

Wage competition and the special-obligations challenge to more open borders

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Abstract

According to the special-obligations challenge to the justice argument for more open borders, immigration restrictions to wealthier polities are justified because of special obligations owed to disadvantaged compatriots negatively impacted by the immigration of low-skilled foreign workers. We refute the special-obligations challenge by refuting its empirical premise and draw out the normative implications of the empirical evidence for border policies. We show that immigration to wealthier polities has negligible impact on domestic wages and that only previous cohorts of immigrants are adversely affected. The special-obligations challenge therefore succeeds only if special obligations owed to previous immigrants justify closing borders to further immigration; we argue that they do not.

Keywords

immigration, open borders, wage competition, special obligations

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The *justice argument* for more open borders presents one of the most powerful challenges to the prevailing view that states are permitted to close their borders to foreigners as they see fit. The justice argument proceeds on the basis of two empirical facts—the fact of severe poverty and inequality at the global level and that migrating to wealthier polities often represents one of the best opportunities for individuals to alleviate their poverty and improve their relative material standing. Proponents of the argument conclude that justice requires that wealthy polities keep their borders relatively open to the foreign poor.¹

An important response to this argument is the *special-obligations challenge* whose proponents claim that justice to the contrary permits, and may even require, wealthy polities to restrict immigration by low-skilled, poor workers. The special-obligations challenge derives this conclusion from a set of normative premises and an empirical premise. The normative premises are that the citizens of a single polity have special obligations of justice to show special concern for their own most disadvantaged compatriots; at least some of these special obligations are derivatively borne, and must be discharged, by the political institutions of the state that represents and acts in the name of its citizens; and these special obligations are such that if immigration would harm the domestic poor within a wealthy polity, then citizens and their state would be justified in restricting immigration, even to the detriment of the global poor who are (often significantly) worse off than the polity's own domestic poor. The empirical premise is that immigration by low-skilled foreign workers does indeed harm wealthy polities' domestic poor.

Our purpose here is to refute the special-obligations challenge by calling into question its empirical premise – the claim that immigration by poor, low-skilled foreigners harms the domestic poor in wealthy polities – and to draw out the normative implications of the available empirical evidence for the border policies of wealthy liberal democracies.² We therefore begin our analysis by initially taking for granted the normative premises of the challenge. Focusing on wages, we show that immigration by low-skilled foreigners has negligible impact on the wages of the domestic poor in wealthy polities: the only negative impact of note is on the wages of previous cohorts of low-skilled immigrants. The special-obligations challenge therefore succeeds only if wealthy polities have a special obligation to protect previous cohorts of immigrants from wage competition by future immigrants. We conclude that there is no all-things-considered justification, grounded in the special-obligations challenge, for closing borders.

The normative background

Citizens of liberal democracies often understand their polities to be fundamentally different from others, thanks in part to a commitment to an ideal of the equality of persons. The justice argument for more open borders is particularly powerful because, on the one hand, it seems to follow directly from this core liberal democratic moral commitment, while, on other hand, it challenges a right taken for granted and claimed as fundamental by all contemporary polities, namely, to exclude almost any foreigner from their territory if they so choose.³

An obvious thought is that if all persons are equal, then justice requires treating each person *as* an equal – not the same or equally, since different persons have different needs,

interests, and capacities, but with equal concern and respect.⁴ The question then is what moral constraints the state must respect if it is to subject persons to coercion and yet still respect their equality and treat them as equals. We take it that, at the very least, the state must respect two minimal, negative constraints on its exercise of coercive political power. First, it may not exercise its coercive power over persons in a way that functions to prevent some of them from pursuing opportunities adequate to meet their basic material needs. Second, it may not exercise its coercive power in a way that functions to protect and entrench the structural sources of significant material inequality. Treating persons as an equal while coercively exercising political power over them requires not using that power structurally to entrench their material poverty or inequality beyond certain levels.

