

PART I

Don't come around here no more

The cosmopolitan conception of the Open Society

1. Consider the wall

In 221 BCE – the final year of the Chinese Zhou dynasty – King Zheng of Qin defeated the armed forces of Qi, which was the last remaining independent state out of seven. This victory ended a war of domination that lasted more than 250 years, and led to the collapse of the Zhou dynasty and the establishment of the Qin dynasty in its place. Zheng became its first emperor. As the first emperor of the first dynasty of what would become Imperial China, Zheng’s place in history was assured. In the West, Zheng’s legacy would become known through an enduring piece of defensive architecture.

During the Warring States era, before Zheng became emperor, many groups had built extensive protective defences, mostly consisting of earthen walls, on their territorial perimeters. Despite Zheng’s success in consolidating his empire from within – he implemented numerous political and economic reforms to promote stability – his empire was repeatedly threatened by outsiders. In particular, a confederation of nomadic tribes from the region now known as Mongolia routinely attacked the kingdom. Unable to defeat the tribes outright, Zheng opted for an alternative method of defence. Noting all the numerous unconnected walls leftover from the Warring States period, Zheng ordered hundreds of thousands of labourers to link them together. Over the next 1,800 years, this structure would be extended, expanded, and rebuilt and eventually came to be known as the Great Wall of China.

Walls, material and immaterial, have featured with increased prominence in the public consciousness. Example one: in June 2015, Donald Trump kicked off his presidential run with a now-famous policy announcement. He said: “I will build a great wall. I will build a great, great wall on our southern border, and I will make Mexico pay for that wall.” Why a wall? Trump’s argument was pragmatic: “Walls work.” Trying to make good on his pledge to build the Great Wall of America turned out to be one of the most contested battles Trump fought during his time in office. “Build the wall!” became a popular crowd chant during his massive stadium events. As progress on his wall failed to materialise,¹ Trump adopted a tough, “zero tolerance” approach to illegal immigration, separating the children of illegal immigrants from their parents. After much humanitarian outcry, the policy was eventually stopped, but not

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before thousands of children had been separated from their parents. Remarkably, there seemed to have been no clear policy in place to reunite parents with their children (Kopan 2018). In the absence of a physical barrier to keep immigrants out, it seems the Trump administration decided to try its hand at creating an immaterial, psychological barrier. The Trump administration was, I suspect, betting that the threat of being separated from one's children indefinitely would provide a deterrent sufficient to stop parents and children from attempting to enter the US illegally.

Example two: in 2016, the UK voted to leave the European Union (EU), effectively voting to create a new, immaterial wall between the UK and the EU – one made of laws and regulations. Leaving the EU, with its free movement of people and goods, would require – despite all the promises of politicians to the contrary – erecting new barriers to travel and trade that hadn't existed previously. Although the vote to leave took many people by surprise at the time, the benefit of hindsight allows us to now see that the vote to leave should have surprised no one. The UK's vote to leave the EU was a product of grievances that had been building for years and that, as we will discuss in Part II, had most efficiently been exploited by political actors using insights extracted from social media.

Although fewer than half of the eligible voters voted to leave the EU, the leave vote constituted 51.9% of the turnout. Since the referendum outcome was determined by a simple majority on a binary choice – rather than, say, requiring a two-thirds supermajority to be decisive – the matter was considered settled. And so 17,410,742 people – less than one-quarter of the population – determined the future course for a country of 65.6 million, including 13.9 million children incapable of voting.² Those children now face a life with fewer opportunities than before.³

These two examples from the US and the UK are drawn from my own experience as a dual citizen of these countries, but evidence regarding the growth in anti-immigrant attitudes in other Western countries exists. The trends wax and wane over time, as one might expect. Semyonov *et al.* (2006, p. 426) found a “substantial rise in anti-foreigner sentiment” in twelve Western countries between 1988 and 2000.⁴ All these countries witnessed an increase in such attitudes between 1988 and 1994, with some experiencing a levelling off afterwards. Some even observed a slight decline, but the overall sentiment was still noted to be higher than at the start of the study. A later study by Dennison and Geddes (2018, p. 111), using data from Eurobarometer, reported a curious finding: in the “vast majority” of the 28 EU member states, anti-immigrant attitudes decreased from 2014 to 2018 even though political support for anti-immigration parties increased.⁵

What, if anything, unites these examples? I suggest that each of them illustrates decisions and actions taken by those who conceive of one conception of the Open Society as an enemy. The nature of the perceived threat varies across the examples and, as I will argue, even though not all of the perceived threats are equally valid, they share enough of a common core to warrant bringing

them together for purposes of analysis. The particular conception of the Open Society here is a *cosmopolitan* conception. As a school of thought, cosmopolitanism admits of so many varieties that it is difficult to identify what they have in common beyond “the nebulous core [...] that all human beings, regardless of their political affiliation, are (or can and should be) citizens in a single community” (Kleingeld and Brown 2019). But that nebulous core provides enough of a guide for us to get started, and we will make more precise the specific cosmopolitan conception of the Open Society with which I am interested as we go along.

Let’s begin by unpacking the nebulous core. Kleingeld and Brown provide a nice taxonomy of possible cosmopolitan views based on how one understands the “single community” of which all humans are citizens. Some philosophers take the single cosmopolitan community to be determined by our *moral* obligations to others. Moral cosmopolitanism then admits a number of different views depending on how one understands the nature of our moral obligations to others.⁶ Others advocate for a form of *political* cosmopolitanism wherein the single community to which people belong derives from the bonds of some political union. Here, too, we find a variety of possibilities, ranging from modest forms featuring a combination of nation states and supranational organisations to more extreme forms that advocate the eradication of separate nations in order to form a single “world state”.⁷

Other forms of cosmopolitanism exist. The two that will occupy most of our attention in this part of the book are *economic* and *cultural* cosmopolitanism. Varieties of economic cosmopolitanism trace back to the emergence of international trade from the age of exploration and have been defended by economists such as Mill, Ricardo, Hayek, and Friedman. As a view, economic cosmopolitanism has considerable conceptual overlap with economic globalisation, and for that reason has come under criticism from a number of different directions, with few defenders outside of economics.⁸ Concerns over cultural cosmopolitanism underlie much of the discussion in the West regarding multiculturalism, both for and against, from both sides of the political spectrum. From the right, worries about cultural erosion and the loss of local communities prompt pushback against cultural cosmopolitanism. From the left, worries about cultural appropriation and, so to speak, the loss of control over the “intellectual property” of ethnic identities also prompt pushback against cultural cosmopolitanism.

Now recall the two examples discussed earlier. The anti-immigration sentiment behind President Trump’s ambition to build the Great Wall of America and the UK’s decision to detach itself from the EU can be seen as a rejection of political cosmopolitanism. In both cases, this rejection of political cosmopolitanism was, in part, fuelled by concerns deriving from both economic and cultural cosmopolitanism, wrapped in the rhetoric of populism. In the US, Trump encapsulated these concerns in a pithy quote shortly after Ford announced that it was planning to move its small car production to Mexico:

“It used to be, cars were made in Flint and you couldn’t drink the water in Mexico. Now, the cars are made in Mexico and you cannot drink the water in Flint. That’s not good.” (see Hains 2016). In the UK, the EU had for years been represented by tabloids as an out-of-touch, bureaucratic organisation forcing its economic regulation onto a reluctant population. The myths circulated about the EU were fascinating in both their specificity and their absence of grounding in fact, such as the claim that EU regulations on the sale of cabbage were 26,911 words in length.⁹ Concerns in the UK about legal migration arising from the free movement of people within the EU also dominated headlines, in addition to speculation about the possible consequences for British society if Turkey were to join the EU (Erlanger 2016).

The cosmopolitan conception of the Open Society matters because it provides an alternative vision to the world in which we live, where the spatially delineated nation state remains the primary, most fundamental unit of political organisation. National identities and expressions of national interests influence and thwart attempts to coordinate action on a global scale on topics as diverse as international trade, international tax and finance law, nuclear nonproliferation, climate change, and the global response to COVID-19. National identity is so central to our conception of what it means to be *human* that Article 15 of the UN’s Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that everyone has the *right* to a nationality.¹⁰ Possession of nationality is granted protection in the same document that lists the right to life, liberty, and security (Article 3); freedom from enslavement (Article 4); protection from cruel and inhuman punishment (Article 5); the right to marry and found a family (Article 16); freedom of thought, conscience, and religion (Article 18); freedom of opinion and expression (Article 19); and the right to participate in the cultural life of the community (Article 27).

But there is an important difference between the rights enumerated above and the right to a nationality. Consider, for example, the right to life, liberty, and security (Article 3) or protection from cruel and inhuman punishment (Article 5). Both of these rights are inextricably linked to our existence as embodied creatures. Article 3 concerns our capacity to exercise agency and free will, while Article 5 concerns our capacity to feel pleasure and pain. In both cases, the legally protected human rights derive from moral protections associated with those capabilities. Other rights appearing in the Declaration arguably have a similar origin. The right to marry and found a family (Article 16) and the right to participate in the cultural life of a community (Article 27) make sense as objects of moral concern given biological facts inherited from our evolutionary origins, such as how we raise children and our pro-social dispositions as a species. To put the point somewhat starkly: if we reproduced like oysters,¹¹ would there be a need for a protected right to form a family? And if we were solitary creatures like the polar bear or moose, the right to participate in the cultural life of a community would probably not be important enough to warrant protection. Instead, perhaps, we would have the right to be *spared*

having to participate in the life of a community. Some people feel that way as it is. As Sartre wrote at the end of his play *No Exit*, hell is other people.

In contrast, the right to a nationality derives from a contingent fact of human existence that is predicated upon a particular, historical solution to the problems of social coordination and organisation. The right to a nationality is thus more akin to the right to be presumed innocent until proven guilty in a public trial (Article 11); the right of individuals to own property (Article 17); or the right to work and free choice of employment (Article 23). As such, we must recognise that this apparently unalterable form of political organisation – this foundation of social reality – is a contingent social construct that exists for a variety of historical, cultural, and functional reasons. The contingent construct of the nation state yields, in many cases, a number of benefits, but at the same time it creates many negative externalities. With all of the global challenges we face – especially, the existential threat posed by climate change – we must ask whether the concept of a nation state – given its geographically defined nature, its division of people into (mostly) non-overlapping groups, and its forcing people to live according to the outcome of a natural lottery they had no part in designing – requires adjustment. If, as I argue, the answer is *yes*, this shows the value of the cosmopolitan concept of the Open Society.

2. You should have picked different parents

Let us begin with the question of how people receive citizenship in the first place.¹ There are two primary ways in which nationality is conferred upon individuals. The first is *jus soli*, Latin for “right of the soil”. This refers to those states that confer nationality to those individuals born in their territory. *Jus soli* can be applied with or without restrictions. Unrestricted *jus soli* grants citizenship to any person born in the territory of a state regardless of the status of his or her parents. Restricted *jus soli*, as the name suggests, requires that one or both parents satisfy certain conditions in order for the child to acquire citizenship.

In the US, unrestricted *jus soli* was introduced by the Fourteenth Amendment in 1868, three years after the end of the American Civil War. This amendment included a citizenship clause specifying that, “All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside.” Prior to the Civil War, the children of slaves were not citizens, and the Fourteenth Amendment played an important role in abolishing slavery by ensuring that all people born in the US at least had equal legal status as citizens. Although the text has generally been seen as supporting a form of unrestricted birthright citizenship that grants nationality without restrictions – admittedly leading to a small cottage industry of “birth tourism” where pregnant women travel to the US for the specific purpose of giving birth² – the requirement that persons born in the US must be “subject to the jurisdiction thereof” has been interpreted as placing a few limited restrictions. Since foreign diplomats have diplomatic immunity, they are not subject to the jurisdiction of the US and, so, their children are not eligible for citizenship.

Unrestricted *jus soli* exists in a number of countries, but the trend has been to move towards applying restrictions. It’s no longer enough, for many countries, to simply be within their territorial borders when your personal contribution to the next generation emerges. For example, New Zealand – which had mostly unrestricted birthright citizenship until 31 December 2005³ – now grants citizenship only if at least one parent is a citizen, or permanent resident of New Zealand, or if required to prevent the child from being stateless. The latter type of restriction is fairly common.

The second way in which nationality is acquired is *jus sanguinis*, Latin for “right of blood”. According to this principle, what matters is not *where* the person was born but what their parents’ nationality is. The UK grants citizenship to any child born abroad to British parents (known as “citizenship by descent”),

provided that the parents did not themselves obtain their British citizenship by descent. This stops the chain of citizenship by descent from going beyond one generation in cases where there are no naturally obvious ties to Britain. Since there is no inconsistency between *jus soli* and *jus sanguinis*, countries can implement a combination of both schemes. The US has a number of conditions under which a child born abroad will be granted US citizenship. The relevant government website (US Department of State 2024) provides a taxonomy of most of the cases you can imagine occurring, ranging from a child born to parents who are US citizens (and married) to a child born “out-of-wedlock” to a mother who isn’t a US citizen and a father who is.

The relevant moral point is that both *jus soli* and *jus sanguinis* bestow nationality to a child based on conditions surrounding their birth. Since different nationalities confer massive differences in life opportunities, and the nationality one acquires at birth is derived from the nationality of one’s parents – a matter obviously beyond one’s control – we have here one source of great natural injustice, an injustice that derives solely from the natural lottery that assigns properties to individuals at the time of their birth.⁴ Consider the simple matter of life expectancy. In 2023, the CIA World Factbook (US Central Intelligence Agency 2024) identified Monaco – the tiny European microstate on the French Mediterranean coast – as the country with the highest life expectancy at 89.6 years; the country with the lowest life expectancy was Afghanistan – a landlocked country straddling Central and South Asia – at 54.1 years. That a person can face the misfortune of having their life expectancy cut nearly in half simply due to an unlucky outcome in the natural lottery is a moral outrage. And then there are all the other differences, also deriving from this natural lottery, in people’s ability to exercise their rights as enumerated in the UN’s Universal Declaration: protection from cruel and inhuman punishment; freedom of thought, conscience, and religion; freedom of opinion and expression, and so on.

It is important to identify the right target for our moral outrage. It is not simply *that* people have such fundamentally different opportunity sets which is troubling, although this fact is surely sufficient reason to be troubled. The real objection is that the *background conditions* that give rise to these different opportunity sets are so widely accepted as a natural fact of life, without asking why things are the way they are.

In writing about social constructivism, Ian Hacking identified the following criterion for when people begin to call attention to some aspect *X* of society as socially constructed: “In the present state of affairs, *X* is taken for granted; *X* appears to be inevitable” (Hacking 1999, p. 12). Let *X* = citizenship acquired via birthright, and you have the present state of affairs. As Shachar writes in her book *The Birthright Lottery* (emphasis added):

To the extent that citizenship is a valuable resource, it is currently secured on the basis of a morally arbitrary set of criteria. Birthright membership principles that sanction such distribution

deserve the same critical analysis appropriate to any other social institution that stands in the way of the equal realization of opportunities. Such analysis is, though, conspicuous for its absence. *The almost casual acceptance of ascription as a basis for assigning political membership is so prevalent that we tend to simply take it for granted.* (Shachar 2009, p. 4)

In other words, the real problem with the injustices created by the natural lottery that assigns citizenship to persons based on accidents of birth is that there is no good theoretical justification for doing so.

Injustices deriving from differential outcomes in the natural lottery are nothing new. If we ignore, for simplicity of argument, the fact that most human attributes are generally the product of both nature and nurture and concentrate on the *potential* people have at birth,⁵ even then we find that life is replete with such inequalities. Some people are born with the potential to be smarter than others (when raised in the right environment, not subject to bad luck, and so on), some are born with the potential to be taller or healthier or faster or more attractive or more sociable, and so on. These differences, even apparently minor and insignificant ones, can make a material difference in a person's life. Scholz and Sicinski (2015) found a statistically significant correlation between the perceived attractiveness of men and their earnings. Similar connections have been found to hold between a person's height and their earnings (Case and Paxson 2008; Judge and Cable 2004). And people – even women – with deeper voices are generally perceived to be more authoritative (Anderson and Klofstad 2012).

