders as the only ethically justifiable position.⁶⁹ I will argue, however, that liberalism's assumption of impartiality does not necessarily rule out the possibility of appealing to partiality. Further, I argue that some prominent formulations of the doctrine can themselves justify partiality.

The Doctrine of Liberalism

Liberalism, like many other broad ideological classifications, resists easy definition. There are many differing views that fall under the broad umbrella of philosophical liberalism. Liberalism is, as Michael Freeden explains in his *Liberalism: A Very Short Introduction*, "largely an abstract and ideal-type normative approach invoking an ostensibly supra-political, universal, and decontextualized social ethics towards which all right-minded individuals should aim."⁷⁰ Throughout its history, liberalism has been an answer to two basic questions: what are the "moral limits to the powers of government" and how to solve the conflict that arises because

⁶⁹ See for example Joseph Carens' "Aliens and Citizens: The Case for Open Borders" in *The Review of Politics*.

⁷⁰ Michael Freeden, *Liberalism: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 94.

“reasonable people tend to differ and disagree about the nature of the good life.”⁷¹ Liberalism, then, can be conceptualized as involving psychological and moral commitments, in addition to political ones.

The Fundamental Liberal Principle

Liberalism, as its name suggests, involves a basic commitment to the primary importance of liberty. As Gerald Gaus explains, this underlying principle of liberalism is what he calls the liberal principle (L)—“Imposition on others requires justification; unjustified impositions are unjust.”⁷² This Fundamental Liberal Principle comes from the psychological theories of such proto-liberal thinkers as Thomas Hobbes and John Locke, who posited that man without a government—that is, man in a state of nature—has full liberty and only consents to give up a portion of his liberty to escape the uncertainty of entirely unregulated communal life. By acknowledging a natural right to liberty, these thinkers began the movement toward binding governments to a moral standard beyond mere pragmatism.

Beyond the Fundamental Liberal Principle, contemporary liberals disagree on how the concept of liberty should be interpreted and applied. The debate stems from a distinction made by Isaiah Berlin between two kinds of liberty: negative and positive. Liberty, he points out, can answer both the questions “what is the area within which the subject... is or should be left to do or be what he is able to do or be, without interference by other persons” and “what, or who, is the source of control or interference that can determine someone to do, or be, this rather than that?”⁷³ Positive and negative liberty can be distinguished as being either an opportunity-concept or an exercise-concept.⁷⁴ Negative liberty is an opportunity-concept, meaning that

⁷¹ Charles Larmore, “Political Liberalism” in *Political Liberalism: Variations on a Theme*, edited by Shaun P. Young (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2004), 55-56.

⁷² Gerald Gaus, *Justificatory Liberalism: An Essay on Epistemology and Political Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 165.

⁷³ Isaiah Berlin, “Two Concepts of Liberty,” in *The Liberty Reader*, ed. David Miller (Boulder: Paradigm Publishers, 2006), 34.

⁷⁴ Gerald Gaus, Shane Courtland, and David Schmitz, “Liberalism,” *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (2018), <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2018/entries/liberalism/>.

“being free is a matter of what we can do, of what is open to us to do, whether or not we do anything to exercise these options.”⁷⁵ Positive liberty, on the other hand, is an exercise-concept, meaning that “one is free only to the extent that one has effectively determined oneself and the shape of one’s life.”⁷⁶ An agent is negatively free, then, as long as he is not prevented by another agent from doing what he wants. He is positively free, however, only in so far as he is both has the opportunity and is able to exercise his will. For instance, a student might not be prevented by any agent from attending college, but he might not have the money to exercise his will to take advantage of the opportunity and is thus free only in a negative sense.

Liberalism as Commitment to Neutrality

While liberals commit to the importance of maintaining as much liberty as possible, whether positive or negative, they solve the problems of the moral limits on government and disagreement over what constitutes the good life with a kind of neutrality. Using neutrality in this sense, as Larmore points out, “can wrongly suggest that liberalism is not a moral conception” and that “neutral principles are ones that we can justify without without appealing to the controversial views of the good life to which we happen to be committed.”⁷⁷ This neutrality toward endorsing any particular view of the good life preserves the liberty to live according to one’s own reasonable principles, thus setting liberalism up as a doctrine of basic tolerance.

