Introduction

Consider the following instances of contemporary political conflict. The people of Egypt mass by the thousands in the heart of Cairo, forcing the abdication of the virtual dictator of the country for the last generation. An unknown political movement in Mexico, named after a historical revolutionary, stages a series of spectacular media-oriented events to publicize its demands for local autonomy in the southern part of the country. Acts of sabotage begin against pipelines, drilling platforms, and other sites in the oilfields of southern Nigeria, close to where the local population has been losing farm- and forestlands to increasing pollution from drilling. A number of fast-food restaurants are attacked and some destroyed in the food- and wine-growing regions of France and Italy. Demonstrations by thousands of farmers in several states in India block and sometimes halt construction of hydroelectric dams that would devastate large amounts of farmland in the surrounding regions. Despite massive spending and endorsements by all leading political parties, the European Union Constitution is decisively defeated by democratic referenda in France and the Netherlands. Protests by native peoples in Amazonia publicize and partially stop destruction of rain forests by logging and farming corporations. The government in Bolivia is first prevented from selling public works (water and electricity) to private corporations and is then overthrown in subsequent elections by a large movement comprising mainly peasants and workers.

What do these recent events—and they can easily be multiplied—have in common? They are all political conflicts over matters that are unexplainable and, indeed, virtually incomprehensible according to any of the major concepts of political theory and international ethics on offer today. They did not arise because of disparities in global income. They did not occur because of discrimination against ethnic minorities. No violations of human rights precipitated their outbreaks, and no claims to statehood for oppressed nationalities were to be found in the protests. How do we understand such movements and occurrences in the absence of global inequities, minority discrimination, human rights violations, or national oppression? There is an older concept that is of use here, although it has been discarded or distorted by recent political thinking. All of these disruptions are struggles for self-determination, and these struggles ultimately seek to assert sovereignty over peoples' lands, resources, governments, and countries against the agencies of "globalization"—whether transnational corporations or hegemonic states.

It is the recovery of a political vocabulary equal to these peoples' struggles that is the goal of this book. The method employed is partly critical—as in the critique of political theories that obscure understanding and justification of such struggles. But it is also constructive—in renovating concepts thought by many to have been surpassed.

My argument here is twofold. First, I show that the eclipse of the principle of self-determination is a result of its problematic embrace by nationalist movements and theorists. The result—the transformation of political self-determination into national self-determination—is neither a necessary nor an inevitable entailment of the idea itself. Rather, it is a product of contingent historical circumstances—the appearance of European nationalist movements in the nineteenth century and the rise of colonial liberation movements in the twentieth. Because these circumstances no longer exist and a new set of political needs and issues has arisen, the concept needs reconsideration.

Second, I argue that, if understood properly, self-determination has an important role to play in the self-understanding of contemporary movements for social justice and environmental sustainability (such as those mentioned previously). Moreover, I maintain that international ethics today is in the grip of illusions about "global" justice and "human" rights that prevent us from understanding the true dimensions and real nature of contemporary political conflicts. The sign that this is so is this very eclipse not only of the principle of self-determination but also of the correlative concept of political sovereignty. In reestablishing the necessity of these principles and concepts—eventuating in a notion of *ecosovereignty* that should supplement other notions of justice and rights—my argument finds its completion.

In this Introduction, I attend to some methodological preliminaries. First, I set the stage for my argument about self-determination by considering its recent neglect as a symptom of a deeper problem in international ethics: ignorance of the political dimension of global problems, which results from an obsession with the "moralization" of international conflict. Second, by providing a brief history of the uses to which the self-determination concept has been put, I hope to show that the concept itself demands redefinition in light of contemporary problems. Third, I explain the method adopted here, which, while focused on ethical justification of particular concepts and principles, builds on prior uses of self-determination as a fundamental norm and incorporates recent historical and geographical research to specify the appropriate scales of its application.

