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978-0-521-76187-1 - Cosmopolitan Regard: Political Membership and Global Justice

Richard Vernon

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Cosmopolitan Regard

Cosmopolitan theory suggests that we should shift our moral attention from the local to the global. Richard Vernon argues, however, that if we adopt cosmopolitan beliefs about justice we must re-examine our beliefs about political obligation. Far from undermining the demands of citizenship, cosmopolitanism implies more demanding political obligations than theories of the state have traditionally recognized. Using examples including humanitarian intervention, international criminal law, and international political economy, Vernon suggests we have a responsibility not to enhance risks facing other societies and to assist them when their own risk-taking has failed. The central arguments in *Cosmopolitan Regard* are that what we owe to other societies rests on the same basis as what we owe to our own, and that a theory of cosmopolitanism must connect the responsibilities of citizens beyond their own borders with their obligations to one another.

RICHARD VERNON is Distinguished University Professor in the Department of Political Science at the University of Western Ontario.

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As the twenty-first century begins, major new political challenges have arisen at the same time as some of the most enduring dilemmas of political association remain unresolved. The collapse of communism and the end of the Cold War reflect a victory for democratic and liberal values, yet in many of the Western countries that nurtured those values there are severe problems of urban decay, class and racial conflict, and failing political legitimacy. Enduring global injustice and inequality seem compounded by environmental problems, disease, the oppression of women, racial, ethnic and religious minorities, and the relentless growth of the world's population. In such circumstances, the need for creative thinking about the fundamentals of human political association is manifest. This new series in contemporary political theory is needed to foster such systematic normative reflection.

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CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore,
São Paulo, Delhi, Dubai, Tokyo

Cambridge University Press
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 8RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press,
New York

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521744379

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First published 2010

Printed in the United Kingdom at the University Press, Cambridge

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data

Vernon, Richard, 1945–

Cosmopolitan regard : political membership and global justice /
Richard Vernon.

p. cm. – (Contemporary political theory)

ISBN 978-0-521-76187-1 (hardback) – ISBN 978-0-521-74437-9 (pbk.)

1. Cosmopolitanism. 2. Political obligation. I. Title. II. Series.

JZ1308.V47 2010

306.2–dc22

2009053754

ISBN 978-0-521-76187-1 Hardback

ISBN 978-0-521-74437-9 Paperback

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Acknowledgments

This book has two origins. One is in a course on “Global Justice” that I introduced and taught in the Department of Political Science, University of Western Ontario, and I am grateful to many students for the critical discussions that have led me to develop my approach, as well as to graduate students who have worked with me on related thesis projects.

The second origin lies in the remarkable work of other scholars who, in barely three decades, have turned a persistently neglected area of inquiry into such a flourishing field. Many of them are mentioned in my footnotes, and I hope it goes without saying that my appreciation of their work is no less when I happen to disagree with their conclusions. I will single out my colleague and friend Charles Jones, whose clarity of thought and expression I cannot hope to match, and whose encouragement I have greatly valued.

Earlier drafts of chapters in this book have benefited from criticism by Gillian Brock, Joseph Carens, Charles Jones, Steven Lecce, David Luban, Daniel Weinstock, and Christopher Wellman, as well as by members of the Moral, Political and Legal Philosophy Research Group at Western Ontario. John Horton, one of Cambridge University Press’s readers, offered not only welcome and generous encouragement but also many acute criticisms and helpful remarks, some (but not all) of which are acknowledged in footnotes below. If I were half as good a scholar as any of those named above, this would be a better book.

Research for this book was supported by a Standard Research Grant from the Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada, 2006–9. Rhiana Chinapen provided able assistance in preparing the manuscript.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS ix

I have drawn upon previously published material. Chapter 1 is a revised version of "Obligation by Association?" *Political Studies* 55 (2007): 865–78; chapters 2 and 3 draw material selectively from two articles, "Compatriot Preference: Is There a Case?" *Politics and Ethics Review* 2 (2006): 1–18, and "States of Risk," *Ethics and International Affairs* 21 (2007): 451–69; chapter 4 is a revised version of "Contractualism and Global Justice: The Iteration Proviso," *Canadian Journal of Law and Jurisprudence* 19 (2006): 345–56; chapter 5 is a revised version of "Humanitarian Intervention and the Internal Legitimacy Problem," *Journal of Global Ethics* 4 (2008), 37–49; chapter 6 borrows in part from "What is Crime Against Humanity?" *Journal of Political Philosophy* 10 (2002), 231–49; chapter 7 is a revised version of "A Global Harm Principle?" *Critical Review of Social and Political Philosophy* 12 (2009): 1–18. I am grateful to the editors and publishers of these journals for permission to draw from these articles here.