



ON THE STATE'S DUTY TO CREATE A JUST WORLD ORDER

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ABSTRACT

What is the significance of asserting that certain agents, be they individual or collective ones, have a duty to create just institutions at a global level? It might appear none. For many agree that there is no global authority to coordinate compliance with the duty. Hence, it is up to individual agents to decide how to comply. If this is the correct account of the duty to create just institutions, then one can say that significant global justice projects depend on insignificant duty to realize them. The state's duty is indeterminate, however, only on the supposition that authoritative institutions are necessary to secure coordination among different agents. The dissertation challenges this fundamental assumption in two steps.

First, I investigate the practical relevance of conventions for solving coordination problems. By building on the works of Hume and Lewis, I show how individuals in the state of nature could have coordinated their actions by conventions up until a point when a government could have emerged. I argue that similar considerations apply to relations among states. I identify relevant similarities between conventions creating a government and international customary law. Moreover, I argue that international customary law is a global governing convention since it prescribes how rules that bind all states are to be made.

The second step in my argument concerns the normative assessment of conventions. I argue that conventions are essential for demands of justice as long as they enable compliance with the demands. Not all conventions, however, do so. I put forward the principle of salience to identify those practices that play such a role. The salient practices determine the state's duty to create a just world order. *Ceteris paribus*, the duty is not indeterminate after all. Consequently,

current coordination problems that arise among states should not be seen as a normal consequence of states' rational and self-interested behavior in the absence of a global authority; instead, the coordination problems amount to the violation of the duty to create a just world order.

The major implication of the argument is that we should replace the Hobbesian framework for thinking about the nature of states as well as how they relate to one another by the Humean one. Thus, instead of insisting on states' consent and necessity of a centralized authority to coordinate actions, we should pay more attention to the habitual behavior of states as well as the role conventions play in solving coordination problems among them. Importantly, the relevance of conventions to compliance with moral demands does not make authoritative institutions obsolete. The argument of this dissertation is modest – it only asserts that conventions can coordinate actions in the process of transitioning toward more centralized forms of global authority. As opposed to the pessimistic outlook of the Hobbesian framework, the Humean one makes room for hope that the change of the present unjust conditions is possible.

Keywords: global justice, a duty to create just institutions, states as moral agents, norm indeterminacy, perfect and imperfect duties, conventions, international customary law, a governing convention, global authority, unipolarity