The chapters that follow expand on these preliminaries in the following way. Chapters 1 through 3 examine the deficiencies of the most prevalent past use of self-determination—by nationalists—and how it has helped to discredit the very notion through its misapplication in ethnic conflicts and secessionist movements. The result of the first part of the book is a redefinition of self-determination without reference to nationalist ideas. Chapters 4 and 5 show how self-determination, properly understood, replaces postulation of global communities with that of real ethical communities that can yield substantive political loyalties essential for solving current conflicts. Chapters 6 and 7 show why ethical communities require a concept of sovereignty and how this concept is applicable only to communities that exist on a scale appropriate for political self-determination. The Conclusion explains why this concept of sovereignty is best understood as one of ecosovereignty, and it gestures at how this idea can be deployed to ameliorate contemporary problems of violence, poverty, and despoliation.

Two Approaches to International Ethics

Recent thought about international relations has been divided between two views of the relation of morality to politics. Both views attempt to "reduce" one feature of international relations to the other—morality to politics or politics to morality. The reduction of moral to political judgments is characteristic of a well-known position in international relations often referred to as "realism." Much of international *ethics* has criticized this "reduction" (and I do not reconstruct the critique here).[1] I am primarily concerned with a different sort of reductionism—that of political judgments (and norms) to moral ones.

This reductionism can be found particularly in what is currently the dominant approach to international ethics: political cosmopolitanism. The

basic idea is that international relations are to be evaluated in relation to cosmopolitan—that is, universalistic—norms, which are in turn to be instantiated in new political institutions (not states) on a global scale. In this view, the values that govern international relations are primarily legal ones; however, these are in turn founded on, and justified by, moral norms that allow us to judge the actions of political agents in just the way we judge the actions of individuals (as moral agents). Furthermore, such judgments can be derived from moral norms or laws that operate similarly in political and personal life. There are differences of scale but not of kind.

This view has at least two consequences for understanding and evaluating international relations. First, it means that persons have the same "standing" in international relations that they have in their own lives—individuals are considered to be the basic unit of ethical comparison and evaluation. This has obvious implications for judgments about such problems as "global" distributive justice and human rights. First, from the political-cosmopolitan point of view, the appropriate basis for comparisons of income distribution or civil liberties, for instance, is a global one—"one person at a time" and all to count equally. Second, political life is devoid of ethical content separate from the individual moral agency of persons. Politics is essentially a struggle for power, a struggle that can (sometimes) be tamed by moral initiatives but when not should be judged according to the same moral standards that otherwise apply (e.g., to individuals).

This moralizing view of international relations has been especially dominant for the last generation or so. The idea is to make use of a historic opportunity—the end of the Cold War—to appeal to hegemonic states and international organizations to take actions that are morally praiseworthy. Much recent scholarship in international ethics has virtually assumed this perspective.[2] Interestingly, even critics of some versions of this view often agree about the ways in which values and norms must be applied to international relations—that is, from the perspective of individual moral agents. They only disagree on whether such values or norms will be instantiated institutionally anytime soon.[3]

But when moral or legal norms are "applied" to political actions or events, the implication is that, without such application, political life—including international relations—operates in a moral vacuum. This view, held by thinkers such as Hobbes, Locke, and Mill (or, more recently, by Niebuhr, Beitz, and Singer), expresses a contractarian-realist, "state-of-nature" perspective on political life, which is regarded as devoid of values, judgments, laws, rights, or any other normative content. But there is another view—the one that politi-

cal life has its own normative content, just as personal life does. This normative content can be given a variety of descriptions—idealist (as in Hegel), materialist (as in Marx), constructivist (as in Rawls), or even quasi-realist (as in Weber). But all descriptions imply that political life itself contains resources for generating ethical judgments about political actions and events. These resources are the real social ties of interest, need, and affinity that collective action generates. The dichotomy between power and morality that is assumed by *both* realists and moralists is founded, as Hegel most thoroughly showed, on a fictitious and invidious view of social life devoid of the norms, ideals, principles, and rules that any possible society must have.