Formulations of this ideal of neutrality within liberal theory have generally fallen into two opposing camps. On the one hand, those following the theories of Immanuel Kant and John Stuart Mill have emphasized the importance of individuality and autonomy to the individual. From this stance of respect for autonomy, these liberals justify the state’s neutrality as leaving the most possibilities open for autonomous self-expression.⁷⁸ The Kantian and Millian

⁷⁵ Charles Taylor, “What’s Wrong with Negative Liberty,” in *The Liberty Reader*, ed. David Miller (Boulder: Paradigm Publishers, 2006), 144.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 143.

⁷⁷ Larmore, “Political Liberalism,” 57.

⁷⁸ See Larmore, “Political Liberalism,” 58-61 for a detailed explanation of the view.

conception can thus be seen as an attempt to maximize negative liberty: each autonomous individual is free from the interference of a body that might prevent him from pursuing his conception of the good life.

On the other hand, some liberals have argued that the neutrality of governing bodies is primarily a practical consideration. This particular string of liberal thought began during a period of particular instability, as war and religious conflict ran rampant through Europe. The pragmatic liberal, then, argues that equally powerful individuals can negotiate a political system in which their own particular conception of the good life is neither endorsed nor prohibited. In this way, each party maintains his own ability to exercise his liberty, but must tolerate the opposing views of equally powerful parties in order to do this.⁷⁹

Larmore suggests a third liberal stance, which is similar to the famous liberalism articulated by John Rawls, which strikes a balance between these two positions. Larmore's suggestion places rational dialogue and equal respect at the foundation of liberal neutrality.⁸⁰ In solving disputes, people should adopt the neutrality that comes along with rational dialogue. In this way, people are forced to solve problems by beginning from the common ground of neutrality. This position of neutrality is what Rawls calls the Original Position, a conceptual framework for placing people in a place free of self-interested associations. Also important to achieving political neutrality is the concept of equal respect. As Ronald Dworkin suggests, treating all people "as human beings who are capable of suffering and frustration...[and] who are capable of forming and acting on intelligent conceptions of how their lives should be lived" constitutes a recognition of such equality.⁸¹ Having equal respect for all persons provides the impetus behind continuing rational dialogue. Similar to the Kantian ethical ideal of the Categorical Imperative, equal respect involves treating people as an end rather than merely a

⁷⁹ See Larmore, "Political Liberalism," 62 for more on this view.

⁸⁰ Larmore, "Political Liberalism," 63.

⁸¹ Ronald Dworkin, *Taking Rights Seriously* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1977), 272.

means. “To respect another person as an end,” Larmore argues, “is to insist that coercive or political principles be as justifiable to that person as they are to us.”⁸² In this way, equal respect for persons involves assuming a position of neutrality in order to establish what principles would be justifiable to someone who does not share my particular view.

Citizenship in Liberal Theory

The fundamentality of liberty, rational dialogue, and equal respect for persons thus make up the shared core of liberal theory. A liberal conception of citizenship, then, conforms to these principles. In the early liberal ideas of Locke and Hobbes, the natural rights of man played a central role. According to natural rights theory, people all have some very basic rights that cannot be infringed upon—e.g. life, liberty, and property. Following this tradition, liberal theories of citizenship place rights at the forefront of citizenship. Citizenship guarantees its possessors equal rights under the law. This universality of citizenship has involved guaranteeing the rights associated with the status to larger portions of the populations of nations over the centuries. In one sense, the universality of citizenship means universal protection of the rights associated with the status for the members of the group. Here, the idea of equality under the law can be understood using a distinction between internal restrictions and external protections. Internal restrictions, Will Kymlicka explains, involve a “claim of a group against its own members,” while external protections involve a “claim of a group against the larger society.”⁸³ It is generally assumed to be unacceptable for groups to exercise internal restrictions “where the basic civil and political liberties of group members are being restricted.”⁸⁴ It is, however, acceptable (and even, on many views, required) for a group to protect its interests in interactions with other groups. Affirming the right of a state to externally protect its citizens thus does not give it the

⁸² Larmore, “Political Liberalism,” 65.