Although we cannot do anything about innate differences in the potential people have at birth, it is generally recognised that, to the extent it is feasible, a just society will try to create an environment where differences in potential, resulting from factors beyond a person's control, are minimised. In part, this is because there is an intuition that such innate differences in potential are *unfair*⁶ in that people did not do anything to deserve the potential they have. In cases where policy is an effective lever for mitigating such differences, appropriate rules and procedures can be put in place to help provide a “level playing field” for all. The playing field is never made completely level, but some of the most egregious injustices can be partially ameliorated. Taxes redistribute income from richer areas to poorer areas, helping fund services in those areas beyond what could be paid for by the immediate community. Those differences in services provide for alternative environments, which make a material difference in people's potential. Educational institutions have made great – albeit still incomplete – strides in helping people realise their potential and even in changing the way in which people think about differences in potential.⁷ In cases where policy cannot really provide methods of ameliorating outcomes from innate differences (i.e., of how tall someone is) or in cases where we think that certain innate differences should not be a factor in determining one's life

prospects (i.e., how deep someone's voice is or how attractive they are considered to be), we introduce rules and procedures to try to prevent those differences from mattering. Inequalities deriving from the natural lottery are not eliminated, but we make the effort to design policies such that the variance in outcomes resulting from those inequalities is less than it would be in the absence of these policies.

These attitudes sit uneasily with the growth of populist nationalism that we see taking place in many countries and the subsequent efforts to reduce immigration and tighten enforcement at the border. What the above discussion about potential intends to show is that we are willing to go through considerable effort and expense to try to *design out* the undesirable consequences of the things *that we had no hand in creating* – such as inequalities in a person's potential deriving from their genetic endowment. Yet, at the same time, the movement to tighten borders and restrict immigration is a concentrated effort to *design in* the undesirable consequences of *something that we humans explicitly created*, namely, national identities attached to individuals at birth and a rigid system of immigration that enforces the relative advantages or disadvantages that creates. The current system of citizenship, which randomly rewards or denies opportunities to persons, aiding or thwarting their life ambitions, effectively punishes a person for not having the foresight to pick different parents. Addressing this fundamental injustice is one key point in favour of the cosmopolitan conception of the Open Society.

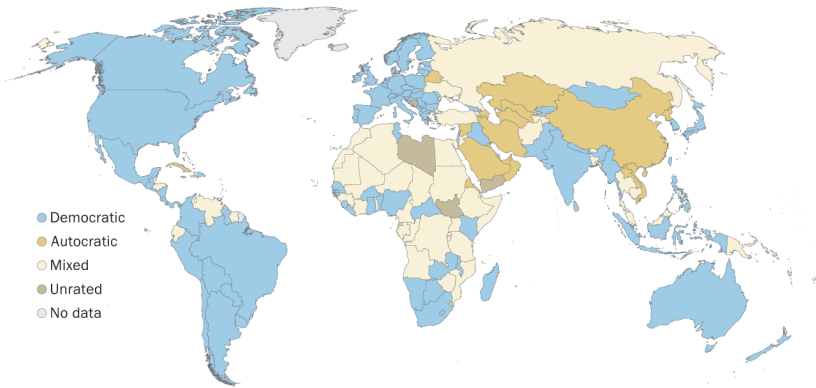
3. The room where it happens

The simple injustice generated by the birthright lottery masks another injustice, which is equally important, albeit operating indirectly. It concerns the ability of people to participate in the decision-making processes that determine the policies endorsed and actions taken by their country. In most democratic countries, the right to vote is restricted to citizens, but there is a surprising amount of variation in practice when it comes to the details. As an illustration of the kinds of variation in practice, consider the EU. The 1992 Maastricht Treaty granted all EU citizens the ability to vote in *local* elections, wherever they happened to live in the EU. In light of this, some EU states decided to go further and extend the right to vote in local elections to any foreign resident satisfying certain conditions. In 1996, Estonia granted foreign citizens over the age of 18 (as well as stateless persons) the right to vote, but not run for office, in local elections if they had lived in the country for at least five years (Heinsalu *et al.* 2016, p. 89). Belgium adopted a similar policy in 2004. Some EU countries are a little more lenient: as of 2024, Denmark lets non-EU foreigners vote if they have been resident for four years; Finland requires them to have been resident only for two. Other European countries are less open: as of 2024, France, Germany, and Italy do not allow non-EU foreigners to vote at all.

When it comes to national elections, very few countries allow non-citizens to vote. One notable exception is Uruguay, but it grants foreign nationals the right to vote only after a 15-year residency period. The most inclusive is New Zealand, which passed a law in 1975 allowing all permanent residents to vote in all elections, regardless of their citizenship status.¹ The right to hold office, though, even in New Zealand, is still reserved to citizens. This occasionally catches people by surprise. In 2002, Kelly Chal was included as a candidate on the party list of the United Future Party. New Zealand uses a mixed-member proportional representation system, and she was expected to join Parliament under this system. When it was realised that she did not have New Zealand citizenship, she was removed from the party list.

Of course, not all countries are democracies, as Figure 3.1 shows. But even in those countries that are not democracies, the very possibility of being in the room where it happens still generally depends on being a citizen of that country. There's no democracy at all in North Korea – the Supreme People's Assembly has no power and simply waves through laws written by the Workers' Party of Korea (WPK) (British Broadcasting Corporation 2019) – but the very

Figure 3.1: A classification of countries according to their regime type, as of 2017



Source: from Desilver (2019). Created using data from the Systemic Peace Polity IV Project. Copyright Pew Research Center, Washington, D.C.

Notes: countries identified as “mixed” have governments featuring elements of both democratic and autocratic regimes. Countries identified as “unrated” have either collapsed, been occupied, or were in the middle of regime change.

possibility of being an advanced member of the WPK, or of being a highly-ranked member of the army, and, therefore, being amongst the elite who do have some influence, requires being a citizen. This point holds more generally. Newson and Trebbi (2018) analysed the patronage networks of the ruling elites in autocratic societies and found interesting differences between sub-Saharan Africa, China, and North Korea. In sub-Saharan Africa, the patronages “are proportionately allocated to different ethnic groups according to the share of that ethnic group in the country population at large”. In contrast, the patronages in China tend to be allocated according to certain biographical traits, such as belonging to prominent families, holding military rank, being affiliated with the Communist Youth League of China, and so on. The secrecy of North Korea makes it even more impenetrable than China, but analysing co-appearances of elites in official photographs of state events allows Newson and Trebbi to show the importance of personal ties while, at the same time, uncovering elements of factionalism. But, in all cases, however the ruling elites are selected, they are generally citizens.

The fact that citizenship is – although generally, not exclusively – a necessary precondition for participating in the political decision-making of a country, democratic or not, matters for the following reason: political decisions taken by a country often have consequences that spill across borders, affecting people who are not citizens and who, therefore, played no part in the making

of those decisions. Climate change provides perhaps the most salient illustration of this point. As all of us are affected by the climate, all of us have a vested interest in preventing climate change.² Policy decisions taken by large, polluting countries such as the US and China have far-reaching consequences for people who do not live in either country, affecting citizens of small countries such as Tuvalu far more than the actual climate policy decisions taken by their home country (Roy 2019). Other issues that illustrate this point are local policies regarding antibiotic use in medicine (Sifri *et al.* 2019) and agriculture (Moyer 2016), which contribute to the rise of antibiotic-resistant bacteria, and the production and use of so-called “forever chemicals”, which contaminate groundwater and collect in the human body (Feldscher 2022). Many other examples exist.

The intuition appealed to in the above discussion – that individuals ought to have a say in those decisions that affect them – is known in democratic theory as the “All-Affected principle”. It is one of several principles proposed as a solution to what is known as the *boundary problem*: when we talk about “we, the people” coming together to make collective decisions, what determines how that group is constituted? Which principle determines who counts as a legitimate member of that group? The true nature of the challenge is fully appreciated once we realise that, “[t]he question itself generates a general paradox of founding for democracy in that any act of legitimate democratic constitution of ‘the people’ or ‘demos’ would itself already require a legitimately constituted ‘people’ or ‘demos’ to engage in that act” (Owen 2012, p. 130). Some have expressed scepticism about the possible solutions to the paradox. Whelan (1983) claims that “brief reflection suffices to show that the boundary problem is one matter of collective decision that cannot be decided democratically”.

In *practice*, the boundary problem has typically been decided by contingent matters of fact. Historically, as societies have evolved from small bands of people to larger tribes, to settlements and so on, the answer to the question “who decides” was determined by things such as spatial proximity, kinship ties, or force.³ In *principle*, what we would like to have is an independent reason sufficient to command assent from those lying on both sides of the boundary. If each individual independently and freely agreed to their proposed state of being inside or outside the group, a spontaneous solution to the boundary problem would emerge – one not requiring a prior democratic procedure.

The All-Affected principle attempts to solve the boundary problem by proposing a moral principle about who has the right to participate. Owen (2012, p. 131) formulates it as follows: “All whose interests are actually affected by a decision should be able to participate as equals in the democratic decision-making process.” The relative simplicity of the principle hides a number of important philosophical subtleties that impact both its feasibility and plausibility. Let us work through these before turning to the matter of how the All-Affected principle might be justified.

The most important question is *what does it mean to be affected?* One proposal is the following: a person is affected by a decision if that person is

changed by the decision. What does it mean for a person to be changed? One well-known criterion of change, due to Geach (1969, p. 71), says that a person x has changed if there is some predicate P such that “ $P(x)$ at time t_1 ” is true and “ $P(x)$ at time t_2 ” is false for some time $t_2 > t_1$. If the local authorities take a decision to purchase your home via eminent domain, with immediate effect, in order to demolish it and build a freeway bypass, the predicate ‘My home is at such-and-such address’ is true prior to that decision being taken and false afterwards. In this case, the criterion delivers the right result: you have been changed by the decision, so you were affected by the decision, and so, according to the All-Affected principle, you should have been able to participate in the decision-making process.

Geach called his criterion of change the *Cambridge criterion* because the concept of change it identified featured quite prominently in the work of the great Cambridge philosophers Bertrand Russell and John McTaggart. But two problems arise if we interpret the phrase “actually affected” in the All-Affected principle as a Cambridge change. The first is that it is virtually impossible to use the All-Affected principle to *exclude* people because Cambridge changes are so permissive in what they count as a change. The second is that the definition of a Cambridge change is relative to a language and hence is limited to what can be expressed in that language.

To see why Cambridge changes don’t allow individuals to be excluded by the All-Affected principle, let’s step back and consider, from the point of view of metaphysics, what it means to say that two entities A and B are different. A good place to start is Leibniz’s principle of the Identity of Indiscernibles: if A and B are different, then there must be some property that is not shared by both A and B .⁴ If a person is changed at some time t , then there must be some property acquired or lost by that person at t . In Geach’s definition, the property gained or lost is the one referred to by the predicate P .⁵

There are two kinds of properties individuals can have: *intrinsic* properties and *relational* properties. An intrinsic property of an object is one which the object has independent of context. For people, typical examples of intrinsic properties include *mass* and *height*.⁶ It’s important to not think of intrinsic properties as somehow being essential to a person because the intrinsic properties of an object can change. One reason so many people go on a diet after the holiday season is that their mass – an intrinsic property – has increased. People’s height tends to change as they get older, as they slowly shrink in stature. Intrinsic properties are context-independent *at the particular moment in time we are considering*: if you were teleported to the Moon, Mars, or Venus, your mass and height wouldn’t change at the particular instant you arrived.

In contrast, a relational property is a property an object has according to some relation which holds between another one or more objects. Examples of relational properties, for people, are “is a child of”, which holds between the person and both of their parents, and “is a friend of”, which holds between the person and each one of their friends. There’s also no upper limit on the number of objects a relational property can apply to. The relational property

“is collinear with” holds between an object and *two* other items: the two items determining the line on which the object falls. More complex relational properties can easily be constructed. On a very permissive theory of properties, “is in the same universe as” is a relational property which holds between all existing things.

The problem Cambridge changes create for the All-Affected principle is that any change that affects a single person propagates via the relational properties to give rise to further changes that affect many (arguably, *all*) other people. Here’s how. Suppose that, as above, the local authorities invoke eminent domain to compulsorily purchase your home in order to demolish it and build a new freeway. This creates a change that affects you. Because you have changed – you are now homeless – you are not, strictly speaking, the *same* person you were before: you now have a different property, namely, the property of being homeless. Now consider the relational property “is a friend of” which holds between you and each of your friends.⁷ Each of your friends is now friends with a slightly different person – the recently made homeless you – and this means that one of the relational properties held by each of your friends now connects them to a slightly different person. This induces a change in each of your friends. And because each of your friends is now slightly different than they were before, it induces a further change in everyone else *they* are connected to by a relational property. And this process continues, seemingly without end. A change to a single person thus affects everyone else, and so the All-Affected principle doesn’t *exclude* anyone from any decision.

Before we consider solutions to this first problem, let us briefly mention the second problem: that Cambridge changes are language-dependent. The criterion for a Cambridge change requires identifying some predicate *P* such that the truth value of *P* applied to a person changes over time. But what if our language doesn’t have a suitable predicate? Not all decisions which have consequences have consequences which can be described by a predicate in our language, at least the way it is at the moment. In some cases, we might be able to appeal to a vague predicate like “is uncomfortable” to capture decisions which make a person feel unsettled or that something is wrong, without being able to identify precisely why. But it is a very real possibility that some decisions which affect people, who therefore ought to be involved in the making of those decisions, do so in ways which escape the expressive capabilities of our language. This is very much one of the main themes in the literature on epistemic injustice (see Fricker 2006, 2007).

One might respond that Geach’s notion of a Cambridge change is the wrong theory of change to use for determining who is affected by a decision in order to apply the All-Affected principle. More precisely, the objection is that changes that propagate through relational properties, thereby creating indirect changes to third parties, are insufficient on their own to identify the kind of “affect” that the All-Affected principle should target. The spirit of this objection is, I believe, largely correct, but a complicating feature is that sometimes indirectly affected persons *are* relevant for inclusion under the All-Affected

principle. Suppose a town made a decision to compulsorily purchase and demolish 5km² of housing in order to build a park. The impact of rendering so many people homeless would clearly have knock-on effects that propagate throughout the wider community, precisely through the variety of social relations that generate the rippling outward effect of a Cambridge change. Many people made homeless would seek to move in with friends or family. People unable to move in with friends or family would compete for increasingly scarce rental accommodation, given the unexpected increase in demand, and some would find themselves unable to afford housing, thereby having to leave the community where they had an established life. All of the people affected by these indirect effects are, it seems, rightly included under the All-Affected principle. The main difference is that the discussion in the above example was framed in terms of the causal consequences that flow from a Cambridge change rather than the Cambridge change itself. But it's not clear whether that is a distinction that makes much of a difference.

Instead of rejecting Geach's theory of change outright, I suggest that two revisions need to be made in order to make it suitable for use in the All-Affected principle. The first is that we need to restrict the set of predicates used to identify a change. In Geach's theory, *any* predicate applied to a person that changes its truth value over time counts as a change. This is clearly too broad as we have seen. Yet how is the set of predicates that matter determined? This matter cannot be settled *a priori* from a philosopher's armchair, as it is itself a matter for democratic deliberation. Every democratic community needs to decide for itself what counts as an "interest actually affected by a decision".⁸ And this presents an interesting complication regarding how the All-Affected principle solves the boundary problem. Suppose that people individually assent to the All-Affected principle, in the abstract, to form a political union. Those people are, in general, agreeing to form a political union *without knowing in advance* whether – in any particular case that may matter to them in the future – that the community will decide that they are able to participate in the making of the decision.⁹ For this reason, agreeing to enter into a political union involves elements of both trust and faith. Each person *P* is saying that they *trust* other individuals to act appropriately in future deliberations and not exclude them from relevant discussions when *P* believes it to be in their interest. And each person *P* is, to some extent, taking it on *faith* that the set of predicates to which the All-Affected principle will be applied in the future will adequately represent the cares and concerns that *P* will have at that point in time.

If the set of predicates used to determine what counts as a change is subject to community revision, this also gives a way of addressing the second concern mentioned above: that Cambridge changes are language dependent. Language changes over time based on the use and expressive needs of a community. As new predicates are introduced, and old predicates revised, new types of change become identifiable through the new expressive capabilities of language.¹⁰ As an illustration, consider the concept of a *microaggression*, first introduced by

Pierce (1970). Although subtle acts signalling negative or hostile attitudes towards minority groups have existed as long as the ability of humans to discriminate, until the term was coined there was no single concept that concisely captured the phenomenon experienced multiple times a day by so many people. Expanding the expressive capacity of language by adding a new term like “microaggression” allows people to not only better characterise their experiences but it enables political coordination and action.

The second revision that needs to be made in order to render the idea of a Cambridge change suitable for application in the All-Affected principle is that a choice has to be made regarding how far along the chain of Cambridge changes we will go before we draw a line and say that the person affected is too remote from the original change to warrant inclusion in the decision-making process. Note that this is not the same thing as saying that the *material effect* on the person is too small to warrant inclusion, although it will often be the case that remoteness correlates with limited materiality. As above, though, what counts as being “too remote” for inclusion cannot be determined *a priori* but will also need to be decided by the community itself, as attitudes towards remoteness can shift over time.