To be sure, the international scale generates fewer and less binding social norms and rules than do smaller communities in which persons act more immediately to satisfy needs and realize goals. But this does not mean that international politics is without normative resources of its own—resources that are the basis of diplomatic and commercial agreements for mutual advantage. The importation of moral standards from personal relations is an unrealistic and unnecessary response to the possibility of conflict on an international scale.

In fact, it is the connection between the realist and the moralist views—both rooted in an understanding of social life as devoid of norms—that suggests why the consequences of imposing order *either* by force or by moral-legal judgment are so undesirable. Even more interestingly, they are quite similar in their consequences, for if political life lacks resources for the instantiation of ethical norms—if society is not potentially a form of ethical life but only of a state of nature—then the only chance for moralizing, *taming*, politics is the use of power in the service of moral ideals. It was the twentieth century's greatest realist, Carl Schmitt, who contended that the only two options in international relations are the conflict of (existential) friend and enemy and the moral imperialism of humanitarian crusades. Of course, they are not the only two options, but the connection between the two is what is interesting. Both rely on the same image of social life; both must employ the same power-political means to achieve their ends.[4] The political-cosmopolitan approach to international ethics turns out, in its implementation, not to be so different from its purported opposite after all.

The Evolution of Self-Determination and Sovereignty

Where does self-determination fit into the dichotomy between a realist, power-political approach and a moralist, natural-legal approach? It does not.

Self-determination, while an ineradicably political idea, is also clearly a normative one. It suggests a very different understanding of the relation between facts and norms than is permitted by either approach just mentioned. This becomes most apparent if the historical origins and uses of the idea of self-determination are considered.

Political self-determination was an important aspiration of the colonial liberation movements in the early twentieth century. These movements regarded it as a universalization of the notion of popular self-rule inherited from the political theory of the European Enlightenment. However, as applied to peoples ruled by the British, French, and other colonial empires of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, self-determination assumed an international dimension that it had previously lacked. It became not only a principle justifying popular government within existing states ruled by authoritarian regimes; it was also a principle leading to claims of independence for colonies and territories lacking self-government of any kind.

A precise understanding of self-determination has been slow in coming. One view of it is that it justified the replacement of European colonial empires with "nation-states" containing distinct ethnonational groups. This idea was especially popular in nineteenth-century Central and Eastern Europe, as the stability of the remaining dynastic empires (Hapsburg, Romanov, Ottoman) was shaken. Yet it was not long before this idea was shown to be inappropriate to the needs of newly independent countries. The new states contained a patchwork of different ethnic and national groups held within boundaries established by the colonial powers without regard for nationality. In light of this, astute observers such as Frantz Fanon noted how nationalist politics actually undermined the self-determination of new states.[5]

In the end, the new principle of self-determination came to be applied only to "non-self-governing peoples." One result was a transformation in international law in the later twentieth century.[6] Since the late 1950s, international law has incorporated continual affirmations of the "self-determination of peoples." Though its ambiguity has plagued attempts to make it consistent with other international legal principles, few today would deny self-determination a place in international legal doctrine.

In fact, some scholars, such as F. H. Hinsley, have argued that the self-determination principle is simply the clarification of an idea implicit in the historical doctrine of political sovereignty—the idea that sovereign states must accord one another equal rights to political independence and territorial integrity.[7] This idea, which this book seeks to make explicit, has recently come under attack by a group of philosophers concerned with certain of its implications. At the same time, the idea of self-determination has been

defended by others as an entitlement not of peoples and states but of national and ethnic groups.

It is my contention that both ideas are flawed understandings of the importance of self-determination and of its meaning. This book puts forward a new interpretation, the motivation for which lies in the recognition, largely lacking among theorists, of the dangerous international environment created by the eclipse of any principle of political independence that can respond to the challenges of this new century.

What are those challenges? It is tempting to use the current term *globalization* as a shorthand for the many changes in the postcolonial and postsocialist global environment. With the end of the colonial empires (after 1960), as well as of most state socialist regimes (after 1990), a new international order (or disorder) has been forming, one with significant new concentrations of power and wealth. These concentrations are not found in the postcolonial or postsocialist states (with the possible exception of India). Rather, across a wide swath of South Asia, the Islamic World, Black Africa, and Latin America, peoples and countries are in danger of exploitation, domination, or marginalization by the new global powers.