⁸³ Will Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 35. While Kymlicka uses this distinction in the context of minority groups within a state, it can easily be applied to states in a global context.

⁸⁴ Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship*, 36.

right to impose internal restrictions on its members—for example, the creation of “second class citizens.”

In another important sense, though, citizenship also involves inclusion in the common life, rather than merely a protection of certain rights.⁸⁵ This has generally been expressed in liberal democratic theory as inclusion in the sovereignty of the state—that is, as part of the metaphorical voice of the people that dictates what the governing body does. The position of neutrality seems to require this, since each differing perspective must be given weight and consideration in order to reach a mutually agreeable solution. This common life, however, has also frequently been characterized in terms of identity, by liberals and republicans alike. On this conception, belonging to a group involves “some intimate connection with your identity.”⁸⁶ The inclusion of a sense of identity is not necessary on a liberal conception of citizenship, but it can provide an important reason to think that group affiliations might warrant respect in a neutral deliberation.

Perhaps the best known comprehensive theory of political liberalism, John Rawls’ liberalism provides a thought experiment that can be used to achieve the ideal of neutrality in citizenship, as well as politics generally. Rawls’ theory centers on the idea of justice as fairness. Justice, he argues, is determined by consensus in the Original Position. In order to determine which principles should govern communal life and social interactions, Rawls posits that “the fair terms of social cooperation are conceived as agreed to by those engaged in it, that is, by free and equal citizens who are born into the society in which they lead their lives.”⁸⁷ Further, however, it is not enough to have mere consensus. The Original Position is beyond what Rawls calls a “Veil of Ignorance”: a “point of view, removed from and not distorted by the particular

⁸⁵ For an articulation of the intricacies involved in citizenship in liberal theory, see Marion Iris Young, “Polity and Group Difference: A Critique of the Ideal of Universal Citizenship,” *Ethics* 99, no. 2 (1989): 250-274.

⁸⁶ Simon Keller, *The Limits of Loyalty* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 11.

⁸⁷ John Rawls, *Political Liberalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 23.

features and circumstances of the all-encompassing background framework, from which a fair agreement between persons regarded as free and equal can be reached.”⁸⁸ In order to render a truly fair decision, the “voters” must be removed from any knowledge of their particular positions in order to avoid self-serving bias.

Citizens, Rawls argues, are the objects of the deliberation from the Original Position. Citizens, according to Rawls, are free in three respects: they “conceive of themselves and of one another as having to moral power to have a conception of the good,” they “regard themselves as self-authenticating sources of valid claims,” and they “are viewed as capable of taking responsibility for their ends and this affects how their various claims are assessed.”⁸⁹ In this way, Rawls’ citizen is one who is positively free. He is able to exercise his will in a variety of opportunities. From the Original Position, Rawls argues, certain reductions in negative liberty can be agreed upon because of the ultimate protection of positive freedom. Rawlsian arguments are thus frequently employed as defenses of state-sponsored welfare programs. Though there is no one unified liberal theory of citizenship, these considerations provide at least a minimal sketch of what such a conception entails.

Liberalism and Partiality: A Resolvable Tension?

It is generally assumed, and rightfully so, that liberalism is at its core an impartial moral theory. The entire liberal project stems from the affirmation of the basic equality of all people in the state of nature. The liberal makes every attempt to avoid considerations stemming from self-interest and partiality. Citizenship, as it functions in reality, nevertheless involves significant partiality; to require strict impartialism based on the equality of all people regardless of national origin seems to contradict fundamentally with the very institution of citizenship. One potential response to the tension between liberalism’s commitment to equality and citizenship as a

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 30-32.

relationship of partiality is to claim that a liberal theory only requires one to assume a neutral position with regards to members of the group. Taking this approach affirms the universality of citizenship within the state—all citizens are equal under the law, but not all people are citizens. There appears to be no tension here. It seems, however, that in affirming the basic equality of all people in the state of nature, as Locke and Hobbes do, liberalism necessarily commits itself to a more universal consideration. Wholeheartedly accepting the core values of liberalism seems to require valuing all people, regardless of national membership, equally. This would arguably require a radical change in the organization of global politics from a system of nation-states to a cosmopolitan ideal. While one can reasonably argue that this is the preferable organization, I will attempt to reconcile the basic assumptions of liberalism with a partiality-based concept of citizenship.