What is the point of this extended discussion regarding the boundary problem and the All-Affected principle? It is to make clear the full extent to which there is a second natural injustice potentially resulting from the circumstances of an individual’s birth over which they had no control. If we generally agree that a person ought to have a say in those decisions that affect them, then the capability of a person to do so is largely a function of the political system of the country into which they are born. This is, of course, obviously true when we are contrasting authoritarian with democratic societies. But what the discussion of Cambridge changes and the All-Affected principle serves to highlight is that *even in* democratic societies, the very possibility of having a say in those decisions that affect a person depends on pre-existing community standards regarding which predicates are recognised as triggering a change for the individual – thereby causing the person to count as *affected* – and bringing them into the decision-making fold. These pre-existing community standards may align with what a person counts as important, but they may not. And so, if we think that a person ought to have a say in those decisions that affect them, and that this ability should be limited as little as possible by natural injustices deriving from a person’s birth, it is natural to embrace a cosmopolitan conception of the Open Society. In particular, imagine a world in which there is much greater potential for people to move freely between states, or to create new states, combined with international institutions having more power to curtail the ability of states to act in ways that impose negative externalities on others. Although such a political cosmopolitanism wouldn’t correct for every inequality resulting from the natural injustices experienced by self-determining agents unable to choose their parents or country, it would at least go some way to partially mitigate them.

In the next chapter, I discuss in greater detail this cosmopolitan conception of the Open Society and provide an argument for why we should endorse that particular form of cosmopolitanism. After doing so, I will turn to address the two main practical criticisms raised by people against this conception of the Open Society: the economic consequences of allowing much greater freedom of movement of people than we do at present and its socio-cultural consequences on local communities.

4. Go your own way

If at this point you feel the pull of the All-Affected principle as both a solution to the boundary problem and a legitimating principle for the formation of political communities, you might start to worry about how it would work in practice. In particular, consider the problem discussed in the previous chapter: how are we to determine whether a person affected by a decision should be included in the decision-making process? Previously, I said that this was a matter for the community to decide. Let's think through the implications of this solution more carefully, beginning with an objection to the All-Affected principle from Robert Nozick.

In *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*, Nozick provides the following argument to show that there are certain real limits of the All-Affected principle:

If four men propose marriage to a woman, her decision about whom, if any of them, to marry importantly affects each of the lives of those four persons, her own life, and the lives of any other persons wishing to marry one of these four men, and so on. Would anyone propose, even limiting the group to include only the primary parties, that all five persons vote to decide whom she shall marry? She has a right to decide what to do, and there is no right the other four have to a say in the decisions which importantly affect their lives that is being ignored here. (Nozick 1974, p. 269)

This objection strikes many as eminently sensible: *of course*, the woman has the exclusive right to decide, and the men have no right to have a say in the matter. Yet much of the force of this thought experiment derives from certain background assumptions such as individualism, respect for personal autonomy in key life decisions, and an understanding of marriage largely according to Western values. If we consider cultures where arranged marriages are the norm, where suitability considerations play a larger role, and where the relationship is viewed not as merely a bond between two *people* but, rather, between two *families*, the force behind the intuition begins to fade. In different cultural settings, where the practice of marriage has roots in different social and moral norms, the set of people affected by the decision who have a right to have a say in the decision, may well vary. It might seem strange to Western audiences that other people beyond the bride and the groom could or should

have a say in the marriage decision, but there is ample precedent for such practices throughout history. Marriage between nobility in medieval Europe often involved political calculations extending beyond the preferences of the bride and groom.

The point of this observation is that who counts as a relevant party affected by a decision, and who thereby has a right to have a say in the making of that decision, depends in part upon the moral beliefs held by that society. It also depends on social norms and other cultural practices regarding how decisions are made. If two societies vary in their moral and social norms, then that can yield differences in how they interpret the All-Affected principle in cases that, on the surface, appear quite similar.

Taking moral pluralism seriously poses a problem for political cosmopolitan theories because how can there be a “single community” to which all people are citizens, if, at the same time, different cultures, states, societies, or communities¹ can occupy substantially different moral spheres, with potentially substantive disagreement regarding the rights and obligations their members have? For this reason, it is more common for political cosmopolitan theories to be derived from a conceptually prior *moral* cosmopolitanism. For example, according to Kant’s moral philosophy, moral principles are derived from the requirements of rationality alone; all rational individuals, human or otherwise, are thus subject to the same moral requirements. Given this, all humans belong to the same moral community, creating a moral cosmopolitanism that provides the foundation for the political cosmopolitanism he later developed in *Toward Perpetual Peace*. Similarly, some forms of utilitarianism, which treat “utility” as a measurable quantity of individual well-being according to some objective set of criteria,² can also yield a single moral community, whereby all are tasked with helping create the “greatest good for the greatest number”. Such a moral cosmopolitanism also lends itself towards providing a foundation for some form of political cosmopolitanism. But neither of these two routes is readily available in a world containing a plurality of incompatible moral beliefs.³

Obtaining a political cosmopolitanism that allows for moral pluralism requires a different foundation. Let’s begin from an existentialist perspective on the grounds that existentialism more accurately characterises the fundamental human condition and the historically and socially contingent grounding of value, meaning, and morality. One classical formulation of existentialism, according to Sartre, takes as its core principle the idea that “existence precedes essence”. That short phrase expresses the idea that as human beings born into the world, our existence as physical, embodied creatures is prior to the formation and establishment, through acts of individual choice, of those goals and values that are seen by us as constituting us as individuals. Webber (2018, p. 14) elaborates further on this point, writing: “In its canonical form, the claim that existence precedes essence is the view that an individual’s behaviour is to be explained through the set of projects that they have pursued and that have become sedimented.” The term “sedimented” refers to an important concept

in existentialist thought but before explaining what it is, let us see why it is necessary to introduce this concept in the first place.

Individual freedom – and, in particular, freedom of choice – plays a central role in existentialist thought. But it is important to understand what exactly is being claimed when it is said that existence precedes essence and what it means for a person to create their essence through free acts of choice. For one thing, it is not to say that human nature is infinitely flexible and that all aspects of who we are, are determined by choice. Such a claim would run counter to experience. To take one example, for most people, the types of people they are sexually attracted to isn't *chosen* but *experienced*. One may choose whether or not to act on any particular instance of attraction but claiming that the attraction itself is chosen doesn't correctly describe our inner mental lives. Here's another example: all people have certain skills or activities they are naturally better at, or prefer doing, than others. There is a real sense in which possessing these skills and preferences is essential to who we are, in that we obviously wouldn't be the same person if we had different abilities or preferences (recall our earlier discussion of the Identity of Indiscernibles), but that isn't the sense of "essence" that Sartre and others had in mind.

In Sartre's original sense, a person's 'essence' is teleological in nature, related closely to an idea that Aristotle referred to as "*to ti ên einai*" in the *Metaphysics*. The phrase "*to ti ên einai*" is difficult to translate into English, as we have no exact analogue, but we can approach the basic meaning through its literal translation: "the what it was to be". To get a grip on this obscure turn of phrase, first note that "to be" should be understood in the temporally extended sense, referring to the *process* of living, wherein that process involves the pursuit of certain projects. Next, let us imagine that we are, at some point, reflecting on an earlier extended temporal process of such a kind. It is perfectly coherent to ask *what it was*, in a general sense, to involve oneself in the pursuit of those particular projects: what was the totality of values, beliefs, understandings, and meanings bound up in the activity? How did all of one's cognitive architecture, so to speak, fit together as one pursued, or failed to pursue, those projects? For Sartre, a person's essence is this totality as determined by their projects: the *what it was to be*.

Early statements of existentialism, such as Sartre's *Being and Nothingness*, were criticised for endorsing a conception of individual freedom too radical to be plausible. Consider the discussion above on what it means to say that existence precedes essence. A person's essence is determined by the projects they pursue. What determines whether a person continues to pursue the projects that they have in the past? Simply, the choice of the person to do so:

Sartre's version of the view that existence precedes essence was that an individual's outlook, the reasons for action that they encounter and respond to in the world, depend on the values at the heart of their projects, which have no weight or inertia of their

own but are sustained only by the agent's continuing tacit or explicit endorsement of them [...] if an agent chooses to abandon a project, then that project will offer no resistance to the agent overcoming it. (Webber 2018, pp. 4–5)

The radical freedom of Sartre's early existentialism, the idea that the only thing standing between the endorsement or rejection of any particular project is the choice of the individual, is incredibly liberating. That radical freedom suggests great possibility regarding people's ability to create and reshape their essence as they wished. But this form of existentialism had one crucial flaw: it was incompatible with the phenomenology of commitment. More generally, it misrepresented the complex interplay between individuals, their society, and the challenges that presented for the exercise of individual freedom.

The problem lurking within Sartre's early existentialist writings quickly became apparent to Simone de Beauvoir, an author and philosopher who was one of the founding members of the existentialist movement in post-war France. Beauvoir is best known for her book *The Second Sex* – the influential text often credited with initiating second-wave feminism and which contained the famous phrase, “One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman.” In addition, she wrote a number of philosophical novels and the long essay “The Ethics of Ambiguity”, later published as a book, among many other works. Although now recognised as a significant philosopher with an important intellectual legacy spanning multiple fields, during her lifetime, Beauvoir never attained the same degree of public acclaim as Sartre and her peers. This is unfortunate, for Beauvoir's development of existentialist theory is superior to Sartre's in many respects; so much so that Sartre's later existentialist writings, such as *Saint Genet*, explicitly adopt Beauvoir's formulation, implicitly rejecting his early framing (see Webber 2018, p. 125).

The problem of commitment, for Sartre, is as follows: if all that stands between my pursuit of a project and my abandonment of it is a *choice*, with the project itself having no grip on my attitudes, then it is hard to see how that means I am *committed* to that project, in the way we normally speak. For example, if I have been committed to my activist work on, say, preventing climate change for the past decade, should I be able to simply wake up one morning and walk away to take a job with Exxon?⁴ It seems that an important part of being *committed* to a project is that it is, in fact, psychologically difficult to abandon it, even if one has good reason to do so. Reasons, on their own, can be insufficient to cause an agent to act. How many of us, when discussing an unsatisfactory relationship or a dysfunctional friendship or a work environment that has become politically unpleasant, have said, “Yes, I *know* I should walk away, *but...*”. That paralysis of reason is the phenomenology of commitment in action.

Sartre is not unaware of this problem, but his diagnosis and analysis are unsatisfactory. Sartre notes that our projects are often interconnected in complex ways such that if I make changes to one project, I will often need to make

changes to other projects as well. If I value those projects (i.e., continue to endorse them), then the knock-on effects of abandoning one project might give me pause. Consider the example of planning a complex holiday itinerary. If I have booked flights to several destinations, arranged accommodation, contacted friends to arrange visits, made restaurant reservations, and so on, then abandoning one leg of the trip (think, project) is not inconsequential. I have other plans (read, projects) that depend on it in non-trivial ways. Abandoning that leg of the trip means that I have to make new arrangements and invest effort to establish a new coherent set of travel plans. It is this kind of consequence that Sartre (2003, p. 454) has in mind when he writes: “I could have done otherwise. Agreed. But at what price?”⁵ Yet it is easy to see that attempting to capture commitment via knock-on effects of interconnections between projects simply cannot work. Why? Suppose I simply abandon *enough* projects so that most, if not all, of the knock-on effects are circumscribed within the set of projects mutually abandoned and thereby simultaneously jettisoned. Consider how, in 1895, artist Paul Gauguin walked away from his life in Paris to take up residence in Tahiti, leaving his wife, five children, friends, and family behind. If I simply abandon *every* project of mine, there is no Sartrean price to pay at all. But the very possibility of doing so is the antithesis of commitment.

And so we arrive at the concept of *sedimentation*. The idea of sedimentation is originally due to Maurice Merleau-Ponty, who developed it as part of his theory of freedom and as a critique of Sartre’s views in *Being and Nothingness*. Beauvoir’s insight was that Merleau-Ponty’s concept of sedimentation could be modified and incorporated into existentialist philosophy to accommodate the problems faced by Sartre’s view regarding commitment.⁶ The essential idea behind sedimentation, for Beauvoir, is this: the consequences of my pursuing a project are not merely external, in the sense of changing the world, or internal, in the sense of affecting other projects of mine. Pursuing a project over an extended period of time changes *me* as well: the values involved are held more intensely, and the beliefs are assigned greater weight.⁷ The term “sedimentation” is a metaphor, but an apt one, for the repeated pursuit of a project that causes it to be increasingly influential in how my life flows around it, just like how the depositing of sediment in a river shapes the current.

Sedimentation thus explains the phenomenology of commitment in a way that Sartre’s original understanding of projects cannot. If I have pursued a project over many years, the reason I cannot readily abandon it through a simple act of choice is that the values and beliefs have become sedimented over time, closing off certain possibilities at the present moment. However – and the importance of this cannot be understated – sedimentation is still, for Beauvoir, compatible with the metaphysical freedom envisioned by existentialism in the “existence precedes essence” slogan. How so? The sedimentation of projects only closes off possibilities *at the moment*: it does not *restrict* the space of possibility in the sense of what is ultimately achievable by a person. If a possibility is closed off by sedimentation, effort is required to undo the sedimentation before that possibility can be realised. If your feet have become

mired in clay, you are not less metaphysically free than someone whose feet are not so encumbered, nor is the set of places you can go restricted in any way which threatens to upset that freedom: you just need to dig yourself out before you can move.

Let us put all these ideas together to see how we arrive at a political cosmopolitanism that allows for moral pluralism. The identity of individuals is shaped by the society in which they are born and raised in the sense that many individual beliefs and values are initially acquired through a process of socialisation rather than rational deliberation. This sedimentation of beliefs and values, acquired from the society and the context in which we are raised, in a sense, constitutes another version of the natural lottery of birth with which this chapter has been so concerned. However, under Beauvoir's version of existentialism, this sedimentation is still compatible with individuals being free to critique and reshape their character and values through acts of choice and exercise of the will.⁸ The extent of sedimentation will determine how much effort is required, but Beauvoir's point is that it remains *possible*. Given this, and in accordance with the fundamental value placed upon individual freedom, it follows that we should respect the autonomy of the individual to choose the life they want to live.

One aspect of choosing one's life involves choosing with whom one wishes to associate. Although all persons are born into a community and a society, that community and society are not initially chosen by the person. As people mature, individuals can engage with, or distance themselves from, their inherited community. This exercise of one's freedom to associate can be correlated with endorsing or rejecting the sedimented values and beliefs acquired through socialisation, but it need not be. The point remains: respect for individual freedom entails respect for freedom of association, which requires that we allow for the migration of people across social groups, as they choose in accordance with pursuit of their life projects, to the greatest extent possible. The phrase "to the greatest extent possible" masks a myriad of practical complexities, but the most important balance to be struck involves a compromise between people's freedom to associate and form self-governing communities – that can create exclusionary rules regarding who may join – and a *consistency principle*, which states that people, as members of a community, should not act in ways that thwart the core freedoms that allowed that community to be formed in the first place. The consistency principle is not entailed by respect for individual freedom or freedom of association but, rather, is a requirement of conceptual coherency on the grounds that one should not use one's freedom to deny the same to others. Together, the respect for individual freedom, the respect for freedom of association, and the consistency principle comprise the *minimal core* required for the version of cosmopolitanism I endorse.

Note that the prohibitions required by the consistency principle are community specific: they apply to members *of* a community, with specific reference to the core freedoms that allowed *that* community to be formed in the first place. It is easy to see how the consistency principle is compatible with free

communities having highly permissive practices. However, properly understood, this principle also allows for the formation of communities with highly restrictive social practices for its members, so long as those members freely accept and endorse those restrictive practices as one of their life projects. There is no inconsistency, on existentialist grounds, with a person choosing the life of a convent, monastery, or an ascetic order. What the consistency principle prohibits is two things. First, it prohibits the denial of a community member's ability to exercise their freedom to go their own way and choose an alternative life outside of that community. Second, it prohibits the community from acting to thwart the relevant freedoms of others, including those outside the community, which were necessary for the community itself to form. This second prohibition is important, for it yields a minimal form of the All-Affected principle that cuts across community boundaries.

The requirements of the consistency principle resonate with Popper's solution to the *paradox of tolerance*. In the endnotes to the first volume of *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, Popper observes that the tolerance of the Open Society could be its undoing, enabling an enemy within to flourish. In particular, "if we extend unlimited tolerance even to those who are intolerant, if we are not prepared to defend a tolerant society against the onslaught of the intolerant, then the tolerant will be destroyed, and tolerance with them" (Popper 1945, p. 226). The solution, then, is that "We should therefore claim, in the name of tolerance, the right not to tolerate the intolerant" (Popper 1945, p. 226). The Open Society allows people to form communities through freedom of association, developing their own Millian experiment in living, *provided that* they extend that same tolerance towards others. The moment a group attempts to curtail the freedom of others, they commit a violation worthy of sanction.