A number of commentators have pointed to these new dangers, but political theorists, with a couple of exceptions, have not been as troubled by them as they should be.[8] The end of the colonial struggles and the Cold War has, on the contrary, been seen as a great opportunity for realizing schemes of moral progress and social justice, though the political agents that are to enact such schemes remain largely unspecified. Furthermore, the new problems of resource exploitation, violent conflict, environmental depletion, and demographic upheaval are not generally seen as having *political* origins and solutions so much as requiring new moral or legal conceptions of justice or rights. Globalization, in short, is viewed much more as an opportunity for global reform and governance than as a new constellation of political and economic power, with potentially dire consequences for weaker and poorer countries.

Because most philosophers have sought to harness the new forces of the global economy and polity to the cause of reform, concern that these forces are overriding the legitimacy of political communities has been muted. This is the case in both of the major recent tendencies in political theory concerning international and global problems. On the one hand, advocates of "political cosmopolitanism" have been clearest in viewing their own conceptions of justice and/or rights as requiring a planetary institutionalization.[9] This view leaves little room for considering the political rights or legitimacy of local communities—whether or not they dissent from the particulars of cosmopolitan schemes. The goal of political freedom—self-determination—is

shortchanged by the hope of establishing international or global institutions that can realize a universal conception of justice or rights.

One of the clearest indications of this willingness to abandon self-determination, which is based on commitment to the integrity and independence of peoples, is the renovated idea of "armed humanitarian intervention."[10] This idea was seemingly discredited during the Cold War, when it was associated with struggles between the "superpowers." In the post–Cold War era, the use of military means to realize humanitarian goals has become a commonplace. But such an idea violates the previously common understanding of "just wars" as limited to acts of self-defense—acts that themselves serve to ensure and protect peoples' self-determination.

On the other hand, and more surprisingly, advocates of "liberal nationalism" have also been largely unwilling to maintain or reaffirm the idea of *political* self-determination as an important desideratum.[11] This is in spite of the rhetoric of *national* self-determination that is the common coin of liberal nationalists. In Chapters 1 through 3, I show how radically such rhetoric diverges from the legitimate claims of political communities to independence. The difference can be stated briefly here by highlighting how important the recognition of (national) identities is for liberal nationalists. In this view, these identities constitute the prepolitical basis for political communities and therefore are accorded rights that may override those of existing political communities that are not so constituted. What is important for the nationalist view is getting the connection between nations and states right, not protecting the political freedoms of citizens as such. This is clearest in cases where the construction of nation-states requires the violation of constitutional provisions that ensure the unity of states, as in the former Soviet Union and Yugoslavia. It is also clear in situations where boundaries can be largely preserved or inherited but citizenship rights must be restricted or denied to certain residents—for instance, in French Canada (Quebec) and Jewish Palestine (Israel).

Both of these dominant positions in contemporary political theory make crucial conceptual mistakes. While these mistakes are discussed at some length later in the book, they can be summarized as follows. The liberal nationalist advocacy of nation-states—and its rejection of transnational norms of justice and rights—assumes the necessity of national loyalties and affinities as the basis for political communities. In fact, this has rarely been the case historically, and there is every reason to think that, with current demographic trends toward increased migrations, nation-states will become even less possible in the twenty-first century than they were in the last two hundred years. In any case, as I argue below, there is no good *ethical* reason to think that

political legitimacy requires a foundation in national identities—and definite reasons to think the contrary.

However, the liberal nationalists do raise a crucial problem—the need for *some* prepolitical basis in local or regional affinities strong enough to generate loyalty to a distinct political community. If this prepolitical attachment is not to one's nation or ethnic group, what is it to? The short answer is that it must involve a "patriotic" connection to country, people, and way of life, shorn of any ethnonational associations. The very distinction between patriotism and nationalism is an indication that such loyalties are possible. That they are actual and increasingly important is discussed in the second half of this book, especially Chapter 4.