The justice argument can consequently appeal to two facts. First, the state's regime of border control subjects persons to the coercive exercise of its political power, in the sense that the state issues standing threats of violently backed sanctions against those who fail to comply with its border laws and uses its military and police apparatuses both to invigilate persons' behavior to ensure compliance and physically to force compliance with those laws.⁵ Second, migration to wealthier polities is often one of the best opportunities for individuals from globally poor regions to alleviate their poverty and improve their relative material standing.⁶ It then seems to follow that the ideal of equality of treatment imposes a *pro tanto* moral duty on wealthy polities, requiring them to refrain from using their coercive state apparatus to keep the foreign poor out of their territory.⁷

The particular interest of the special-obligations challenge to the justice argument for more open borders is that its proponents *accept* the ideal of equality of treatment. They seek to reconcile that ideal with the polity's putative right to exclude foreigners via the insight that equality of treatment requires equal *respect* but not equal *concern*. Sometimes certain relationships may ground special obligations without compromising the equality of treatment – even if these special obligations, owed only to one's special relations, were to take priority over some of the general duties owed to all persons.⁸ Stephen Macedo (2007) has accordingly advanced the special-obligations challenge by, first, arguing that citizens of wealthier polities do indeed have special obligations to show special concern for their own most disadvantaged compatriots (to alleviate their material poverty and/or inequality) and by, second, drawing on the work of the economist George Borjas to conclude that, as a matter of empirical fact, immigration to the United States has harmed the country's poorest citizens (see also Isbister, 2000; Swain, 2009; Woodward, 1992). Whatever *pro tanto* duties of justice that wealthy polities have to keep their borders open are therefore overcome, on this view, by the special obligations that a polity has to protect its domestic poor from immigration.

The empirical evidence

We here focus on the most important mechanism to which Macedo appeals to defend the empirical premise of the special-obligations challenge. Macedo claims that the immigration of low-skilled workers has driven down the wages of the domestic poor through wage competition at the lowest rungs of the economy.⁹ According to the *wage competition mechanism*, an increase in low-skilled immigration increases the domestic supply of low-skilled workers and, if the demand for such workers remains constant, then wages

for native-born, low-skilled workers will decrease. (Workers are classified as skilled or unskilled according to their level of educational attainment; unskilled workers are those with a high school education or less.) Using US federal-level data and assuming an integrated countrywide labor market, George Borjas and his colleague Lawrence Katz examine the impact of an increase in the number of low-skilled immigrants on the wages of low-skilled natives and conclude that increased immigration reduced real wages paid to native-born, low-skilled workers by 4–5 percent between 1980 and 2000 (Borjas, 2003; Borjas and Katz, 2007). Thus, Borjas's work appears to bear out the empirical validity of the wage competition mechanism.

Borjas's approach and findings, however, suffer from two significant shortcomings. First, a number of studies have raised concerns about the assumption of an integrated countrywide labor market. Borjas's approach does not take into account the fact that the rate of immigration flows into a particular region responds to regionally specific factors, such as the presence of ethnic enclaves, which affect labor supply in the region independently of wages. Since wages are a function of both supply and demand factors, failing to take into account such exogenous, regionally specific labor supply factors can bias the estimated impact of immigration flows on wages.¹⁰ In addition, there is little evidence that native-born workers move out of areas where immigrants choose to locate, which would be required for the assumption of an integrated countrywide labor market to hold (since an integrated labor market assumes labor mobility across the market).¹¹ Studies using city- or state-level data that examine the impact of immigration on wages in specific labor markets within the United States, which address these shortcomings in the countrywide approach, find little to no negative effects on the wages of less-educated native-born workers (Card, 2001, 2007; Card and Lewis, 2007; Lewis, 2011).

Second, the wage competition mechanism and Borjas's work assume that native- and foreign-born workers of comparable educational attainment are perfect substitutes in production (i.e. that they have identical skills and therefore specialize in the same types of occupation). Gianmarco Ottaviano and Giovanni Peri (2012) argue, however, that differences in the degree of substitution between native and immigrant workers within each education group may result in differences in the effect of immigration on the wages of native-born and immigrant (foreign-born) workers. While an immigration-induced increase in the supply of low-skilled workers would reduce the wages for low-skilled workers in general, if native and immigrant unskilled workers are not perfectly substitutable, that is, if native and immigrant workers of comparable educational attainment differ in their skills and specialize in different occupations, then the wage loss to native workers from immigration would be lower than the loss to previous immigrants. Furthermore, Ottaviano and Peri argue that the approach employed by Borjas provides only the 'direct partial effect' of immigration on the wages of native workers, since it does not consider the effects of substitutability across education and experience groups. Taking such effects into account would provide the 'total wage effect', which would provide for a better measure of the impact of immigration on native workers' wages.