When the Open Society defends tolerance by sanctioning the intolerant, it must acknowledge the full range of options available. Sometimes modest sanctions will suffice, such as engaging in constructive dialogue with the offenders to show how and why their actions violate the consistency principle and persuading them of its value. But other violations will require the exercise of force.⁹ Some may wonder if there is not an inconsistency here: does not my conception of the Open Society allow for people to form communities built around a commitment to pacificism and non-violence? Yes, my conception of the Open Society allows people to form communities built around such values; however, it is an undeniable fact that such communities are vulnerable to the intolerant. The Open Society, functioning as a protective umbrella for a range of experiments in living, must be grounded in pragmatism and *realpolitik*. Here, the Open Society follows Rousseau, "taking men as they are and laws as they might be".

Thus we arrive at a form of political cosmopolitanism, wherein all individuals have the freedom to choose which groups or communities they associate with and develop particular values, traditions, and social practices as they see fit. But the political cosmopolitanism it yields is very different from the one

of Anacharsis Cloots: instead of a single world state, we arrive at a world containing an array of communities linked by political and economic ties, sometimes partially overlapping, sometimes hierarchically contained. But it is not a world entirely free of global governance, for the consistency principle imposes a requirement to ensure that negative externalities created by one group, community, or state do not unduly impinge upon the freedom of others. And it is not a world that requires *only* minimal oversight, for communities are free to adopt additional rules that go above and beyond the minimal requirement.

A political cosmopolitanism that allows people to move freely between groups, communities, or states is a laboratory in which multiple experiments in living are run in parallel. Each political unit can adopt its preferred solution to the local challenges it faces. Different social practices will have differential rates of success from which all can learn if information is shared.¹⁰ When the free movement of people is allowed, political cosmopolitanism becomes a cultural evolutionary process with *group selection* operating at the aggregate level. When people can vote with their feet, ineffective and oppressive forms of social organisation will struggle to remain viable in the long run. Remember that the Berlin Wall was built to prevent people from escaping East Berlin to West Berlin.

This political cosmopolitanism is compatible with moral pluralism, at least according to some metaethical theories. In a previous work (see Alexander 2007), I argued that morality was best understood as a *social technology* for solving the interdependent decision problems which arise from people's social existence. An *interdependent decision problem* is one where the outcome depends on the choices and actions taken by multiple individuals. In such problems, conflict often exists because people have different and incompatible preferences, and each person is seeking to bring about the outcome they would most like to see realised as individuals. According to this conception of morality, moral systems provide rules for minimising conflict (e.g., guidance on how one should act towards others) as well as guidance regarding preference formation (e.g., what it is that one should want). When this system is followed, it serves to minimise conflict and maximise individual preference satisfaction within that society. From this, the possibility of moral pluralism follows almost immediately: variation in environment, culture, and history will yield different sets of interdependent decision problems that need to be solved by societies. It is natural that different sets of interdependent decision problems will likely admit different solutions, and these different solutions will give rise to different moral systems.

Some might find that unsettling, but I suggest that such a political cosmopolitanism would result in a net improvement in the world in which we currently find ourselves. For the different moral systems – each one a society's own expression of their collective project – would exist within a protected global space whereby individuals could, if they so chose, exercise their freedom to associate with an alternative community that aligned better with their own

life's projects. In contrast, the world in which we live is designed to thwart people's freedom to construct meaningful lives, unless they find themselves dealt a lucky hand in the birthright lottery.

Let us now step back and reflect on our central question: what are we to make of the cosmopolitan conception of the Open Society? Over the last three chapters, I have argued that there are a number of points in its favour. The cosmopolitan conception of the Open Society provides a way to address the natural injustices arising from the birthright lottery. If we assume that some variant of existentialism correctly captures the fundamental human condition – I have endorsed Beauvoir's formulation – then, as we have seen, political cosmopolitanism flows naturally from the need to respect individual freedom. Most importantly, this form of political cosmopolitanism does not require that one accept any particular moral theory but only that the fundamental metaphysical freedom of individuals ought to be respected.

It is time now to turn to two of the most pressing objections to the cosmopolitan conception of the Open Society: that it is economically infeasible and that a world of open borders would undermine the socio-cultural distinctiveness of local communities. I address each of these questions in the following chapters.

5. It's the economy, stupid

One argument against the cosmopolitan conception of the Open Society – and its implication that borders between nation states need to be treated as highly porous, thus allowing the ready flow of people between states – is that the economic consequences of doing so would be disastrous. We have already seen how populist politicians, ranging from Donald Trump in the US to the Brexiteers in the UK, have suggested how a great influx of immigrants pouring into the country would result in them stealing “our” jobs, with a concomitant increase in crime and a drain on the welfare state, to boot. In the UK, even Gordon Brown – an economically astute politician, who was no great opponent of the globalised economy – played with the trope, advocating “British jobs for British workers” (Summers 2009).

Ultimately, this is an empirical question: if we were to reduce barriers to immigration substantially, or even eliminate them completely, what would the economic consequences be? Since no global experiment of that kind has been conducted, the next best way to answer the question is to try to get a grip on the issue through the use of economic models. In an influential paper, Clemens (2011) looked at a number of estimates on how world GDP would be influenced by (a) eliminating all policy barriers to trade, (b) eliminating all barriers to capital flows, and (c) eliminating all barriers to the flow of labour. Figure 5.1 reproduces a table from Clemens’s paper, which lists the respective findings. The point to note, Clemens stresses, is that “the gains from eliminating migration barriers dwarf – by an order of a magnitude or two – the gains from eliminating other types of barriers” (Clemens 2011, p. 84). The numbers border on being unbelievable: the lowest estimate is that world GDP would increase by “only” 67%, with the largest estimate being an increase of 147.3%. As world GDP in 2020 was estimated to be \$85.2 trillion,¹ the estimated gains resulting from eliminating immigration restrictions completely range between *\$57.1 trillion and \$125.5 trillion per year*.

If the potential gains from eliminating migration restrictions completely are eye-wateringly large, the potential gains from partially eliminating migration restrictions are also pretty impressive. Figure 5.2 lists some estimates of the efficiency gains resulting from the partial removal of barriers to immigration. The smallest estimated gain is given by Walmsley and Winters (2005), who calculate a gain of 0.6% to the world GDP from a net emigration rate of 0.8%. However, with world GDP at \$85.2 trillion in 2020 (The World Bank 2024),

Figure 5.1: Efficiency gain from complete elimination of international barriers (% of world GDP)

<i>All policy barriers to merchandise trade</i>	
1.8	Goldin, Knudsen, and van der Mensbrugge (1993)
4.1	Dessus, Fukasaku, and Safadi (1999) ^a
0.9	Anderson, Francois, Hertel, Hoekman, and Martin (2000)
1.2	World Bank (2001)
2.8	World Bank (2001) ^a
0.7	Anderson and Martin (2005)
0.3	Hertel and Keeney (2006, table 2.9)
<i>All barriers to capital flows</i>	
1.7	Gourinchas and Jeanne (2006) ^b
0.1	Caselli and Feyrer (2007)
<i>All barriers to labor mobility</i>	
147.3	Hamilton and Whalley (1984, table 4, row 2) ^c
96.5	Moses and Letnes (2004, table 5, row 4) ^c
67	Iregui (2005, table 10.3) ^{c,d}
122	Klein and Ventura (2007, table 3) ^e

^a These studies assume a positive effect of trade on productivity; the other trade studies assume no effect.

^b Change in consumption rather than GDP.

^c Assumes two factors of production, immobile capital, and no differences in total factor productivity. Estimates from Hamilton and Whalley and from Moses and Letnes cited here assume no differences in inherent productivity of migrants and nonmigrants. Some much smaller estimates in Moses and Letnes assume that poor-country emigrants at the destination are $\frac{1}{5}$ as productive as nonmigrants at the destination, which (as the authors note in their footnote 12) is certainly extremely conservative.

^d Computable general equilibrium (CGE) model.

^e Assumes three factors of production and international differences in total factor productivity in a dynamic growth model.

Source: Clemens (2011), Table 1. Copyright American Economic Association; reproduced with permission of the Journal of Economic Perspectives.

this small 0.6% increase amounts to \$511.2 billion. How significant is \$511.2 billion? According to the 2020 figures, this gain was larger than the individual GDP of all but the 23 largest countries. According to this data set, Belgium's GDP in 2020 was \$526 billion, ranking it 23rd, with Thailand ranking 24th with a GDP of \$500 billion. Even a modest increase in global migration would be equivalent to boosting the world economy by adding a whole new economically developed country.

Figure 5.2: Efficiency gain from partial elimination of barriers to labour mobility

	<i>Removal of barriers</i>	<i>Net emigration rate (% origin-region population)</i>	<i>Efficiency gain (% world GDP)</i>
Moses and Letnes (2004, 2005)	Complete	73.6	96.5
	Partial	29.3	54.8
	Partial	10.3	22.0
Iregui (2005)	Complete	53	67
	Partial	24	31
Klein and Ventura (2007)	Complete	> 99	122
	Partial	14.8	20
	Partial	7.3	10
Walmsley and Winters (2005)	Partial	0.8	0.6
	Partial	1.6	1.2
van der Mensbrugge and Roland-Holst (2009)	Partial	0.8	0.9
	Partial	2.0	2.3

Notes: The Moses and Letnes figures on emigration rates are from Moses and Letnes (2005) table 9.3; figures on efficiency gains are from Moses and Letnes (2004) table 9, scaled to assume equal inherent labor productivity across countries (for example, 10 percent elimination of wage gap gives \$774 billion gain in table 9, multiplied by the ratio 96.5/9.6 in table 5 to equalize inherent labor productivity, and divided by world GDP gives 22 percent). Iregui (2005) figures are from tables 10.3, 10.6, 10.8, and 10.9. Klein and Ventura (2007) figures are from tables 2 and 7 (emigration rates calculated from population allocations given 80 percent initial population allocation to poor region). Walmsley and Winters (2005) figures from tables 4 and 11, assuming 80 percent of world population starts out in (net) migrant-sending countries. Van der Mensbrugge and Roland-Holst (2009) figures come from tables 6 and 7, and likewise assume 80 percent of world population starts out in (net) migrant-sending countries. World GDP in 2001 is taken to be \$32 trillion, doubling (in 2001 dollars) to \$64 trillion by 2025.

Source: Clemens (2011), Table 2. Copyright American Economic Association; reproduced with permission of the Journal of Economic Perspectives.

The initial estimates of the potential economic gains from greatly opening up immigration are pretty impressive: there was a reason that Clemens included, as a subtitle to his paper, the rhetorical question “Trillion-dollar bills on the sidewalk?” But one might worry about the models’ underlying assumptions, which have not been mentioned. For example, three of the papers cited by Clemens assume that capital is not mobile, while two others assume it is mobile. We know, for a fact, that capital is mobile, but which model provides the more accurate estimate? (It’s not always the case that including more accurate assumptions in a model yields more accurate predictions.) In addition, considerable variation exists across all the different models regarding assumptions about the nature of the production function as well as in the overall productivity of labour. There is also a question about how sensitive the results are to *when* migration is assumed to occur and when the benefits are measured. In a later study, Desmet *et al.* (2018, p. 908) find that “complete liberalization yields

output gains of 126% [of world GDP] and welfare gains of 306 percent". This aligns quite well with the upper end of the estimates found in Clemens' review, but the Desmet *et al.* paper assumes that all of the increase in migration happens in the first year of opening up borders, in addition to tracking effects 600 years into the future. Given that economists struggle to predict recessions *next year*, we might take these figures with a grain of salt.

It is perfectly reasonable to be concerned about how the results of an economic model depend on its assumptions, but the fact that we have *multiple* models, all in rough qualitative agreement, is potentially a virtue. This view is known in the philosophy of science as *robustness analysis* and the intuition behind it is as follows. The one thing we can be sure about models – economic or otherwise – is that all models make simplifying assumptions and all models are literally false. Yet if we have a collection of models, where each model in the collection makes *different* simplifying assumptions but, nevertheless, *each* model in the collection yields a qualitatively similar result, then that should give us increased reason to believe that something in the neighbourhood of those results may actually be true. Why? The argument is that such convergence shows that the result does not depend on any *particular* set of simplifying assumptions. Each model smooths out real-world complexities in different ways, but no matter how the smoothing out is implemented, a similar result still appears.² This idea was neatly encapsulated by Levins (1966, p. 423) in the slogan: "our truth is the intersection of independent lies." In the case of increased migration, the multiple independent lies all intersect at a common point: significant economic growth.

To drive the point home, Clemens provides a quick back-of-the-envelope Fermi estimate³ to show that, to a first approximation, the order of magnitude of the projected benefits is not implausible. Suppose that the world is divided into two regions, one "rich" and one "poor", where one billion people live in the rich region and six billion live in the poor region. In addition, suppose that, on average, people in the rich region earn \$30,000 a year and people in the poor region earn \$5,000 a year. Suppose that migrants from the poor region have lower productivity than natives from the rich region (perhaps due to differences in education, etc.) such that when someone moves from the poor region to the rich region, they only gain 60% of the difference in income ($\$25,000 \times 0.6 = \$15,000$). Furthermore, suppose that as migration continues over time, the net benefit received by migrants decreases further due to supply and demand to only half of the initial benefit, or \$7,500. If half of the people in the poor region move, then the net gain is three billion times \$7,500, or \$22.5 trillion. That quick estimate is below the other estimates in Figure 5.1 but not by much. It is only two-and-a-half times less than the lower estimate of \$56.7 trillion and five-and-a-half times less than the upper estimate of \$124.8 trillion. As Fermi estimates go, that's well within the order of magnitude of accuracy one typically expects.

Given that, let us assume for the sake of argument that the overall economic gains, to destination countries, of greatly opening up migration are both substantial and positive. At this point, opponents of open borders often turn to other arguments to try and establish that, the positive economic gains notwithstanding, the negative externalities created by greatly increasing migration are sufficiently significant to warrant a much smaller increase, if any at all. These arguments typically appeal to *distributional* concerns about *who* benefits from the predicted economic gains, both in the source country as well as in the destination country. Let us consider some of these arguments in turn, drawing upon the excellent analysis found in Chapter 2 of Nowrasteh and Powell (2021), who survey the relevant literature.

One argument concerns the possibility of a “brain drain” in the source countries from which migrants depart. If highly skilled individuals leave low-productivity countries to take more lucrative jobs in high-productivity countries, then won't it be the case that the source countries – which already were disadvantaged due to their lower productivity – will suffer further because the remaining workforce will consist of those individuals whose skills were not strong enough to enable them to take jobs elsewhere?⁴ That is a reasonable concern, but there are two mitigating factors. First, the emigration of highly skilled workers increases the value of those same skills in the local economy, potentially incentivising people to acquire skills who might not otherwise have done so. Furthermore, the very *possibility* of emigration can motivate people to acquire skills up to the level required to emigrate. If they later choose to not do so (e.g., for family reasons), those skills remain in the local economy. The overall effect may be to minimise the net effect of brain drain. Second, people who emigrate often send money back to friends or family members in the source country in the form of remittances:

For the sending countries, the welfare impact on the staying natives depends on a tradeoff. [...] these source countries would *ceteris paribus* be better off without emigration because a larger labor force implies greater variety in production and consumption. However, absent emigration, there would be no remittances. For countries such as El Salvador or the Philippines, where remittances account for more than 10% of GDP, the latter effect dominates and the average native stayer is about 10% better off under the current levels of migration. (di Giovanni *et al.* 2015, pp. 170–1)

That said, it's important to recognise that not all countries with high levels of emigration are better off. Shortly after describing the net positive effect on El Salvador and the Philippines, di Giovanni *et al.* state that Mexico, Trinidad and Tobago, and Turkey would be 1%–5% better off if no emigration occurred. The important point is that, given the sizeable gains that can be achieved from

Figure 5.3: The unemployment rate in the US, from 1950 to 2000

Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics (2024), retrieved from FRED®
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 Courtesy of Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis.

increasing migration worldwide, the overall negative net consequences for some (not all) countries lie well within a range capable of being resolved via redistributive policies rather than stopping migration entirely.

Turning attention to negative externalities created in the destination countries, additional common arguments against migration are as follows. First, there is a common perception that immigrants “steal” the jobs of native workers, increasing unemployment. Second, for those native workers who manage to retain a job, it is thought that immigrants push down the wages of native workers. Third, immigrants take valuable limited resources away from native residents, such as places in schools, and increase demand for services, such as the police, the fire department, and healthcare. Let us consider each of these arguments in turn.