A Response from the Social Contract

The first solution to the problem I will consider is one from social contract theory. Social contractarianism perhaps found its best formulation in the historical liberal figures of Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Social contract theory comes from a psychological theory about man absent government. In this state of nature, each person is equal because even “the weakest has strength enough to kill the strongest... that are in the same danger with himselfe.”⁹⁰ Hobbes takes a negative view of the basic psychology of humans, claiming that man has “a perpetuall and restlesse desire of Power after power, that ceaseth onely in Death.”⁹¹ He concludes “that during the time men live without a common Power to keep them all in awe, they are in that condition which is called Warre.”⁹² John Locke, in contrast, takes a more positive view of the state of nature, claiming that the state of nature is governed by a natural law that comes from man’s inherent capacity for reason. Reason, he

⁹⁰ Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd., 1985), 1.13.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 1.11.

⁹² *Ibid.*

says, “teaches anyone who takes the trouble to consult it, that *because we are all equal and independent, no-one ought to harm anyone else in his life, health, liberty, or possessions.*”⁹³ The state of nature, however, is less than ideal; both men thus claim that people give up their natural liberty and enter into a contract with one another in order to achieve peace and stability.

A second important tenet of social contract theory, other than the basic assumption of liberty in the state of nature, is the idea of contractual consent. Locke argues, in this vein, that it is only when men “*consent to make themselves members of some political society*” that they leave the state of nature.⁹⁴ Since man “was born with a right to perfect freedom, and with an uncontrolled enjoyment of all the rights and privileges of the law of nature, equally with any other man or men in the world,” he must relinquish some of his natural power when he enters such a contract.⁹⁵ Rousseau further contends that entering freely into this contract means that “a state can be legitimate only if it is guided by the ‘general will’ of its members.”⁹⁶ “It’s the common element in these interests [present in the state],” he says, “that forms the social tie; and if there were nothing that they all had in common, no society could exist. It is solely by this common interest that every society should be governed.”⁹⁷ The general will thus serves both to empower the people but also to limit the power of the state, as “the sovereign on its side can’t impose upon its subjects any fetters that are useless to the community.”⁹⁸ From the writings of these three philosophers, then, social contract theory took shape. Most notably, social contract theory is distinctly voluntary. Where many other conceptions of citizenship involve the

⁹³ John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government*, edited by Jonathan Bennett (2017), II.2.6, <http://www.earlymoderntexts.com/assets/pdfs/locke1689a.pdf>. Emphasis in original.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, II.2.15.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, II.7.87.

⁹⁶ Christopher Bertram, “Jean Jacques Rousseau,” *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (2017), <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/rousseau/>.

⁹⁷ Jean Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, edited Jonathan Bennett (2015), II.1, <http://www.earlymoderntexts.com/assets/pdfs/rousseau1762.pdf>.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, II.4.

involuntary assignment of status based on birth, social contract theory posits that every individual consents and voluntarily becomes involved in the contract.

By defining citizenship as a voluntarily entered contract, social contract theory can solve the tension between liberalism and partiality by framing the obligations that arise from group membership as contractual obligations.⁹⁹ Assuming the equality of two individuals, I am obligated to uphold my agreements only with the one who is the other party involved in the contract. If, for example, I sign a contract promising to pay an employee of mine \$5,000 for a job, then I only have an obligation to give \$5,000 to my employee regardless of his moral equality with someone who is not my employee. On the contract-based solution, I also only have an obligation to my fellow-citizen because he and I are both parties involved in a contract.