Ottaviano and Peri use US federal-level data to estimate the elasticity of substitution between native and immigrant workers and conclude that the two groups are in fact imperfect substitutes in production. They use their estimates of the elasticities of substitution between natives and immigrants and between education and experience groups to

Table 1. Wage effects of immigrants, 1990–2006.

	Borjas approach	Ottaviano–Peri approach
US-born workers		
Less than high school	–3.1%	0.6%
High school graduates	0.7%	0.3%
Some university	1.6%	1.3%
University graduates	–1.1%	0.3%
Average US born	0%	0.6%
Foreign-born workers		
Less than high school	–3.1%	–4.8%
High school graduates	0.7%	–7.1%
Some university	1.6%	–3.6%
University graduates	–1.1%	–8.2%
Average foreign born	0%	–6.4%
Overall average	0%	0%

Source: Adapted from Table 6 in Ottaviano and Peri (2012). The wage effects are for total immigration for the 1990–2006 period. During this period, the increase in hours worked due to new immigrants was 23.6% for the 'less than high school' group, 10% for the 'high school graduates' group, 6% for the 'some university' group, and 14.6% for the 'university graduates' group (Table 1, Ottaviano and Peri, 2012).

simulate the total wage effect of immigration. Table 1 provides a comparison of the results of the impact for the 1990–2006 period based on the Borjas approach and on the Ottaviano–Peri approach. The table highlights the importance of differentiating between native (US-born) and immigrant (foreign-born) workers. While the impact of immigration on native workers is negligible, immigrant workers experience large declines in their wages due to further immigration. In other words, Ottaviano and Peri argue that increased immigration resulted in a *significant wage reduction only for previous cohorts of immigrants*.

Using administrative data for the 1987–2001 period for western Germany to evaluate the labor market effects of immigration, Francesco D'Amuri et al. (2010) come to a similar conclusion. They fail to find any adverse effect from the substantial immigration of the 1990s on the wages and employment of natives. Again, similar to the conclusions using the US data, they find that increased immigration had adverse employment effects on previous immigrants, with a small decrease in their wages.

In an effort to reconcile the differences in the results stemming from city- or state-level and federal-level studies, a more recent study by Peri (2011) takes a different approach and examines the employment effect of immigrants using data for California, a state with a very high rate of immigration. He finds that 'the estimates of the wage and employment effect of immigrants on natives in an education-experience group are never significantly negative' (2011: 12). Further, based on his estimates he concludes that there is evidence that low-skilled immigrants and natives are not perfect substitutes.

Another study by Peri and Chad Sparber (2009) argues that low-skilled immigrants and natives could be imperfect substitutes if they specialize in performing different tasks.

Using data for US states for the 1960–2000 period, they find that ‘foreign-born workers specialize in occupations intensive in manual-physical labor skills while natives pursue jobs more intensive in communication-language tasks’ (2009: 135). Based on this finding they argue that the increased immigration of low-skilled workers leads to higher specialization in native low-skilled workers, which reduces the impact of immigration on their wages. Similar conclusions are obtained by Libertad González and Francesc Ortega (2011) using data between 2001 and 2006 for Spain.

These findings are confirmed by a couple of recent reviews of studies on the impact of immigration on low-skilled wages. Sari and William Kerr (2011: 14–15) conclude in their review that the ‘large majority of studies suggest that immigration does not exert significant effects on native labor market outcomes’.¹² The review of the empirical literature by Noel Gaston and Douglas Nelson (2013: 103) similarly finds that ‘all four approaches – regional-versus skill-based observations by structural versus reduced form methods – to estimating or calculating the effect of immigrants on native labour market performance come to the same conclusion: at worst, immigration has small negative effects on native wages and employment prospects, with the largest negative effects falling on previous waves of immigrants with the same labour market traits’.

Based on the findings of these empirical studies, we draw the following conclusions of relevance to the special-obligations challenge to more open borders: first, the effect of immigration on the wages of native unskilled workers in wealthy countries has been negligible; second, the negative effects of unskilled immigration on wages are observed only in the case of foreign-born (immigrant) workers.