The idea that immigrants steal the jobs of native workers, thereby increasing the rate of unemployment in the destination country, is a form of what is known as the “lump of labour” fallacy. The term originates in an article entitled “Why Working-Men Dislike Piece-Work”, published by David F. Schloss in 1891. According to the fallacy, there is a fixed amount of labour required by a society – the “lump” – so any allocation of labour that gives one worker more work, necessarily takes work away from at least one other person. This mistaken understanding of the economy is what, in the 1950s, drove fears about mass unemployment due to the introduction of automation in factories and, more recently, has contributed to questionable economic policies being introduced by governments.⁵

The reason the lump of labour fallacy is a fallacy is that it fails to recognise that the economy is a dynamic entity. The amount of labour required can increase when the economy grows and can decrease when the economy shrinks as in times of a recession. In their discussion of the fallacy, Nowrasteh and Powell (2021) note that, according to the fallacy, *any* introduction of new

workers into the economy – not just immigrant labour – would have the same effect. They then point out that historical data from the US economy shows the exact opposite: in 1950, the US had 60 million workers. By 2018, the US had over 160 million workers due to an increase in the number of women in the workforce⁶ and the massive growth in population caused by the post-war baby boom. The unemployment rate in September 1950 was 4.4%, and the unemployment rate in September 2000 was 3.9%. Time-series data over that interval, as shown in Figure 5.3, makes it clear that the greatest increases in the unemployment rate are almost always correlated with periods of recession. The counter-intuitive fact is that “[a]s more people enter the labor force, more people get jobs” (Nowrasteh and Powell 2021, p. 21).

What about the second claim, that immigrants who enter the labour market drive down wages such that native workers are paid less for the same job? This would seem to be an entirely predictable consequence of the basic law of supply and demand from Economics 101: as the supply of labour increases, the amount paid for each unit of labour will decrease, if the demand for labour remains the same. But is it really the case that the naïve supply-and-demand analysis holds up under scrutiny?

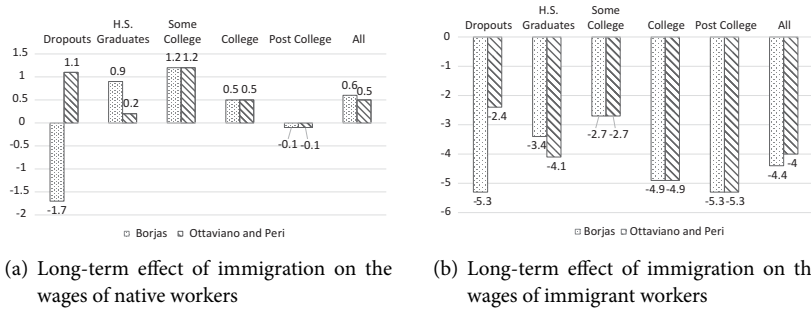
According to Nowrasteh and Powell (2021) (emphasis added):

when economists measure the impact of immigrants on the wages of the native-born population, they don't find any general decrease in wages *in the long term* when capital and other factors of production in the economy adjust to the increase in immigration. Nowrasteh and Powell (2021, p. 22)

The answer about wage effects depends on the point in time we are concerned with; as before, economies are dynamic entities and react to changes. But the overall effect turns out to be rather less than what one would initially expect, given the law of supply and demand. Nowrasteh and Powell (2021, p. 22) claim that, in the economic literature, “the debate on the effect of immigration on wage rates of native-born workers has narrowed to debate the effects on the wages of high school dropouts in the long run”.

Figure 5.4 shows plots comparing the effects of immigration on wages from two important studies, the first by Borjas (2014) and the second by Ottaviano and Peri (2012). Each study looks at how immigrants with certain work experience and educational qualifications affect the wages of native workers with similar experience and education. In addition, each study supplements its analysis by combining it with other research that estimates how capital adjusts to changes in the labour market. The two different studies, then, involve a blend of empirical and theoretical findings, which explains why they occasionally disagree.⁷ Regarding the wages of native workers, only Borjas (2014) finds one category severely affected: high school dropouts, with their wages falling

Figure 5.4: Comparison of the long-term effects of immigration on wages for native and immigrant workers



Source: Figures 2.2 and 2.3 in Nowrasteh and Powell (2021, p. 24).
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by an estimated 1.7%. Aside from that, the two studies find – again, counter-intuitively – that the average effect over all categories of native workers is an *increase* in their wages of about half a percent.

The people whose wages are most affected by immigration are those immigrant workers who are already embedded in the economy. Here, the wage effects can be quite large, with postgraduate workers (and high school dropouts, as Borjas 2014 noted) experiencing a long-term decrease of 5.3% in their wages. This effect has the potential to reduce the attractiveness of further immigration over time.

The takeaway message is that, contrary to many people’s expectations, the wages of native workers are not severely affected by immigration. Nowrasteh and Powell (2021) explain this slightly paradoxical finding by pointing to the heterogeneous nature of labour: immigrant workers tend to *complement* the native workforce rather than serve as outright substitutes. And while it is true that high-school dropouts are predicted to be the most severely affected, it is worth noting that high-school dropouts, as a category of worker, have increasingly struggled as economies shift towards knowledge-based work. As before, I suggest that the correct reaction to this finding is to see it as identifying the need for appropriate redistributive economic policy, shifting some of the economic gains from immigration to the category of workers most severely affected.

Finally, what about the third argument, that immigrants are a drain on the public resources from the community, taking places in schools and increasing demand for local services? Assessing the impact of immigrants on public services – the “fiscal impact” of immigration – is challenging because, as Vargas-Silva *et al.* note:

Many of the contributions and costs that need to be included in estimates of the net fiscal impact of migration cannot be calculated directly, because the data do not exist or are not publicly available. Vargas-Silva *et al.* (2022, p. 3)

What this means is that different studies make different assumptions, and the different assumptions often lead to different estimates of the fiscal impact of immigration. For example, consider the question about whether to include the cost of education for children born inside the country. (In those countries with *jus soli* citizenship laws, this is further complicated by the fact that a child born inside the country is a citizen even if their parents are illegal immigrants.) If the definition of a “migrant” is someone born outside of the country, then a child born inside the country to immigrant, non-citizen parents does not count as a migrant. In countries without *jus soli* citizenship, one could argue that a child who is not a citizen would not have been born inside the country if their parents were not in the country, and so they should be classified as a migrant even if they don't officially satisfy the definition. Further complications exist if the child has mixed parentage, with one parent being a citizen of the country and another parent not a citizen. How do you include such children in the measurements? Some studies split the difference.

Another methodological question Vargas-Silva *et al.* (2022) mention is whether the measurement of fiscal impact should be in *absolute* terms (i.e., the total amount immigrants contribute or cost the government) or in *relative* terms compared to the native population. This choice can make a huge difference in how the results are perceived, for in years when the government runs a deficit, even native citizens are a net fiscal cost. If the immigrant population costs less than the native population – say, by being more economically productive – then they are *more* beneficial to the government than the native population.

In what follows, I'll consider two reports by Vargas-Silva *et al.* (2022) and Blau and Mackie (2017), the former discussing the estimated fiscal impact of immigrants in the UK and the latter, the US. The result of the reports will provide some general guidance as to the fiscal impact of immigration but, of course, no definitive answer can be provided for all of the qualifications cited above.

In the UK context, most measurements of the fiscal impact of immigrants agree that immigrants from the European Economic Area (EEA)⁸ have a more positive impact than immigrants from non-EEA countries. According to Vargas-Silva *et al.* (2022, p. 4, Table 1), a number of studies over 2013–18 indicate that immigrants from the EEA paid more in income tax and national insurance contributions⁹ than non-EEA immigrants. Recent immigrants were found to have more of a positive fiscal impact than immigrants who had been in the UK for longer. (One reason for this is that people often wait a few years after they settle into a place before they decide to have children.) Overall,

though, Vargas-Silva *et al.* (2022, p. 4) find that “in all cases, the [fiscal] impacts have been estimated at less than +1% or –1% of GDP”.

You might wonder how to square that finding with the earlier claim that increasing immigration can have such a huge positive impact on world GDP. At first blush, the fact that the fiscal impact of immigrants in the UK is in the interval –1% to +1% makes it sound as though immigrants make a minimal contribution to the UK economy. Yet recall the definition of fiscal impact: it is the amount that a person contributes to public finances (e.g., by paying tax) minus that person’s cost to public finances. Suppose an immigrant pays £10,000 in income tax and costs the UK government £12,000 due to health-care expenses incurred in that tax year. That’s a net fiscal impact of –£2,000. But there are additional economic contributions made by the immigrant to the overall economy, which fiscal impact doesn’t measure. Let’s suppose that the immigrant spent £10,000 on food, clothing, entertainment, and other consumables in a given year.¹⁰ That is £10,000 of economic activity generated, which wouldn’t have been if the immigrant wasn’t living in the country. Such spending increases overall economic activity and helps boost GDP.

Let us turn now to the US context. One interesting difference in measuring the fiscal impact of immigrants between the US and the UK occurs in an unexpected form: how to factor in spending on pure public goods – like national defence – into the measurement. The US national defence budget in 2022 was set at \$782 billion. In contrast, the UK government defence budget in 2021–22 was £46.0 billion (HM Treasury 2021). This accounting question matters because it’s hard to imagine that the US or UK governments would significantly alter their spending on national defence even if they didn’t have any immigrants.

A key finding of Blau and Mackie (2017, p. 11) is that “viewed over a long time horizon (75 years in our estimates), the fiscal impacts of immigrants are generally positive at the federal level and negative at the state and local levels”. Why is that? Because educating the children of immigrants is paid for by state and local governments, but the methods of taxation used by states and local governments don’t really succeed in recovering those costs from the educated children when they become taxpayers in later life. Suppose, for example, that the child moves to an entirely different state (in the US) for work once they complete their education. Then, the contributions to state and local taxes paid by the educated child will help fund schools in the state that is their new home rather than the state that educated them. But, that said, an important finding is that “An immigrant and a native-born person with similar characteristics will likely have about the same fiscal impact” (Blau and Mackie 2017, p. 11).

Rowthorn (2008) attempts to estimate the fiscal impact of immigrants on a number of advanced economies. The broad findings are in line with what we have found in the UK and US context:

In countries where there has been mass immigration over a fairly long period of time, the stock of migrants and their descendants

normally contains a fairly wide spread of different types and age groups. This explains why estimates of the fiscal contribution of the immigrant population are typically quite small. The positive contributions of some migrants is largely or wholly offset by the negative contribution of others. [...] Estimates of the net fiscal contribution of past immigration normally lie within the range ± 1 per cent of GDP. (Rowthorn 2008, p. 577)

Rowthorn does note that there are a few exceptions to the $\pm 1\%$ rule, but these tend to be in countries that are experiencing a demographic collapse due to the joint effect of three factors: a rapidly ageing population, declining birthrates, and unrealistic assumptions about how the fiscal burden will be allocated across generations. However, even in these cases, Rowthorn finds that when more realistic assumptions are made that the net fiscal impact of immigration, even for the countries experiencing demographic collapse, is much smaller.

And so it seems that the third argument against immigration – that immigrants are a drain on the public finances – can also be seen as more-or-less refuted. I say “more-or-less” because, as with any measurement problem this overwhelmingly complex, it will be impossible to reach universal agreement on the conclusion.¹¹ What we have seen real evidence of is that the net fiscal impact of immigration, despite all the measurement problems, despite all the variation across countries and immigrant populations, tends to be pretty small. I suggest that the takeaway lesson about the fiscal impact of immigrants is that it should have no real bearing on the overall decision about whether greatly increasing immigration is a good thing or a bad thing. Perhaps the best way to draw this part of the discussion to a close is in the words of Rowthorn (2008, p. 577): “The above findings suggest that, in general, there is no strong fiscal case for or against sustained large-scale immigration. The desirability or otherwise of mass immigration should be decided on other grounds.”

The three economic arguments against immigration that we have just considered have been around for a long time. More recently, however, an argument known as the “new economic case for immigration restrictions” (NEC) has been put forward by a number of academics.¹² The NEC is worth considering because it challenges the economic gains predicted from opening up borders from a new perspective, although some of the ideas it draws on have been around for a very long time as well.

The core idea of the NEC is straightforward: many of the economic gains predicted from opening up borders are generated by workers moving from low-productivity countries to high-productivity countries. But what is it that makes a country a *low-productivity* country? Generally speaking, a country can have low productivity for a number of different reasons: perhaps it has a shortage of natural resources or insufficiently many skilled workers. But sometimes a country will be a low-productivity country because it lacks properly functioning institutions that enable economic productivity, such as the rule of

law, stable political organisations, appropriate cultural practices (e.g., a strong “work ethic”), and so on. Institutions, both formal and informal, and cultural practices are the products of human behaviour, built on the beliefs and attitudes of the people involved. According to the NEC:

If immigrants harbor beliefs, attitudes, ideologies, or other factors that are, in part, responsible for the formal and informal institutions and norms that cause low productivity in their origin countries, then they could bring these ideas with them when they immigrate. (Nowrasteh and Powell 2021, pp. 273–4).

If that were the case, then the enormous economic gains predicted by the models described earlier would not actually be found because immigration on a large scale would lower the productivity of the destination countries. If the productivity of destination countries were lowered enough, the predicted benefits of immigration could be wiped out entirely.

Some might detect a hint of casual racism built into the assumptions underlying the NEC. And, indeed, history is replete with the writings of people worrying about whether – and, if so, how – immigration will corrupt the social fabric of their country. But proponents of the NEC will stress that there is no such intended interpretation to their models; instead, they are simply making the following point: if low productivity results from certain social practices in source countries, will those social practices be imported, to any extent, into the destination country? Viewed dispassionately, the NEC can be seen as asking whether immigration has negative externalities that affect the productivity of the destination country. That is an empirical question.

In their book *Wretched Refuse? The Political Economy of Immigration and Institutions*, Nowrasteh and Powell provide an extremely detailed and scrupulously researched investigation into whether any such negative externalities can be found to support the NEC. They proceed by looking at detailed case studies of immigration in three countries (the US, Israel, and Jordan) and running regressions on various cross-country data sets to see whether any correlation can be found between immigration and social practices which matter for productivity. In particular, they investigate whether immigrants (i) have an impact on the institutions in destination countries that support economic freedom,¹³ (ii) increase the rate of corruption in destination countries,¹⁴ (iii) increase the risk of terrorism in destination countries,¹⁵ and (iv) have an impact on measures of generalised trust in destination countries.¹⁶

Nowrasteh and Powell’s findings are surprisingly strong:

Overall, our findings fail to detect the presence of the negative externality posited by the new economic case against immigration and sometimes indicate an opposite, positive, institutional externality in improvements in economic freedom. (Nowrasteh and Powell 2021, p. 279)

They find no evidence of the posited negative externalities. They do add a slight qualification (emphasis added):

However, neither our cross-country findings, nor our case studies, *can rule out the possibility that, in particular cases*, immigration from one or more origin countries to a particular destination country *could* generate the negative externality posited by the new economic case for immigration restrictions. (Nowrasteh and Powell 2021, p. 279)

I think that's important enough to repeat: they could not rule out the *possibility* that *in some cases* negative externalities *could* be generated. Given how difficult it is to rule out the possibility of any social phenomenon occurring, this is not surprising. And they offer a simple suggestion for how to deal with such negative externalities if they are found to occur: impose targeted quantitative limits on migrant flows from the relevant source countries, leaving immigration from the rest of the world untouched.

When people first hear about the possibility of opening borders and increasing the amount of immigration permitted, it is only natural to worry about the potential economic consequences. What we have seen is that, contrary to most people's expectations, the potential economic consequences are vast and positive. This is important because we have already encountered excellent *moral* reasons for opening borders. It turns out that there are very good to excellent *economic* reasons for opening borders as well. In a way, this is a welcome finding: in our globalised world, there is a large amount of free movement of capital across borders. Why should capital have more freedom than people?

6. Nowhere, man

During the UK Conservative Party conference in October 2016, then–Prime Minister Theresa May took a swipe at cosmopolitan elites: “If you believe you’re a citizen of the world, you’re a citizen of nowhere.” It was a deliberate nod to populism in a post-Brexit world. It was an easy attack on globe-trotting globalists, whom many felt were to blame for the ills at home.