While nationalists can be expected to affirm local self-determination—*if and only if* it is congruent with national identities—cosmopolitans can be expected to see self-determination as irrelevant or even deleterious to the task of globally enacting ethical norms. The assumption that political cosmopolitans make is that their moral commitments to universal norms and rights entail a correspondingly global political institution of some sort that can enact and protect them.

But this is not the case. The assumption relies on a conflation of a moral cosmopolitanism that establishes certain universal moral norms—for instance, human dignity or basic rights—and a political cosmopolitanism that asserts the claims of global institutions to the authority necessary to realize these norms. Historically, however, there have been a number of successful global instantiations of universal norms *without* such institutions. In fact, this is one interpretation of the development of international law over the last two centuries. It is also applicable to recent agreements about human rights, environmental protections, weapons prohibitions, and the self-determination of peoples.

There have been no comparable successes for global states or other authorities, for the simple reason that such states or authorities have never existed. Whether or not we can ever expect to see a global state or some such institution, there is no reason to think that we need one to realize universal norms. In any case, moral universals do not require them (and may even prohibit them if one such universal norm is that of political self-determination). The existence of a system of international law, realized through interstate treaties, diplomatic protocols, court decisions, and other legal instruments, has provided a useful set of tools for the advocacy, dissemination, and institutionalization of moral norms. This does not require any more powerful political institutions—and there are other, good reasons to argue against their establishment, one of them being the loss of political autonomy that it would entail.

What this has meant is that political cosmopolitans, in practice and sometimes in theory, sanction the actions of hegemonic states that seem either to be acting *or to be able to act* in accordance with a cosmopolitan agenda.[12] This is what "global governance," to use the current jargon, means in a world without effective, or even existent, global institutions that can realize that agenda.

Not only does the current impasse between nationalism and cosmopolitanism rely on faulty assumptions about the necessity of certain political institutions; it also makes more difficult criticism of, and resistance to, the more nefarious aspects of economic and cultural globalization. In the case of cosmopolitanism, the establishment and dissemination of cosmopolitan norms is supposed to provide an antidote to aspects of globalization that increase inequalities of wealth and power. This idea relies on the view that globalization is an autonomous and anonymous process, taking place without substantial inputs from states. The possibility that states or quasi-states with a "global reach," such as the United States and the European Union, can coerce recalcitrant countries to accept universal moral norms of equality, redistribution, and rights becomes a tempting possibility. But what if it turns out that these very states (and intergovernmental organizations that act for them, such as the United Nations or the World Trade Organization) are the primary perpetrators of the new inequalities? An increasing accumulation of historical evidence suggests that this is the case—that globalization is not a process "out of the control" of states or countries. On the contrary, it is the result of policies deliberately enacted by powerful states—especially the United States in the recent past—*against* less powerful states to further an agenda of economic and political dominance.[13] The very agencies—hegemonic states and their "international" organizations—to which cosmopolitan theorists appeal to realize global norms are those that have been working hardest to achieve greater power and wealth at the expense of smaller, weaker peoples and countries.

It may seem that liberal nationalists could mount an effective critique of this complicity of cosmopolitanism with global hegemony. In fact, liberal nationalism disables such a critique because it undermines the ability of peoples to argue for an effective sovereignty that can resist attempts at global hegemony. The reason for this paradoxical result is that nationalists seek to delegitimate countries and states that do not conform to their criterion for political authority—that they must be based on (single) national identities. If states do not so conform, they have no legitimacy in the view of liberal nationalists—at least until they are transformed into nation-states. But this transformation, often involving dismemberment (or worse), turns out to be possible only at the hands of hegemonic states and their agencies. Thus

nationalism and cosmopolitanism have occasionally entered into an "unholy alliance" (for instance, in the Yugoslav wars) to justify destroying states that are neither nationalist nor "Western" (i.e., in conformity with prevailing norms espoused by "Western" powers).[14]