Normative implications

In light of this empirical evidence, the special-obligations challenge – even assuming that its normative premises are sound – can justify immigration restrictions by wealthier polities only on the basis of special obligations owed to *previous cohorts of immigrants* to protect them from the potentially negative impact of continued immigration on their wages. This is not the basis on which anti-immigration political forces typically make their case, but in light of the empirical evidence, it appears to be the only viable basis for the special-obligations challenge.

It might be argued, for example, that previous immigrants are now members of the society (as long-term residents) or of the polity (as naturalized, formally recognized citizens) who participate in, and contribute to, a common economic, social, civic, and/or political enterprise and, as such, are owed the same special obligations that their fellow citizens and/or coresidents owe to native-born members. It might also be argued that there are special obligations of concern that the citizens and/or residents of a polity owe specifically to previous immigrants, precisely because the polity has already welcomed them: by welcoming previous immigrants, and possibly investing resources in their integration, the polity has caused them to rely on a series of legitimate expectations about their future treatment, expectations on the basis of which they have foregone other opportunities and incurred significant (financial, social, and psychological) costs associated with migration and settlement.

There are two types of problems with such justifications for closing borders to future immigrants. The first arises even if we assume that a wealthy polity bears special obligations of concern for previous immigrants that would, all other things equal, serve to cancel or override the polity's existing *pro tanto* duty to keep its borders relatively open. The general problem is that previous immigrants may themselves bear special obligations that would serve to restore, or tip the balance of reasons in favor of, the general obligation to keep borders open (against the force of the special obligations owed, by hypothesis, to previous immigrants). In particular, previous immigrants may be obligated to other members of their adopted polity and/or to future potential immigrants in a way that permits or even requires their adopted polity to fulfill its general duty to keep its borders relatively open to immigration.

Insofar as landed immigrants have voluntarily accepted the benefits of a state's regime of relatively open borders (open enough to allow their own migration), they may owe a duty of fairness to their new polity to accept reasonable costs (e.g. of added labor competition) in order to keep those borders similarly open in the future. According to a standard account of the duty of fairness (or 'fair play' or 'reciprocity'), someone who voluntarily accepts the benefits of a scheme of social cooperation is obligated to 'do his part' to support that scheme, where voluntarily to accept a benefit is either to 'have tried to get (and succeeded in getting) the benefit', or to 'have taken the benefit willingly and knowingly' (Simmons, 1979: 129). Immigrants to wealthy polities clearly accept benefits in the first way: they try and succeed in getting the benefits associated with immigration. A regime of relatively open borders can be modeled as a scheme of social cooperation among the (both old and new) members of a wealthy polity on the basis of two empirical assumptions: first, that immigration is of some overall economic benefit to wealthy polities and, second, that even immigrants who end up relatively poor by domestic standards nevertheless improve their absolute economic standing. Under the scheme in question, then, current members accept an overall benefit, namely newcomers' contribution to societal wealth creation, and a potential burden, from added competitors in domestic markets (e.g. labor markets), while new members accept a benefit, namely entry into the wealthy polity, and a potential burden, from competition with future immigrants. Thus, even if the state bears, in the name of the members whose political representative or agent it is, a *pro tanto* special obligation to poor previous immigrants, those obligations may be overridden by the duty that the state also bears, in the name of precisely *those immigrants* whose representative it has become, to allow for continuing open borders. The argument is by no means decisive, of course: although its second empirical assumption is solidly backed by the evidence, the evidence favoring the first assumption is mixed and is weakest in the case of immigration by low-skilled workers.¹³