It, unfortunately, also had more sinister echoes. In November 1933, in a speech given to workers at the Siemens Dynamo Works in Berlin, Adolf Hitler attacked a “small, rootless, international clique”. He elaborated:

It is the people who are home both nowhere and everywhere, who do not have anywhere a soil on which they have grown up, but who live in Berlin today, in Brussels tomorrow, Paris the day after that, and then again in Prague or Vienna or London and who feel at home everywhere. (Wikiquote 2024)

I don’t mean to suggest that Theresa May intended to channel Hitler, but her suggestion that what really matters is being a citizen of *somewhere*, of being rooted in a place, unfortunately also plays into the next few lines of Hitler’s vitriolic speech. He continued: “The people are bounded to its soil, bounded to its fatherland, bounded to the possibilities of life that the state, the nation, offers” (Wikiquote 2024).

Here’s one attempt at a charitable interpretation of what Theresa May said that captures a major worry about the cosmopolitan conception of the Open Society. If we open up borders and allow high levels of migration, isn’t there a risk that all the local aspects of life you know and love will be displaced? This complaint is like what people say about gentrification of neighbourhoods but at a national scale. In 2014, the film director Spike Lee launched into an amazing rant¹ against gentrification in New York, of which some selected portions, quoted below,² make it very clear what his objections were:

Here’s the thing: I grew up here in Fort Greene. I grew up here in New York. It’s changed. [...] My father’s a great jazz musician. He bought a house in nineteen-motherfuckin’-sixty-eight, and the motherfuckin’ people moved in last year and called the cops on my father. He’s not — he doesn’t even play electric bass! It’s acoustic! We bought the motherfuckin’ house in nineteen-sixty-motherfuckin’-eight and now you call the cops? In 2013?

Get the fuck outta here! Nah. You can't do that. [...] You have to come with respect. There's a code.

I mean, they just move in the neighborhood. You just can't come in the neighborhood. I'm for democracy and letting everybody live but you gotta have some respect. You can't just come in when people have a culture that's been laid down for generations and you come in and now shit gotta change because you're here?

Spike Lee's complaint was that the local culture had grown up over many years. It had its unique traditions and practices. The people who lived there cared about their community's traditions and practices. It was *somewhere* that people called home, and they wanted to carry on with that form of life. The worry is this: how is the cosmopolitan conception of the Open Society compatible with communities maintaining their unique form of life? Won't embracing the cosmopolitan conception of the Open Society result in all of our *somewheres* ending up, like, *nowhere*, man?

A cautionary tale is provided by Venice, Italy. Venice has always been popular with tourists and was part of the Grand Tour taken by young aristocrats in the 17th to early 19th centuries. With the advent of international air travel after World War II, followed by the invention of the mega-cruise ship, the number of tourists visiting Venice skyrocketed. With that growth in tourism, the permanent population in Venice's historic city centre declined precipitously. Since 1950, the permanent population of Venice's city centre declined by two-thirds, from being upwards of 175,000 to about 50,000. In a typical year, almost 30 *million* tourists visit. And while tatty gift shops abound, replacing your sofa is tricky.

The concern about whether it is possible to maintain a unique sense of local community in the face of increased migration is perfectly valid. In this chapter, I am going to argue for two points. First, that this concern, rather than being a knockdown argument *against* it, provides powerful reasons for careful, measured policy decisions about implementing the cosmopolitan conception of the Open Society *in the right way*. Second, that the cosmopolitan conception of the Open Society is compatible with the existence of two duties regarding assimilation by migrants. These two duties, which follow from the existentialist foundation argued for in earlier chapters, serve to mitigate the Nowhere, Man problem.

To begin, I want to make one thing perfectly clear: although some of the economic analyses cited in the previous chapter assume all the migration resulting from open borders occurs in the first year, *there is no reason* the cosmopolitan conception of the Open Society requires such a policy. It would be foolish to think that a sudden, radical opening up of borders to high levels would result in anything except social chaos as cities struggled to adapt to undeliverable demand for housing, food, and jobs.

What the economic analyses from the previous chapter make clear is the potential economic benefit from opening up borders to levels greater, perhaps

far greater, than we are doing at present. If that is the case, it becomes an evidence-based policy question about how to proceed. It would be rationally prudent to adopt a gradualist approach: begin by opening up borders for migration a bit more than they are at present, keeping that increase in place year-on-year so long as the economy and local communities remain healthy and adapt to the influx of people. That migration should be managed with programmes to help new residents integrate. If the predicted economic growth materialises, the additional resources it provides could be used to mitigate any negative consequences that arise. Why tolerate *any* negative consequences? Because the fundamental moral arguments for opening borders suggest this is an obligation we all have. But adopting a gradualist approach to opening borders would help ensure that any problems remain within the ability of societies to adapt. The reason why it is in the interest of societies to do so is the amount of economic growth possible: the trillion-dollar bills currently being left on the sidewalk would fund a lot of necessary services.

Why is it reasonable to think a gradualist approach would make a difference to the Nowhere, Man problem? It is worth reflecting on two natural experiments in open borders, one that has lasted for over 245 years and the other that has lasted for over 65 years. The first natural experiment is the US; the second natural experiment is the suprapolitical organisation now known as the European Union. Both natural experiments have complex histories and important legal differences, but they serve as the closest attempt we have seen in recent history to provide a partial realisation of the cosmopolitan conception of the Open Society.

In the US, freedom of movement appears in the Privileges and Immunities Clause of the Constitution (Article IV, Section 2, Clause 1). It states: “The Citizens of each State shall be entitled to all Privileges and Immunities in the several States.” The intended interpretation of the clause was to prevent one state from discriminating against citizens of another state and provide a right of interstate travel. But specific details as to what that meant precisely did not receive a definite answer from the US Supreme Court for quite some time. The difficulties in providing a clear interpretation of the Privileges and Immunities Clause can be seen as arising from the inevitable conflict resulting from the coexistence of states where slavery was legal and states where it was illegal. It wasn’t until after the Civil War and the ratification of the Fourteenth Amendment that the Supreme Court ruled in the 1869 case of *Paul v. Virginia* that:

It was undoubtedly the object of the clause in question to place the citizens of each State upon the same footing with citizens of other States, so far as the advantages resulting from citizenship in those States are concerned. It relieves them from the disabilities of alienage in other States; it inhibits discriminating legislation against them by other States; it gives them the right of free ingress into other States, and egress from them; it insures to them

in other States the same freedom possessed by the citizens of those States in the acquisition and enjoyment of property and in the pursuit of happiness; and it secures to them in other States the equal protection of their laws. (US Supreme Court 1869)

The first point is that, since its founding, the US has had freedom of movement, in some sense, across state borders. Since the *Paul v. Virginia* decision, the right of freedom of movement was clearly recognised by the Supreme Court. With the development of railways and then, later, the automobile, that freedom of movement became accessible to all. If you live in Arkansas and want to move to Utah or California, you can. There is no need to apply for permission to travel across state borders or to file your intent. You don't even need to have a job in the destination state. You can simply pack up and go and try your luck elsewhere. As you drive across the border into the next state, no one will check your finances or ask if you are able to return from where you came, if things don't go to plan.³

The second point is that even with all this freedom of movement in the US, there are huge differences in local communities, their traditions and practices, and their unique sense of place. New Orleans, Louisiana, has a very different vibe from Fort Lauderdale, Florida, which differs from Washington, DC; Portland, Oregon; Seattle, Washington; Las Vegas, Nevada; Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; and Billings, Montana, and so on. Unique local culture is compatible with freedom of movement once an equilibrium has been achieved. The local ingress and egress of people naturally track periods of economic growth and decline, the perceived desirability of the location, and so on. Each city, having had to deal with the ingress and egress of persons over the years, would have accrued experience in dealing with the shifting population over time. Of course, there has been change over time, in each of these communities, but some degree of change is compatible with each place retaining its *je ne sais quoi* that makes it the *somewhere* that people value.

The EU provides another example, although with more recent origins and a more complex legal structure. After World War II, there was a general interest in establishing greater economic integration between the countries of Europe so as to reduce the likelihood of war in the future. At the time, because coal and steel were necessary industries for war preparations, the Treaty of Paris of 1951 established the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC). The ECSC consisted of Belgium, France, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and West Germany. Originally, freedom of movement was limited to those working within these industries. In 1957, the Treaty of Rome brought forth the European Economic Community (EEC), whose remit was to create a common market and customs union for its member states, which, at the time, was just the same six ECSC members. Over time, the EEC grew in importance, and in 1965 the Treaty of Brussels merged the separate executives of the ECSC, the EEC, and the European Atomic Energy Community (EAEC) into a single entity known as the European Communities (EC).

Growth of the EEC occurred in fits and starts over the decades. Here is an incomplete list of examples, just to give a sense of the messy, organic nature of the process. Greece was the first country to join the EEC in 1961 (in a limited capacity known as “associate member”) but was suspended after a right-wing dictatorship took control of the country in 1967 in a military coup. The UK also applied for membership in 1961, but its application was vetoed by the French President Charles de Gaulle out of fears that British membership would give the US too much control over the EEC. (The UK later joined in 1973.) Spain’s application for membership was rejected in 1964 on the grounds that the dictatorship of Francisco Franco was incompatible with the democratic ethos of the EEC. (Spain later joined in 1986.) Greenland was a member of the EEC for a while, as a territory of Denmark, but after being given limited home rule in 1979, Greenland voted in 1982 to leave the EEC due to a dispute over fishing rights.⁴

For our purposes the crucial event is the Maastricht Treaty of 1992 – the founding treaty of the EU. The EU provides yet another layer of political organisation on top of the EC. The Maastricht Treaty introduced the concept of a shared “European citizenship” for citizens of its member states. Membership of the EU provided freedom of movement, allowing individuals to move between member states and take up residence and work where they liked. And many people did.

The freedom of movement provided by the EU gave great opportunities to its citizens, with enormous flows of labour across borders.⁵ But the freedom of movement provided by the EU has not erased the character of its member states. Each member state of the EU still retains its rich cultural identity, with great diversity across the local districts. France feels very different from Italy, Germany, Spain, and so on. This suggests the Nowhere, Man objection may have been overstated in general. Free movement of people hasn’t led to a mass homogeneity of environs and a loss of local culture. To be honest, I suspect a greater threat to local culture comes from the spread of international corporations, offering the same generic chain stores and restaurants on every corner, making available in Italy the same products, like coffee and hamburgers, that you can get in Alaska.

Not everyone agrees with that view. Some have argued that, like Spike Lee, their local community has been transformed with the freedom of movement provided by the EU. There are three points I wish to make in response. The first point is that I am not denying that some places have been very greatly affected by the EU’s free movement of people. In any social experiment of that magnitude, it will surely be the case that there are some places that have been transformed far more than the local residents feel comfortable with. I am speaking about the overall level of cultural homogenisation, in general. The second point is that people have a natural tendency to interpret any change as for the worse. In *Phaedrus*, Plato complained about the invention of *writing*, for god’s sake. Change can be unsettling, and people vary both in their ability to tolerate it and how much change is acceptable. The third point is that the

concern is really about the *rate of change*. Opening borders needs to be done carefully and gradually. The US had many years to reach equilibrium with its free movement of people. (And, don't forget, the free movement of people was much harder before the invention of the automobile.) The EU is attempting a similar experiment but in a much shorter period of time.

The Nowhere, Man problem concerns how migration may change the local culture of a place. Those who find the problem persuasive think that closing borders and stopping or reducing migration will solve it. It is worth noting that in some cases, counterintuitively, attempts to *restrict* the movement of people across borders can actually exacerbate the problem people are trying to address. This is nicely documented in a detailed discussion by Massey *et al.* (2016), who show how the crackdown on migration across the US–Mexico border after 1960 turned a small amount of cyclical, seasonal migration affecting three states into a permanent population of 11 million people living in all 50 states.⁶ Let us consider this in some detail so as to see how, sometimes, the best response to the Nowhere, Man problem can be to allow *greater* freedom of movement.

In 1942, the US entered into the Mexican Farm Labor Agreement with Mexico. This agreement initiated what was known as the Bracero Program, whereby Mexican labourers were brought into the US to help alleviate the labour shortage caused by the number of Americans deployed in World War II. Although the number of braceros admitted into the US was initially quite small, the number of Mexican workers grew over time in response to the growing demand for labour. After the end of the war, the Bracero Program remained in place, with various amendments, until it was eventually terminated in 1964 out of concern that the braceros were suppressing the wages earned by native workers.

At the same time, US attitudes towards immigration were changing. In 1965, the US Congress passed the Immigration and Nationality Act, which imposed strict limits on immigration from the Western Hemisphere. Over time, the already strict initial limits were decreased further until

by the late 1970s Mexico was placed under a quota of just 20,000 legal resident visas per year and no temporary work visas at all, as compared with 50,000 permanent resident entries and 450,000 temporary work entries in the late 1950s. (Massey *et al.* 2016, p. 1559)

Since people still entered the US from Mexico to meet the demand for labour, the primary effect of this legislation was to make most labourers entering from Mexico illegal. By the early 1980s, the fact that most Mexican labourers entering the southwestern US were illegal immigrants, gave politicians and pundits ample material to whip up fears. In 1985, Ronald Reagan declared illegal immigration to be a “threat to national security” (see Massey *et al.*

2016, p. 1561), and the political rhetoric became increasingly heated. By 2006, Patrick Buchanan could claim in his book *State of Emergency* that Mexico was following a strategy that aimed

directly at a reannexation of the Southwest, not militarily but ethnically, linguistically, and culturally, through transfer of millions of Mexicans into the United States and a migration of ‘Anglos’ out of the lands Mexico lost in 1848. (Buchanan 2006, p. 125)

Buchanan also invoked the standard conspiracy theory of the “enemy within” by claiming Mexico was urging the immigrants to seek US citizenship in order “to advance the agenda of the mother country”. Mexico’s aim, Buchanan asserted, was to “attain that leverage over U.S. policy toward Mexico that the Jewish community has over U.S. policy towards Israel and Cuban-Americans have over U.S. policy toward Castro” (Buchanan 2006, p. 125). Massey *et al.* (2016) describe these pundits and politicians as deliberately cultivating a state of “moral panic”. This moral panic legitimated calls for stricter border enforcement policies, which continue today, echoed in Trump’s call to “build the wall”.

Yet the truth of the matter is that much of the migration across the border was *circular*. Mexican workers would cross the border, legally or illegally, and then after a period of time would return home. Not all, but many. In a detailed study that looks at migration from 1965 to 1980 – the years before Reagan branded illegal immigration a national security threat – Massey and Singer (1995, p. 211) find that “over the 25-year period under study, 86% of all entries were offset by departures”. After 1980, some years had more Mexicans *leaving* the country than entering. By the late 1980s, in a typical year, 3.1 million illegal immigrants would enter the country and 2.9 million would leave, for a net increase of about 200,000 people. To put that into perspective, in a typical year across 1990–2010, the US would admit *one million* legal immigrants (data from Migration Policy Institute 2024).

When public sentiment demanded ever-stricter border enforcement, it led to a change in the strategic calculation of the incoming immigrants. Although strict border enforcement did increase the rate of apprehension, the effect was minimal. As Massey *et al.* (2016, p. 1581) observe, “The massive increase in enforcement spending had only a modest effect on the probability of apprehension and virtually no effect on the ultimate likelihood of entry.” But what *did* change for the illegal immigrants was the cost of getting into the US and the risks they had to take. Smugglers would charge more and the increased policing meant that people needed to attempt more dangerous routes into the country. So although there was little change to the overall probability of getting *into* the US, the cost and risk faced by immigrants was such that circular migration was no longer an attractive option. Strict border enforcement thus served to take a relatively minor problem of illegal immigration⁷ and transform it into a greater one. Massey *et al.* (2016, p. 1592) sum up the result

nically: “In the end, a circular flow of male workers going to a handful of states was transformed into a settled population of families dispersed throughout the nation.” Had the US kept the border *porous* so that circular migration remained possible, it is arguable that the US would face a much smaller problem regarding the Dreamers. And if that is true for illegal immigrants crossing a *porous* border, imagine what could have been the case if the US had adopted a more open border policy, such as retaining the Bracero Program. Perhaps the greatest irony of all is that the 1965 termination of the Bracero Program, which kicked off this whole sequence of events, was found to have made no real difference to the wages of native workers (see Clemens *et al.* 2018).

At this point I have argued that opening up borders, contrary to what some might think, does not necessarily generate the Nowhere, Man problem. We have seen this to be the case in two natural experiments – the US and the EU. We have also seen how the attempt to strictly enforce borders can backfire in unexpected ways. This matters because critics of open borders tend to concentrate only on the fact that they allow people to *enter* the country easily, but open borders also virtually eliminate the cost of *leaving* the country as well. With an open border policy, people will be much more willing to leave because they know that, should events not work out as they foresee, they can return.

In addition, I think a proper understanding of the existentialist foundations of the cosmopolitan conception of the Open Society I am defending yields two duties for immigrants in the destination country. Discharging these two duties will further serve to mitigate the Nowhere, Man problem. How so? Fundamentally, the Nowhere, Man problem results from local communities changing dramatically as the result of new arrivals. But the two duties I will now discuss would temper the effect of new arrivals on the local community.