This solution has a few advantages. First, it provides a concrete “shared project”¹⁰⁰ and relationship to fulfill the requirements of the hybrid theory of partiality that I suggested in Part II. The relationship established by the contract clearly creates obligations, which provides a solution for the inability of theories of partiality to create anything beyond mere permissions. Secondly, it establishes a reciprocal relationship of the kind that is required for citizenship. One individual cannot contract himself to another person or group without the involvement of the other party. A contract approach thus provides a standard of exclusion for citizenship. Finally, a social contractarian solution follows the standard of neutrality. It seems that reasonable people behind the veil of ignorance, who have no idea whether or not they are a party involved in the contract, would uphold the obligation to fulfill a contract.

This approach, however, faces two distinct drawbacks that make it an unattractive solution for my purposes. First, it is unclear to what extent citizenship should properly be understood as voluntary. Even if a social contract were the original method of entering into a

⁹⁹ See Samuel Scheffler, *Boundaries and Allegiances: Problems of Justice and Responsibility in Liberal Thought*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 49-50.

¹⁰⁰ I use the term project very broadly.

social group when the first society was formed, it is difficult to find such an agreement that is robust enough to constitute a valid, consensual contract in contemporary citizenship. An appeal to contractual obligation might work in the cases of naturalized citizens—these individuals chose to become a citizen of a particular country, and generally must swear allegiance to their new country. In most cases, however, people are born into a citizenship through no decision of their own.

One response to this objection is that citizens consent to their membership by their failure to exercise their other options. It seems like a weak argument, however, to claim that citizens choose their country voluntarily simply by not leaving. As Rawls says, “the bonds of society and culture, of history and social place of origin, begin so early to shape our life and are normally so strong that the right of emigration... does not suffice to make accepting its authority free.”¹⁰¹ As an analogy, consider the case of automatic enrollment in health insurance programs, as many universities require for their students. At the beginning of each academic year, students are sent a notice that unless they opt out of the school’s student insurance program, they will be charged and enrolled in the program. If a student does not receive the email, her failure to opt out does not seem to constitute consent to be enrolled.¹⁰² Citizens who are unaware of the intricacies of their country’s policies, ignorant or unable to leave, or simply who do not wish to uproot their lives do not necessarily seem like voluntary members of a contractual relationship.

Further, taking such an approach contradicts the role of partiality for which I am arguing. By categorizing the relationship of citizenship as one of contract, partiality can be reconceived as merely fulfilling a contractual duty.¹⁰³ In this way, associative duties, or those “that we have only to those particular people with whom we have had certain significant sorts of interactions or

¹⁰¹ Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, 222.

¹⁰² This analogy is obviously imperfect, but it serves to illustrate that lack of protest does not necessarily constitute positive consent.

¹⁰³ See Scheffler, *Boundaries and Allegiances*, 49-50.

to whom we stand in certain significant sorts of relations, could be attributed to an impartial obligation to maintain contracts.¹⁰⁴ This approach thus turns relationships of partiality into ones of impartiality.

A Response from Neutrality

A different approach is to argue that liberalism itself justifies partiality without an appeal to a contract. I will consider two strands of this kind of approach, since this can allow me to maintain the integrity of partiality in citizenship. The first is an argument from liberal neutrality. Part of neutrality, recall, involves an equal respect for individuals, especially in assuming that their differing views on what constitutes a valid conception of the good life are viable. “Political liberalism,” Rawls is careful to point out, “does not attack or criticize any reasonable view.”¹⁰⁵ It cannot, further, reject “any particular theory of the truth of moral judgments.”¹⁰⁶ The response from neutrality, then, is to claim that partiality is a perfectly reasonable concept to affirm. This is, in fact, part of the original draw toward partiality. To return to this assertion mentioned at the very beginning of Part I, a good reason to think that partiality should play some role in moral thinking comes from the intuition that to prohibit partiality entirely is an unreasonable request of people. Especially given the limits to partiality that I endorsed in Part II, it seems difficult for a liberal to argue that allowing for partiality as part of a view of morality is so unacceptable as to justify violating the standard of neutrality.