The case for special obligations directed toward future would-be immigrants is more decisive. Already-landed immigrants often have special relationships to many future would-be immigrants, relationships that may require them not to prevent the latter from enjoying opportunities similar to those of which they themselves have already taken advantage. Evidence for the fact that migrants take themselves to have rather deep and intense special relationships to individuals left behind is provided by the frequency and sheer volume of remittances: household surveys suggest that about half of interstate

migrants remit (Adams, 2011), and the World Bank (2013) estimates that officially recorded remittances to developing countries in 2012 totaled \$401 billion. A large portion of remittances goes to immediate and extended family members left behind, and if there are any special relationships that ground special obligations – as the special-obligations challenge assumes – then those owed to family members are surely among them. The remittance data provide not only evidence that these are special relationships of the kind that would ground special obligations but also evidence for some of the obligations' content, namely, to help alleviate the poverty of extended family members.¹⁴ If immigrants have a positive obligation to alleviate extended family members' poverty, moreover, then it is reasonable to suppose that they also have a negative obligation not to *prevent* extended family members from acting to alleviate their poverty themselves. Insofar as migration to a wealthier polity is an opportunity to alleviate poverty, migrants would therefore have a special obligation not to close borders to members of their own extended family (and so have a reason to support family reunification policies). (This special obligation would of course reinforce the general duty not to use coercive political power to entrench poverty and inequality.) It follows that the state who represents those impoverished landed immigrants would have a duty not to close its borders, in those immigrants' name, to their extended family members.

More broadly, if membership in one's *current* society grounds special obligations, as the special-obligations challenge supposes, then membership in one's *previous* society presumably did too, and the obligations that emigrants owe to members of their native country may not all lapse simply because they have emigrated. If what grounds special obligations is formal civic membership, then proponents of the special-obligations challenge are committed to the view that if migrants continue to hold the citizenship of the country they have left, then they have a special obligation to help alleviate, and to refrain from restricting opportunities to alleviate, the poverty and/or inequality of their native country's citizens – by not preventing them, for example, from migrating as they have. Alternatively, if what grounds special obligations is the social membership that accompanies residence and participation in a common social enterprise, and if the members of the society from which one has emigrated helped to make one's migration possible (e.g. by collectively investing, through taxes, and in one's education), then one may owe the residents of one's previous society a special obligation (grounded in considerations of fairness or 'direct reciprocity') to help them emigrate.¹⁵ It is true, of course, that any given landed immigrants would not owe such special obligations to *all* would-be immigrants but, rather, only to members of their previous country of residence. But if so, they would owe them to precisely those would-be immigrants who are most likely to have skills most like themselves and therefore most directly substitutable for their own. In other words, the more that a would-be immigrant is likely to depress a landed immigrant's wages via the wage competition mechanism, the more likely it will be that the latter has a special obligation to refrain from closing the polity's borders to the former.

Even more broadly, landed immigrants may bear a duty of fairness not to close their adopted polity's borders to potential future immigrants in general. It may be unfair for landed immigrants voluntarily to accept the benefit of an open border (provided to them by a state's prior members) and then to seek, once they themselves are citizens or residents, to deny future immigrants the equivalent benefit. The basic intuition underlying

this thought is sometimes articulated, especially in the literature on intergenerational justice, via the notion of a duty of *indirect reciprocity*: a duty of reciprocity requires that one provide a benefit of value equivalent to the benefit that one has willingly received; the duty is indirect if it requires one to provide the benefit to persons other than those who provided one with the initial benefit (Gosseries, 2009, cf. Barry, 1991). If landed immigrants bear a duty of fairness to keep their polity's borders open to future potential immigrants, it would once again follow that the state who represents its members would have a derivative duty not to close its borders to future immigrants in the name of previous cohorts of immigrants.

It might be objected, of course, that even if a polity derivatively bears, *in the name of* previous cohorts of impoverished immigrants, a *pro tanto* duty not to close its borders, it may nevertheless still derivatively bear, in the name of its wealthier members, a countervailing *pro tanto* duty to close its borders to protect previous immigrants' *interests* – by way of discharging its wealthier members' special obligation to care for impoverished landed immigrants. There is, after all, a difference between the state representing and acting in the name of impoverished immigrants, and representing and acting in the name of other members who have special obligations to care for the interests of these impoverished immigrants. The conceptual distinction drawn here is entirely warranted, but the arguments above suggest at the very least that previous cohorts of immigrants are obligated to release their fellow compatriots from the putative special obligations that are supposed to override the polity's general duty to keep borders open. (These putative obligations are, after all, owed to these landed immigrants.) The question is, therefore, what if landed immigrants do not, in fact, release their fellow compatriots? The polity would then face conflicting imperatives: in the name of its wealthier citizens, it would have an obligation to close its borders to protect its impoverished landed immigrants, but in the name of the polity's impoverished landed immigrants themselves, it would have an obligation to keep its borders relatively open – a special obligation that would reinforce the polity's existing general duty of justice to keep its borders relatively open.