When philosophers talk about duties, they typically distinguish between *perfect* and *imperfect* duties. A perfect duty is something you must do, always. A failure to perform a perfect duty is morally blameworthy. A standard example of a perfect duty is the prohibition against murder: there is no time when murder is permitted, and under no circumstances would there be a morally permissible way to murder someone.⁸ An imperfect duty, in contrast, is something that you do not always have to do, but you are not allowed to ignore it entirely. A standard example of an imperfect duty is the requirement to help others. We recognise that you do not *always* have to help others because life is complicated and sometimes what I have to do is not compatible with helping someone at that time. If I am rushing to an important job interview, which has the potential to transform my life, and someone on the street asks for complex directions, I do not have to stop and assist *on that occasion*. However, we think that you should help others when and how you can, to the extent you are capable. Imperfect duties allow flexibility in how individuals perform them and when they judge it appropriate to do so.

The existentialist foundations of the cosmopolitan conception of the Open Society yield one perfect duty and one imperfect duty for new immigrants. The perfect duty is this: do not (initially) interfere with members of the community carrying on with their time-honoured and cherished traditions or social practices. This follows from the basic respect for individual freedom that is the cornerstone of existentialism. The people of that community are exercising their individual freedom to engage in social practices in which they have collectively engaged. A new arrival to a community is, in a manner of speaking, entering into a conversation between other people that has been ongoing for a long time. And, just like it would be rude for someone joining an ongoing conversation to immediately try to change the topic, it is inappropriate for a new arrival to attempt to change or block a cherished tradition or social practice. Let us call this the *perfect duty of non-interference*.

It will have been noted that the perfect duty of non-interference includes the temporal qualifier *initially*. The reason for this is that all communities have norms or procedures for how their traditions and social practices can be revised over time. Not everyone in a community agrees on all aspects of that community's practices. As a new arrival becomes embedded into a community, perhaps ultimately being accepted as "one of our own", the immigrant becomes – to continue the metaphor – increasingly able to participate in the conversation and exercise conversational protocols for the changing of topic. At that point, the perfect duty of non-interference will cease to bind, for the new arrival will have effectively made the transition from an immigrant to a fully-fledged member of the community.⁹

Complementing the perfect duty of non-interference is the *imperfect duty to assimilate*. It is an *imperfect* duty because respect for individual freedom means that no person can be *forced* to assimilate into a community: even native-born members of a community have, as I've previously observed, the right to go their own way and opt out of traditions or practices as they see fit, as long as they comply with the law. Every community needs to respect the right of an individual to say, "I don't feel comfortable with that." The imperfect duty of assimilation places upon the immigrant the ability to choose in what ways they wish to assimilate and the extent they will do so.

Why is there an imperfect duty to assimilate at all? It follows from the respect owed to the community by the immigrant, for being allowed into the community in the first place. Previously, I described how respect for individual freedom means that we need to respect each person's freedom to associate with those whom they choose. This is, ultimately, what allows groups, communities, and societies to form: people choosing to associate with one another and enter into a common form of life. But the freedom of association also entails the freedom to exclude: a football club is free to exclude someone from being a member if they hate football and refuse to play. Two people cannot be forced to be friends if neither wish to be. Given that, if a community is willing to allow a person inside when they did not have to do so, it is only fitting to reciprocate by trying to enter into their form of life, to some extent.

The perfect duty of non-interference and the imperfect duty to assimilate work together to mitigate the Nowhere, Man problem. Discharging both duties means that immigrants in a community will strive to respect the ongoing traditions of that community. As Spike Lee said: “You can’t just come in when people have a culture that’s been laid down for generations and you come in and now shit gotta change because you’re here?”

7. Concluding remarks

What, then, is the overall assessment of the cosmopolitan conception of the Open Society? Is it something to be assigned to the scrap heap of history, as populist politicians are wont to argue? Or is there enough value in it to warrant rehabilitating the idea?

As I have argued, the cosmopolitan conception of the Open Society has been greatly maligned. Instead of being a threat to national security, economic stability, or national identity, it can transform the world for the better in many ways. Opening up borders would provide an important corrective to the natural injustice inflicted upon so many as a result of the birthright lottery. It would also generate great economic benefits. And more open borders, if implemented properly, need not threaten the national identity and character of local communities.

There is one last objection to consider: one might grant the natural injustice of the birthright lottery yet think that the correct response is not to allow the free movement of people but, rather, working towards international development. This view argues that by helping developing countries build their economies and institutions, the inequities generated by the birthright lottery can be alleviated without the need for opening borders. While it is true that international development has improved the material conditions of many over the past three decades (a point we will revisit in Chapter 22), the fact that we can still speak of the natural injustice of the birthright lottery today shows that development has only partially alleviated the inequities. Development is necessary to improve the lives of future generations, but opening borders, even if only slightly, provides a way to mitigate, even if imperfectly, the injustice of the birthright lottery for those alive today.

Furthermore, while it is surely important to improve the material conditions in developing countries, let us not forget that economic development is only one contributor among many to the well-being of a person's life. No country can be all things to all of its citizens, and some people born into a particular state may fundamentally disagree with its politics or values. Respect for individual freedom and the right of self-determination means allowing people the opportunity to go their own way if they choose. When faced with a misalignment between an individual's values and the larger society, some people will choose to leave, but not all. As we have seen, sedimentation is a powerful force and so some will choose to stay, working to try to bring their country into alignment with their values.

There is one further implication of the cosmopolitan conception of the Open Society worth mentioning. Perhaps it ought to be easier for new countries to be formed. When people differ fundamentally in their worldview and conception of morality, it can be difficult to maintain a stable, coherent political union in the face of such polarisation. (We will cover the subject of polarisation in detail in Part IV.) In such cases, it could be beneficial to allow new units of political self-determination to arise. If that were to happen, and borders were open, then there would be no need for extended arguments about which form of life was the “right” one. Let people move as they like, provided that they comply with the perfect duty of non-interference, the imperfect duty of assimilation, and the consistency principle. Then the division of the world into states would result in a proper group competition, with successful states being those where people choose to live and unsuccessful states being those where people flee. That would also help redress an imbalance of power between people and corporations. It is a curious fact that, in the modern world, we allow corporations to shop around countries, looking for the best deal they can get, when ordinary people cannot.

Notes to Part I: Don't come around here no more

1. Consider the wall

¹ According to US Customs and Border Protection, at the end of October 2020 only 15 miles of new “primary barrier” had been completed, with 350 miles of replacement and/or “secondary barrier” built. At the time, 221 miles of additional barrier – some primary, some secondary – was under construction. But since the US–Mexico border is over 1,900 miles long, the majority of the border remains without any barrier in place at all, other than the naturally inhospitable environment. (See Rodgers and Bailey 2020, for a more lengthy discussion.)

² The fact that these children had no say in a decision that affected their life prospects more than those of the people who participated in the vote is worth stressing. While I suspect few would join the political scientist David Runciman in calling for the voter age to be lowered to the age of six (Runciman 2021), the general point about age bias and how long-term and future concerns are reflected in political decision making is clear. We shall explore this point in greater detail in Chapter 3 when we consider the “All-Affected” principle of democratic participation.

³ It will be argued by those in favour of Brexit that the reduction in the opportunities available to those children will be compensated by greater opportunities in the future that are yet to be realised, opportunities that would have not existed if it had not been for Brexit. Determining the truth of such counterfactual claims is notoriously difficult, but I think at least the following can be said: the set of opportunities available to the children of the UK pre-Brexit is not only different but partially non-overlapping with the set of opportunities post-Brexit. From a moral perspective, this gives rise to the following criticism. I venture that it will often, but not always, be accepted that there is nothing wrong with enlarging the set of opportunities available to a child such that the set of opportunities available at a later time contains all the opportunities previously available, plus some more, provided that the additional opportunities included are, on average, primarily positive and/or morally permissible. (No one would think that enlarging a set of opportunities to include only additional explicit harms is a good thing. Matters become difficult when the enlarged set of opportunities includes both harms and benefits, and the additional benefits cannot possibly be added without also adding some harms. For example, the greater communicative benefits provided by the internet are undoubtedly an all-things-considered benefit, but it is also undoubtedly the case that the internet makes possible new forms of harm.) In this case, anything the child could have chosen before is still available for them to choose later. However, when the later set of opportunities removes items from the earlier set, we have clear grounds for possible complaints, for the child may now be unable to choose something that they would have preferred. What the

Brexit vote did was change the set of opportunities for future generations in the second manner, which is morally problematic.

⁴ The 12 countries were Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, and the UK.

⁵ How are we to make sense of this paradoxical result? Dennison and Geddes suggest that support for anti-immigration parties increases depending on the salience of immigration as a political issue, which is not the same thing as people's actual attitudes towards immigrants.

⁶ For example, do we have special duties and obligations to family and friends that potentially trump our duties and obligations to others? Or are we required to treat all of our moral obligations to members of the community as equally demanding? Consider the following thought experiment, inspired by the famous example of the drowning-child-in-a-pond, by Singer (1972, pp. 231–32). Suppose it is your child's birthday tomorrow, and you have a spare US\$10 bill that you can include in their birthday card. You know that they will use this money to buy something that will give them a modest amount of transient happiness (i.e., a comic book or some candy). Alternatively, you also can donate the US\$10 to the Red Cross, who will use that money to vaccinate five children against measles, potentially saving their lives (see American Red Cross 2022). Are you morally obligated to donate the money to the Red Cross, potentially saving the lives of five children, or can you give it to your child so that they can buy a modest amount of transient happiness?

⁷ Although few people argue for the most extreme form of political cosmopolitanism, it was defended by Anacharsis Cloots (originally Jean-Baptiste du Val-de-Grâce, baron de Cloots), who was born to Dutch parents and raised in Prussia but moved to Paris after inheriting great wealth from his father. In Paris, Cloots became known as a free-thinker, writing sceptical tracts against religion and arguing that the logic of social contract theory required nothing less than the formation of a single world state. Despite his privileged upbringing, Cloots was a staunch supporter of the French revolution and used his foreign status to his advantage, suggesting that the revolution was not just about the liberation of France, but the liberation of humanity from tyrants everywhere (Kleingeld 2006, p. 56). Cloots' luck ran out, though, when the French revolutionaries turned against cosmopolitanism for political reasons. He was executed by the guillotine in March 1794.

⁸ I shall argue that this is a mistake and that the real problem is not globalisation, or economic cosmopolitanism, per se but, rather, how it has been realised.

⁹ One peculiar aspect of this claim is that it is actually a meme that originated in the US in the 1940s, moving over to the UK shortly thereafter. Barry O'Neill, a professor of political science at the University of California, Los Angeles, wrote a short memo tracing the history of the "Great Cabbage Myth" (O'Neill 1995). According to O'Neill, the myth derives from a directive regulating the price of

cabbage seed that was issued by the US in 1943. The reason for the directive was that a California speculator attempted to make excessive profits during a shortage in the supply of cabbage seed in the US, which was caused by the Nazi occupation of the Netherlands. Although the document was only 2,000 words, it contained a number of examples of phrasing typical of a document drafted by committee. Allegedly, because one supervisor insisted that all key terms had to be defined, a *cabbage seed* was helpfully defined as a “seed used to grow cabbage”. Over time, both the source and subject of the regulation began to drift and the number of words increased by a factor of ten. Why 26,911 words? No one knows why, but the precision suggests evidential backing. Numerous articles have been written attempting to debunk this urban legend, all to no effect (see Gray 2016).

¹⁰ This stands in sharp contrast with the views of those political cosmopolitans, like Cloots, who think that the world would be better off if we rid ourselves of all individual nations, moving towards a single world state.

¹¹ A male oyster releases sperm into the environment that is then collected by female oysters through respiration. Once the eggs have been fertilised, they remain in the female oyster for approximately 10 days until they are released into the environment – millions at a time, depending on the species. The released eggs drift through the water until they attach to a hard surface and then continue to develop.

2. You should have picked different parents

¹ It is important to distinguish being a citizen from one's national identity. Although the two concepts overlap in many cases, some of the most difficult practical and philosophical problems arise when the two become decoupled. For example, in the US, at least hundreds of thousands of children (and potentially millions, see Nakamura 2018) of illegal immigrants (the “Dreamers”) have been raised and educated in the US after being brought into the country at a very young age by their parents. They are, for all intents and purposes, culturally American, despite not having citizenship. They present an anomaly for those who argue that immigration needs to be sharply restricted due to concerns about diluting or changing the national identity by an influx of foreign nationals who, through naturalisation, increase the pool of citizens. In the case of the Dreamers, they already *have* the national identity but lack the citizenship. (And that's before we even consider the question of whether a *national identity* is the sort of thing for which it makes sense to speak of in such a monolithic sense.)

This formal decoupling of citizenship and national identity can occur for a variety of other reasons. Sometimes the decoupling is voluntary, for instance, when foreign nationals move abroad for employment reasons and later choose to apply for naturalisation. But it can also occur involuntarily, for instance,

when a territory with a given national identity is incorporated into the political organisation of another. Consider, for example, the reunification of East and West Germany after the Cold War. During the slightly less than 41 years of East Germany's existence, enough cultural drift had occurred between the two states that reunification created problems regarding the respective identities of each group, which persist to this day (see Bennhold 2019). The decoupling of citizenship and national identity can also result from a combination of both voluntary and involuntary reasons, for instance, when persons flee a region of political conflict and rationally see seek asylum in another state. The millions of Ukrainians who fled after the Russian invasion in February 2022 are an example.

² On the extent of birth tourism in the US, Nori (2016) provides a short overview of the business. Lewin (2015) reported that one company boasted on its website of having helped 8,000 pregnant women gain access to the US.

³ There were three conditions under which birthright citizenship would be denied but they would apply in very rare cases. First, children born to foreign diplomats with diplomatic immunity, as we have seen before in the US context; second, children *born on a ship or aircraft registered to another country*; and third, children born to parents who were *enemies of New Zealand* who had *occupied territory*. This last condition had never obtained in practice.

⁴ Indeed, it is this very aspect of the acquisition of citizenship that led Ayelet Shachar to name her book analysing the global inequality generated by our current citizenship scheme *The Birthright Lottery* (Shachar 2009).

⁵ Even talk of *potential* needs to be treated with caution, for a person does not have a potential *simpliciter* but, rather, has a potential relative to the environment they happen to inhabit. But, even so, we can usefully speak about differences in the potential between persons *A* and *B*. How so? Given some particular realisation of the environment *E*, we can then talk about the differences in capabilities between *A* and *B* in *E*. Identifying this difference can be helpful even if there is some alternative environment *E'*, such that the capability of *A* in *E'* is the same as the capability of *B* in *E*.

⁶ Whether this intuition is ultimately defensible is unclear. In order for innate differences in potential to be unfair, there needs to be a possible world in which the same persons would have different potentials, where that alternate world is viewed as more desirable than the actual world. (If no such possible world exists, it would perhaps be better to describe the differences in potential as *unfortunate*.) Yet whether this makes sense depends on how we understand the identity conditions for persons when we make comparisons across possible worlds. For example, if we accept Leibniz's Law, then *x* and *y* are different if and only if there is at least one property which *x* has that *y* lacks (or vice versa). So, if we imagine comparing a person *x* in the actual world, who has a certain potential, with a person *y* in an alternate world, who has a different

potential, it would seem that x cannot be identical to y because of the difference in potential. (Actually, the problem arises even earlier because if x and y are in different possible worlds and we think of *the-world-an-object-is-in* as a property, then no two objects in different possible worlds can be identical, according to the identity of indiscernibles.) If so, then how can we make sense of the claim that it is unfair for x to have the potential that she has because it would have been better for x to have a different potential? We would then be talking about a different person than x . There are many ways one might try to address this issue, such as by distinguishing between *essential* and *accidental* properties of a person, but all solutions to trans-world identity are philosophically contentious.

⁷ For example, by calling attention to the environmentally relative nature of potential that I've noted before. Thirty years ago it was commonplace to hear people with dyslexia or dyspraxia being described as having a "learning disability". Now, it's much more common to hear talk of *neurodiversity*. Why the shift in language? Because talk of "learning disability" presupposes that there is *one correct way to learn*. If changes in the environment allow people to learn, then what we have is really just variation in learning styles.

3. The room where it happens

¹ However, New Zealand has quite strict rules on who can become a permanent resident. It is first necessary to obtain a visa, and many routes for getting a visa require the applicant to be under 55 and have an offer of employment.