Further, this approach recognizes the advantages that partiality can have given the limits of human psychology. “It might be an ideal to extend our loyalty to everyone on the planet,” George Fletcher writes, “but nourishing utopian visions about faraway places sometimes makes people indifferent to the real suffering next door.”¹⁰⁷ When confronted with the stories of the suffering of strangers, most of us acknowledge the pain but are not particularly moved by it. It

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 49.

¹⁰⁵ Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, xix.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., xix-xx.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 20.

would, frankly, be an unsustainable life to truly feel the full force of empathy for every suffering person. In a way, partiality divides up the available human empathy and doles out a portion to each individual. Just as I feel moved by the empathy I have for my loved ones, others are moved by their own loved ones. Rather than creating an unequal balance of concern, partiality allows for the distribution of deep and meaningful empathy. From behind the Veil of Ignorance, then, depriving the world of such deep care seems less advantageous on the whole than allowing for partiality, given the limited capacity of the human psyche.

A Response from Autonomy

A second way of reconciling partiality and liberalism without relying on contract theory is to appeal to the role that group attachments play in the realization of the autonomous self. According to Rawls, free citizens “regard themselves as self-authenticating sources of valid claims.”¹⁰⁸ In *Loyalty*, Fletcher argues that group loyalty is an important part of being such a free and self-authenticating individual. “To love myself,” Fletcher argues, “I must respect and cherish those aspects of myself that are bound up with others.”¹⁰⁹ Many others, as I have mentioned, have pointed to the inextricability between group membership and identity, especially in the context of the nation. From this consideration of identity, then, allowing for full autonomy of the individual requires that he be able to define himself by group identity if he so wishes. Further, having such attachments to others is a source of meaning for many people; allowing for the possibility that a conception of the good life can involve relationships to other people is required for a full expression of liberal respect for autonomy.

The main advantage of this view for my own argument is that it emphasizes the role that relationships can play in liberalism. If, from a neutral perspective, it can be affirmed that relationships have value—to the individual, as in the case of identity, or intrinsically—then the

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 32.

¹⁰⁹ Fletcher, *Loyalty*, 16.

idea that relationships should give individuals special reasons for action is distinctly plausible from a liberal perspective. From the Original Position, the individual does not know whether or not he is in the relationship; however, he can recognize the value of relationships themselves. Through this recognition, the individual in the Original Position can quite easily allow for relationships. Further, relationships that generate special reasons can be affirmed from the Original Position because the partiality involved in relationships makes them meaningful. If a relationship did not involve anything different than is involved in impartial morality, then it loses its point. From the Original Position, it is thus advantageous to affirm the permissibility of partiality as an integral part of relationships, as well as to affirm the permissibility of relationships at all. I thus conclude that liberalism can accommodate partiality in citizenship, especially given the impartial constraints that I require in my view.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I turn to the potential implications of my discussion. Does allowing for partiality in the context of citizenship justify maintaining the global order as it now stands? I think that the massive inequality between the developed and the developing world provides more than sufficient reason to change the way the global order functions, even while allowing for partiality. As Will Kymlicka argues, “a liberal view requires *freedom within* the... group, and *equality between* the... groups.”¹¹⁰ There is, as I have argued, a compelling reason to think that partiality is important; but, this importance should not be misconstrued as permission to ignore the problems of others. Allowing for group attachments can ensure that everyone is protected, but it cannot justify the supremacy of the majority over the minority. This, after all, would not pass the test of the Original Position. The imperative of morality outweighs the particular group’s desire for power and dominion.

Using my hybrid relationships view requires a shift from a local view to a universal one. While it is not a full-blown cosmopolitan argument, it does suggest that the interest of all play a role in our considerations. In the “concentric circles” model I used, the global community of humanity plays an undeniable role. Rather than viewing the community of humankind as the only allowable standard, my view requires that it place a limit on the reach of other attachments. Further, it must always be a factor, even if only a small one, in considerations. This standard, then, seems to require a larger role for the global community in national considerations than currently in place. Ultimately, I think this is the only justifiable viewpoint for global politics, especially for rich developed countries like the U.S.

¹¹⁰ Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship*, 152.

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