The second type of problem with the putative justification for closing borders to future immigrants is even more decisive. We have so far proceeded on the basis of the assumption that, if wealthy polities bear special obligations to previous immigrants on the basis of their current membership and/or legitimate expectations, these obligations would serve, all other things equal, to cancel or override the polity's existing *pro tanto* general duty to keep its borders relatively open. So far we have argued that all other things would not be equal: even if the assumption were true, the polity would have countervailing special obligations that reinforce the general duty to keep borders open. But in fact the assumption itself is false: the kind of relationship that the putative justification specifies, between native-born and foreign-born members, and in which special obligations to foreign-born member are supposed to be grounded, in fact only justifies special obligations that *add* to members' existing general duties to everyone, rather than ones that cancel or *override* them. The circumstances in which special obligations typically override general duties are those in which the former cannot feasibly be fulfilled in tandem with the latter. But wealthy polities feasibly *can* fulfill their members' special obligations to previous cohorts of immigrants who have joined the polity's domestic poor, without shirking their general duty not to exercise coercive political power in ways that

serve to entrench poverty and inequality at the global level: they can draw on their polity's wealth to compensate their domestic, foreign-born poor for any ill effects that continued immigration may have on them. If there is a general moral duty owed to foreigners to keep borders open, then special obligations of concern for poor, already-landed immigrants must be fulfilled by means other than closing borders.¹⁶ We can put the point more starkly. The wealthy members of a polity may indeed owe a special obligation of concern for the welfare of the polity's more impoverished members, a special obligation that is in turn borne by the state *qua* political representative of those wealthy members. But since the state's special obligation is derived from the special obligation of its own wealthy members, it is upon the shoulders of the wealthy members themselves – not upon the backs of even *more* impoverished third parties – that the sacrifice, required to discharge the special obligation, falls. Principals who bear a duty to ensure that a beneficiary has adequate resources cannot legitimately ask that their agent discharge the duty on their behalf by shirking its duties (e.g. of noninterference) to third parties!

We therefore conclude that the special-obligations challenge to the justice argument for more open borders in wealthy polities fails. First, given the empirical evidence, only special obligations of concern for previous cohorts of immigrants could potentially justify closing borders to further immigration. Second, even if special obligations to previous immigrants provided some *pro tanto* justification for overriding the general duty to keep borders open, those special obligations themselves may very well in turn be overridden by previous immigrants' own obligations to allow for continuing open borders. Third, special obligations to previous immigrants in fact cannot override the duty to keep borders open: the sacrifices required to alleviate landed immigrants' material poverty and inequality fall on the shoulders of the wealthier members of the wealthy polity, not the destitute members of relatively poor polities.

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Notes

1. The other most prominent argument for more open borders is the *liberty argument*. On the justice and liberty arguments for more open borders, see Carens (1992) and Abizadeh (2010a).
2. For a critique of the normative premises of the special-obligations challenge, see Abizadeh (forthcoming).
3. The case of refugees is one of the rare exceptions.