² Even if you are a citizen of a country that is predicted to not be particularly badly affected by climate change, there is still an overall net incentive to prevent climate change over the short- to medium-term due to the global political instability and economic shocks that will result from it. Over the long-term, concerns about intergenerational justice should prompt all those with children to worry about the world that their great-grandchildren will inherit.

³ Although the boundary problem most naturally arises in the context of democratic theory, the problem applies generally to all decision-making entities. It is always possible to ask what legitimates any particular decision-making body. The *paradoxical* nature of the boundary problem, though, is unique to democratic theory. No paradox arises, for example, if we answer the question "who decides?" by saying "the king" where the justification for the monarch is based on the divine right of kings.

⁴ Strictly speaking, the Identity of Indiscernibles states that if A and B have every property in common, then A and B are identical; the version used in the text is the contrapositive of the conditional, which is logically equivalent.

⁵ There is a deep philosophical literature concerning the precise relation holding between properties and predicates. Here I am assuming – as it seems is required by Geach's definition – that any definable predicate in a language picks out some property.

⁶ These are standard examples used to illustrate intrinsic properties, assuming Newtonian physics. Once we assume relativistic physics, even these standard examples become problematic: length contraction means that height is not invariant across all contexts and the observed mass of an object increases with its velocity. Life is complicated.

⁷ It doesn't have to be this particular relational property: any relational property will work. I have selected this particular relational property because it will play a role in the subsequent discussion of possible solutions to this problem.

⁸ At the time I wrote this, the US was undergoing social upheaval from a leaked document regarding the Supreme Court's imminent decision concerning *Roe v. Wade*, which they overturned in 2022. As an illustration of the point under discussion, consider the question of whether abortion should be legal. Who has an "interest actually affected" by this decision? Does a biological male, incapable of having children, who has no children, count? (Children affect the future economic viability of the country and make a difference for the sustainability of pension schemes.) What about a hermit removed from society, who lives alone, has no family, and primarily interacts with society via the internet, passively consuming news? We can readily imagine an "interest" held by both – say a concern in the general functioning of society – but how does this abstract, theoretical interest weigh against the very real and material interest of a female who is capable of getting pregnant?

⁹ The basic problem is that the running of modern society requires too many decisions, which affect too many people, to allow the general application of the All-Affected principle in its broadest form.

¹⁰ One question, which I will not address here, concerns whether the new types of identifiable change have *always existed* or whether they have *recently become possible*. I think, in some instances, it makes sense to say that we are finally able to identify types of change that have always existed but have been beyond the expressive capabilities of our language. In other instances, it will be more accurate to say that new types of change have become possible. Which applies, in a given case, is a deep and difficult question concerning the discursive processes of social constructivism.

4. Go your own way

¹ I include this list because I don't want to take a stand on what the appropriate unit of organisation is for establishing a moral or social norm. Bicchieri (2005, 2017) defines a *social norm* in terms of an individual's *reference network* – the people that person treats as their community who have some influence over their behaviour – as follows: "A social norm is a rule of behavior such that individuals prefer to conform to it on condition that they believe that (a) most people in their reference network conform to it [...] and (b) that most people in their reference network believe they ought to conform to it" (Bicchieri 2017, p. 35). A social norm can be thought of as a person *P*'s *conditional preference*

to behave in a certain way, given that enough other people of their reference network behave similarly, and expect P to conform.

The relationship between moral norms and social norms is complex. Bicchieri thinks that moral norms go beyond the conditional preferences which characterise social norms. In particular, Bicchieri (2017, p. 33) states: “Our commitment to these moral norms is independent of what we expect others to believe, do, or approve/disapprove of. Social norms instead are always (socially) *conditional*, in the sense that our preference for obeying them depends upon our expectations of collective compliance.” But moral norms *do* shift over time: they co-evolve with values of the moral community in which one is embedded under the influence of key “thought leaders”. Perhaps the greatest sleight-of-hand performed by moral education is that people are *socialised* under the influence of their *reference network* to acquire a *commitment* to something which they take to be “independent of what we expect others to believe, do, or approve/disapprove of”. An illustration of how moral norms can shift over time under the influence of other shifts in social norms is revealed by a recent discussion of the history of the pro-life movement in the US by the *Washington Post* (Frank and Young 2022).

² Taking *utility* to be individual well-being determined by an objective set of criteria has the virtue of ensuring a common conception of the good across all persons. If utility is understood as individual preference satisfaction, as is common in economics and other social sciences, there is always the chance that two people may have maximally incompatible preferences: that the good for one person counts as the bad of another. (Think of the difficulty in trying to satisfy the preferences of a mixed population evenly split between sociopaths and saints.) However, even under an objectivist conception of individual well-being, conflict can still arise; Nozick’s marriage problem, again, providing a salient example. The point is that an objectivist conception of individual well-being is anticipated to have fewer conflicts requiring resolution.

³ Although there are a number of points of overlap in the moral beliefs held by different communities (e.g., obey your parents, respect your elders, always tell the truth), there are also stark disagreements. I am not assuming that moral pluralism is in fact the case but, rather, noting that the distribution of moral beliefs throughout the world is consistent with moral pluralism. Given that, it seems desirable, if we are aiming at a descriptively accurate theory, to take as a working assumption the possibility of moral pluralism.

⁴ Note that this thought experiment does not solely consist of the act of taking a job with Exxon, allocating one’s time there instead of, say, being an Extinction Rebellion protester. There are many ways to construct coherent reasons that make sense of a climate change protester taking a job with Exxon: to act as a consultant with the aim of helping shift the company’s business model away from fossil fuels, or, more sinisterly, to act as a saboteur. Rather, this thought experiment asks us to consider a climate change activist who simply chooses

to walk away from that aspect of their life without giving another moment's thought to it, taking a job with Exxon and throwing themselves completely behind the project of extracting and selling fossil fuels. And, again, the point of this thought experiment is not to suggest it is difficult to construct reasons that rationalise such a choice, for that, too, would be easy. We can readily imagine a climate change protester who is fed up with living a hand-to-mouth existence and needs money to support and raise their family. The point is that we would not describe someone who would simply drop a decade's worth of climate change activism for a high salary as someone who had actually been *committed* to climate change activism, for presumably there are other means to obtain a high salary that would not involve selling fossil fuels.

⁵ To stress: by "price" Sartre means the psychological cost of making adjustments. He is not concerned with economics.

⁶ There are interesting differences in how Merleau-Ponty and Beauvoir conceive of sedimentation. For Merleau-Ponty, the concept is *epistemic*; for Beauvoir, the concept is *motivational*. We can find the epistemic sense of sedimentation in the following examples:

When I move about my house, I know without thinking about it that walking towards the bathroom means passing near the bedroom, that looking at the window means having the fireplace on my left [...] When I chat with a friend whom I know well, each of his remarks and each of mine contains, in addition to the meaning it carries for everybody else, a host of references to the main dimensions of his character and mine, without our needing to recall previous conversations with each other [...] there is a 'world of thoughts', or a sediment left by our mental processes, which enables us to rely on our concepts and acquired judgements as we might on things there in front of us, presented globally, without there being any need for us to resynthesize them. (Merleau-Ponty 1958, pp. 149–50)

Here, sedimentation serves as an epistemic shortcut: as I move about the house, I do not need to re-infer from my knowledge of the floor plan how my current position changes my relative position to other rooms in the house. My friend's comments immediately signify, to me, meaning which is beyond that available to other participants in the conversation, without my having to make explicit inferences. That said, there are places in *Phenomenology of Perception* where Merleau-Ponty hints at a broader use of the concept (*italics in the original*):

If it were possible to lay bare and unfold all the presuppositions in what I call my reason or my ideas at each moment, we should

always find experiences which have not been made explicit, large-scale contributions from past and present, a whole 'sedimentary history' which is not only relevant to the *genesis* of my thought, but which determines its *significance*. (Merleau-Ponty 1958, p. 459)

Here, Merleau-Ponty states that sedimentation *determines*, for me, the current significance of my ideas. This evaluative use of the term is closely connected to Beauvoir's motivational understanding; however, the motivational interpretation is less developed in Merleau-Ponty's work.

⁷ By "weight" I do not mean our degree of belief but, rather, how responsive that belief is to contrary evidence. If believe that some proposition *p* is likely but I then encounter evidence to the contrary, how likely I think *p* is can shift a lot or a little.

⁸ Two recent books that provide detailed first-person accounts of the efforts required to overcome sedimented values and beliefs are *Educated: A Memoir*, by Tara Westover, and *Unfollow: A Journey from Hatred to Hope*, by Megan Phelps-Roper. Both books detail how people born into closed communities eventually rejected values and beliefs that were originally deeply held. And both books show how undoing sedimentation involves critique originating from within the individual as well as contingent exogenous shocks, which provided an initial destabilisation, either epistemic or evaluative.

⁹ Popper was aware of the challenges of striking the right balance. He wrote:

I do not imply, for instance, that we should always suppress the utterance of intolerant philosophies; as long as we can counter them by rational argument and keep them in check by public opinion, suppression would certainly be most unwise. But we should claim the *right* even to suppress them, for it may easily turn out that they are not prepared to meet us on the level of rational argument, but begin by denouncing all argument; they may forbid their followers to listen to anything as deceptive as rational argument, and teach them to answer arguments by the use of their fists.

(Popper 1945, p. 226)

We shall investigate some of the challenges raised by the phenomenon of *epistemic closure*, where a group is not willing to engage in rational argument, in Parts III and IV.

¹⁰ This is one benefit of informational transparency at the level of institutions or organisations, a topic which we will turn to in Part II.

5. It's the economy, stupid

¹ Value obtained using WolframAlpha.

² It must be acknowledged that difficulties exist in identifying the precise conditions when robustness analysis works and when it can be used as a reliable inferential guide. Frigg (2023) provides an excellent summary of the philosophical debate up to the present day.

³ This technique is named after the Nobel laureate physicist Enrico Fermi, who was well-known for being able to quickly generate approximate solutions to difficult problems, often based on little known information and accurate to an order of magnitude. Fermi's technique relies on being able to make reasonable estimates of the necessary variables, taking into account their variance and likely upper and lower bounds. Perhaps the most famous example of Fermi's skill took place during the Trinity nuclear test on 16 July 1945. Fermi, who worked on the Manhattan Project and was one of the observers of the Trinity detonation, slowly dropped six pieces of paper as the blast wave was passing. Since there was no wind at the time, this allowed Fermi to measure the displacement of the pieces of paper by the blast wave. Since the displacement was about 2.5m, Fermi calculated that the Trinity explosion was equivalent to approximately 10,000t of TNT (Fermi 1945). Estimates of the actual yield of the Trinity explosion have varied over the years. Most recently, Selby *et al.* (2021) determined that the yield was 24.8 ± 2 kt of TNT, which is considerably higher than the first official estimate of 21kt. The important point is that the Selby *et al.* result, based on a detailed radiochemical analysis of trinitite from the blast site, shows that Fermi's estimate was accurate to within a factor of three.

⁴ A recent example of brain drain in action occurred after the Russian' invasion of Ukraine in 2022. A number of news organisations reported that many young workers with highly sought-after and transferable skills (i.e., IT specialists, journalists, researchers, and analysts) were leaving Russia and taking jobs elsewhere, since they no longer felt safe in the increasingly authoritarian political climate. *Al Jazeera* reported (Vorobyov 2022) that more than *four million* workers left during the first three months of 2022 and *The Japan Times* reported (Bedwell and Champion 2022) that 80,000 Russians had moved to Georgia (the country, not the US state).

⁵ For example, economist Paul Krugman credits the lump of labour fallacy as underlying the French government's 1999 decision to try to create more jobs by reducing the length of the working week. He also identifies the fallacy as being used by apologists of the George W. Bush government's failure to deliver decent job growth in its recovery from the early 2000s recession (see Krugman 2003). The apologists blamed the poor growth in jobs on structural factors in the US economy rather than on the inability of tax cuts for the rich to deliver job growth via trickle-down economics.

⁶ In 1950, only 29.6% of the US workforce was women, numbering slightly more than 18 million. In 2000, that figure had increased to 46.6%, numbering over 65 million women (see Toossi 2002).

⁷ But, as noted in our discussion regarding robustness analysis, the important point here is that the two studies are generally in agreement with both the *direction* of effect and its *magnitude*.

⁸ The EEA consists of the EU countries, plus Iceland, Liechtenstein, and Norway. Membership in the EEA allows these three countries to participate in the single market even though they don't have the full benefit of being an EU member state. Switzerland is neither a member of the EU nor the EEA but has access to the single market.

⁹ For US readers: national insurance contributions are a bit like social security payments except that they are used to fund the National Health Service in addition to providing for a small state pension when one retires.

¹⁰ I am excluding cost of housing from this quick example because it could be argued that spending on housing crowds out possible spending activity by native workers. If the immigrant wasn't renting a flat, another native worker forced to live at home with their parents would have rented that flat instead. Concentrating on food and such explicit consumables circumvents this problem: the amount of money spent by the immigrant on food isn't crowding out possible spending on food by a native worker.

¹¹ Harry Truman once asked to be sent a one-armed economist because he was fed up with his advisers always hedging their advice by saying, "On the one hand, this" and "on the other hand, that" (Buttonwood 2010).

¹² Borjas (2015) presented the first formal model of the NEC, drawing upon ideas suggested by Collier (2013). In a later work, Clemens and Pritchett (2019) developed their own formal model, attempting to improve on the work of Borjas. However, it should be noted that Clemens and Pritchett do not actually endorse the NEC.

¹³ This effect is measured using the 2013 version of the *Economic Freedom of the World Annual Report*. The Economic Freedom of the World (EFW) index is constructed from 43 variables across the following 5 areas: size of government, legal system and property rights, sound money, freedom to trade internationally, and regulation (Gwartney *et al.* 2013). Data on immigration was taken from the United Nation's *International Migrant Stock by Destination and Origin* data series.

¹⁴ Nowrasteh and Powell (2021, p. 100) state that they measure corruption using the inversed Control of Corruption indicator from the Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI) project by the World Bank. The WGI index is constructed from 30 data sources, which track 6 indicators of governance: voice

and accountability, political stability and absence of violence/terrorism, government effectiveness, regulatory quality, rule of law, and control of corruption. Data on migration is from the years 1995 to 2015 and looks at immigrants as a percentage of the population.

¹⁵ The risk of terrorism is measured using the annual terrorism murder rate, which gives the chance of being killed in a terrorist attack as a proportion of the population (i.e., 1 in N , for some N). Only deaths were used as an indicator on the grounds that it was clearly comparable across countries. Data on the number of people killed in terrorist attacks was taken from two sources: for all countries *other* than the US, the Global Terrorism Database from the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism at the University of Maryland, College Park; for the US, a more fine-grained data was used, constructed by Nowrasteh (2019).

¹⁶ There is a large trust-growth literature in economics, leading to a great availability of data. As Nowrasteh and Powell (2021, p. 162) note, “surveys like the World Values Survey, EuroBarometer, the American General Social Survey, the Latinobarómetro, and others have all asked similar questions about trust for decades in many different countries.”

6. Nowhere, man

¹ Lest people think I am being disrespectful towards Spike Lee, this is how the speech was described by many papers. See, for example the headlines from the Guardian (Michael and Bramley 2014), CNN (Sanchez and Almasry 2014), and the Huffington Post (Oh 2014).

² Coscarelli (2014) includes the full text in his brief report.

³ By way of contrast, a non-citizen isn't even allowed to visit the UK *as a tourist* unless they can prove that they will be returning to their country and that they have enough money for their trip.

⁴ Greenland still retains some connection to the EU as one of 13 Overseas Countries and Territories of the EU.

⁵ Indeed, before the UK voted to leave the EU, it was frequently joked that it was easier to find a Polish plumber in the UK than in Poland because so many had moved to work in the UK.

⁶ This phenomenon was also covered in Malcolm Gladwell's *Revisionist History* podcast, in the episode “General Chapman's Last Stand” (Season 3, episode 5).

⁷ Recall that the workers were needed and were only classified as illegal because the arbitrarily strict quotas made it difficult for them to obtain a work permit.

⁸ You might wonder about killing people during war or capital punishment. The standard way to handle these cases is to introduce a conceptual distinction so that these acts, although instances of *killing*, do not count as *murder*. I won't broach the question of whether or not that response is ultimately defensible.

⁹ It's important to realise that communities may place limits on the possibility of immigrants making this transition, at least with respect to some aspects of the community. Consider a thought experiment inspired by Spike Lee's remarks on gentrification: suppose a white family moved into a predominantly Black neighbourhood. After period of time of sincere community engagement, done in good faith and with a real desire to fit, it's reasonable to think that they would be able to broach the topic of playing music at certain times of the day. However, it's also reasonable to think that there would be certain aspects of the community on which, because they are not Black, the new residents would not be able to shape the conversation.

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