For many, this has been a bitter realization: the hopes engendered by the end of the Cold War in the early 1990s suggested that a new, more peaceful era was beginning. Continually reiterated by various thinkers since the late eighteenth century, the belief that peaceful commerce can eventually replace violent conflict as the primary form of international relations seemed at last to be taking place. Yet a decade later this hope appears increasingly misplaced. Not only can it be seen that various international organizations (e.g., the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank), supposedly established to regulate trade and aid development, have abetted the immiseration of large parts of the globe.[15] It is also now apparent that the absence—for the first time in the twentieth century—of a confrontation between major powers has done nothing but encourage the United States, as the single hegemonic power, on a course of military adventurism from the Balkans to Central Asia. Both global economic exploitation and imperial political ambitions seem to have easily survived the end of both communism and colonialism.

The belief that the "liberation" of ethnic nations after the collapse of communism would usher in a new period of peaceful accommodation has similarly been seen as chimerical. War in central Europe, as well as the implosion of multinational Asian and African states (e.g., Indonesia, Congo), has been the result not of the suppression of ethnic nationalism but of its legitimation. Liberal nationalism increasingly has little to offer as a palliative for political conflict.[16]

By contrast, what is remarkable about political cosmopolitans is their persistent unease about the realizability of their own schemes for global reform. Of course, it long ago became necessary to largely eschew the idea of world government in favor of that of "global governance."[17] But this hardly solves the institutional question of how such governance is going to become operational. Even its hardiest advocates, however, have become wary of making claims about the feasibility of global governance via either existing institutions or new ones to be established in the foreseeable future.[18]

A further indication of a general questioning of cosmopolitan assumptions is the shift in the "global justice" movement away from immediate "global" solutions. While the movement has suffered from the same general lack of thinking about forms of the state that has characterized radical social movements since the mid-nineteenth century, this is now somewhat less the case than not so long ago. In the 1990s and early 2000s, there was much

discussion of how to achieve "globalization from below," presumably meaning global governance without government or perhaps simply a global solidarity movement spontaneously coordinated across the continents. Of course, this is no more realizable than the schemes of political cosmopolitans. The increasing awareness of this has prompted a movement to reconsider the state and what alternative forms it might take to provide greater protection against multinational corporations and hegemonic powers (as well as social justice on the local scale). Such rethinking is increasing in many contexts, including the Global Social Forum, the opposition to the European Union, Latin American populist movements, and Green activist groups in Asia and elsewhere.[19]

The sources of this rethinking are several and are discussed in the chapters that follow. Three in particular are worth noting here. First, there is the recent revival of a view of political life as manifesting its own particular, ethical, norms—for instance, in the work of Axel Honneth.[20] In this view, international ethics becomes not the application of preexisting moral values to actions and agents on the global scale but the search for ethical norms implicit within, and appropriate to, an international political order. Normative concepts can, in this account, be found in political life that provide sufficient resources for its regulation and flourishing. Self-determination and sovereignty are not moral ideas (about personal agency, identity, or integrity) that have been applied or misapplied to politics; they embody conceptions of ethical life that have grown out of continuing efforts to cooperate in securing public and social goods.

Second, there is the rejection of political cosmopolitanism in the late work of John Rawls, in favor of international toleration and diversity.[21] While Rawls's work is not inconsistent with certain thinking in international law, it was greeted with rage by political cosmopolitans, many of whom were exponents of a political liberalism that they thought entailed a global cosmopolitan scheme of justice. Rawls's refusal to sign onto this idea was viewed by many as a betrayal of his earlier principles.[22] Of course, Rawls saw political cosmopolitanism itself as a naïve lack of recognition that different political principles should obtain between states on the international scale. Nevertheless, his critics had a point inasmuch as it was not apparent that his earlier theory gave his later views about the necessity of global tolerance a sufficient justification. In particular, the idea of the liberal state seemed to be at cross-purposes with the idea of states committed to different ways of life ("comprehensive doctrines," in Rawls's terminology). This is perhaps why the idea of self-determination, although present in Rawls's *Law of Peoples*, does not play a central role in his theory. Even so, it is important to acknowledge that

political liberalism is not equivalent to political cosmopolitanism and in fact is an effective critique of some cosmopolitan ideas.