4. For the distinction between treatment as an equal (or equality of treatment) and equal treatment, see Dworkin (1978: 227, 273). For the related notion of equal concern and respect, see Dworkin (1973).
5. See Abizadeh (2010b) for this definition of subjection to coercion, and for a defense of the claim that regimes of border control instantiate it.
6. Using an experimental approach, for example, McKenzie et al. (2010) find a 263% increase in income from migrating.
7. A conception of justice committed to the ideal of equality of treatment can motivate the justice argument for more open borders in other ways. For example, a number of cosmopolitan theorists have derived an expansive set of moral implications from such a conception of justice, arguing that it requires fulfilling significant positive duties of poverty reduction and economic distribution at the global level (Beitz, 1999; Gilibert, 2012). If these theorists are correct, and if more open borders would result in global poverty reduction and/or more egalitarian wealth distribution, then the justice argument for more open borders would stand as an important corollary. It is true, of course, that many have denied that justice at the specifically global level imposes comparative, egalitarian principles of distribution (Blake, 2002; Miller, 2007), and that others claim that more open borders would in any case fail to alleviate the most extreme forms of global poverty or result in a more egalitarian global distribution of wealth (putatively because the worst off amongst the global poor would not have the resources to migrate) (Woodward, 1992). It is therefore important to see that the justice argument can be motivated as we do above, that is, on more minimal grounds, appealing to negative, rather than positive, constraints, and focusing specifically on how the state may permissibly exercise coercive political power over persons. (However, the empirical claims marshaled against the positive-duties version of the justice argument are challenged by two facts: first, remittances from those who do migrate reduce poverty in low-income countries (Adams, 2011; Singer, 2010; Taylor and Lopez-Feldman, 2009) and, second, once migration networks are established, the costs of migration fall, making it more likely that poorer individuals can migrate in the future (McKenzie and Rapoport, 2007, 2010).)
8. For the argument that equality of treatment requires equal respect but not equal concern, see Miller (1998). On special obligations more generally, see Scheffler (2001) and Abizadeh and Gilibert (2008).
9. We do not here treat the second mechanism by which, according to Macedo, immigration harms the domestic poor: the supposedly disproportionate reliance on welfare benefits by immigrants ostensibly strains the welfare state and lowers public support for *welfare provision* to the poor. A survey of the literature on the effects of immigration on the public finances of host countries is provided by Kerr and Kerr (2011), which focuses on the question of 'whether immigration burdens the host country's social benefits system, welfare services, education system, and health care sector more than is covered by the taxes paid by the immigrants' (p. 18). A number of studies have evaluated the fiscal impact of immigration on the host country and most have found it to be modest relative to the size of the economy. However, given the challenges in quantifying such impacts, differences in the assumptions used for computing the impact of immigration on fiscal burdens can lead to large differences in the results. A number of factors such as immigrants' age, education, and reasons for migration all play an important role. As a result, it is difficult to come to a definitive conclusion on the magnitude of the impact of immigration on fiscal burden.

10. Since the effect of immigration on wages is estimated by estimating the labor-demand equations, that is, since the labor-demand and labor-supply equations are estimated simultaneously, estimation controls are required for changes in labor supply in order to avoid omitted variable bias and to estimate the labor-demand equations properly. While Borjas's countrywide approach includes controls for labor-demand factors, it includes no such controls for labor-supply factors. More recent studies have overcome this shortcoming by employing the regional labor market approach and using the variation in the stock of immigrants by country of origin for particular US states and the aggregate flow of immigrants by country of origin into particular US states to control for labor-supply factors in their analysis (Peri, 2011).
11. While Card (2001, 2007) and Peri (2011) find no evidence that native-born workers move out of areas where immigrants choose to locate, Borjas (2006) claims to find large displacement effects for native-born workers. In a recent paper evaluating the methodology used by different studies of the displacement of native-born workers, however, Peri and Sparber (2011) show that there is inherent bias in the regression specification used by Borjas, which casts doubt on the validity of its results. Using panel data for US states, moreover, they find no evidence that native-born workers are displaced by immigrants.
12. For similar conclusions from a survey of the literature, see also Okkerse (2008).
13. For evidence for and against the first assumption, see Borjas (1995) and Nannestad (2007). For evidence supporting the second assumption, see McKenzie et al. (2010).
14. One recent study using matched data for migrants and family members left behind (Nigerian immigrants in Chicago) finds that, other things being equal, poorer families left behind tend to receive larger transfers (Osili, 2007: 447), which is further evidence of acknowledged family obligations of poverty alleviation. For an overview of the reasons behind remitting, see Stark (2009).
15. Direct reciprocity involves contributing something of equivalent value to precisely those persons who made the initial contribution to oneself. On the notion of direct reciprocity, see Gosseries (2009).
16. See Abizadeh (forthcoming) for the argument that special obligations to the domestic poor take the form of 'additive', rather than 'prioritizing' special obligations, that is, they *add* to the sacrifice required on the part of the bearers of the obligations and do not release them from their other, existing obligations and duties. See also the 'distributive objection' to special responsibilities discussed in Scheffler (2001).

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