Third, the development of international law itself can be regarded as involving the articulation of norms designed to reconcile the independence of peoples with certain universal norms—for instance, equal respect for persons.[23] What is important is that international law has developed through recognition of *both* the claims of persons and those of peoples. Self-determination can therefore be seen as having an essential place in international law, although its definition requires reference to extralegal sources. The idea that moral and political, personal and collective, norms are complementary is a minority view in international *ethics*, but it is more commonplace in international *law*.

These sources of a reinterpretation of self-determination generate not only a concept of "self-determination without nationalism"—one compatible with other doctrines of international law—but also a changed idea of sovereignty. That sovereignty has made a reappearance at the beginning of the twenty-first century might seem surprising to those in the mainstream of international ethics. However, I argue that it is entailed in the renovation of the self-determination principle itself.

While sovereignty was initially espoused without reference to peoples or countries as such (rather than rulers or states), its transformations in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have made it not only compatible with the idea of self-determination but, as I argue, instrumental to it.[24] In particular, the development of the sovereignty doctrine in the twentieth century led to the incorporation of the claims of newly independent states to equality with existing states. The change made it possible to see sovereignty and self-determination as correlative ideas.

This may be surprising to some, since sovereignty was once understood to denote the rights of *states* to trump or override the self-determination of *peoples*, at least in many cases. Yet it is important that the development of the sovereignty concept has meant its increasing *dis*association from the prerogatives of states as such. States are often still important instruments for securing sovereignty, but it is now the sovereignty *of peoples* that they secure. In this sense, sovereignty is no longer inconsistent with the rights (or, more minimally, the claims) of peoples to self-government.

But is sovereignty an entailment of self-determination? If self-determination is understood as a *political* rather than a moral norm, institutions or the principles that justify them are entailed. In this sense, a self-governing people must be able to claim authority over its own decision making, as well as a place in which to exercise it. Put somewhat differently, self-determination is

not only a moral desideratum or simply a conception of legitimate political power; it is also a claim to autonomy and noninterference. Sovereignty, in this sense, is a necessary constituent of political self-determination.

It is more than that, however, for it turns out that sovereignty provides the means to argue for a new kind of political institution—one that serves the purposes not only of political independence but also of sustainable development and environmental stewardship. This is the sense in which I specify the idea of postnational sovereignty as that of *ecosovereignty*—a concept I hope will be useful in arguing both for the protection of diverse political ecologies and for the political rights of distinct peoples.

Ethical Justifications, Empirical Foundations

How are the concepts of self-determination and sovereignty advocated here ethically justified? I maintain that stipulating prior moral principles, from which second-order political concepts are derived, is the wrong way to think about the normative content of international politics or, for that matter, any politics. Political life has its own normative content. The task is to understand what that content is in order to make explicit, and then establish, institutions that embody it. For this reason, it is important to give as accurate and complete an account as possible of the fundamental nature of, in this case, international politics. And this account must include a narrative leading up to the present so that it has the requisite specificity to determine appropriate principles and institutions. Concretely, this means that the story of colonial liberation movements, for example, introduces an important new normative dimension to the principles of international relations developed in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This story must, above all, be able to account for the principles that adequately justified such movements—and how these principles found expression in new concepts of, for instance, self-determination. Viewing self-determination as an entitlement of national groups is not going to provide the justification for anticolonialism that was significant for these movements. At the same time, any adequate interpretation of such a principle must refer to antecedent ideas—in this case political independence, autonomy, or freedom—that reveal its normative intent and content.

Thus, an understanding of political freedom—and specifically how it is realized on the international scale—provides the justification for self-determination. This point has often been made, including in some of my previous work.[25] However, the justification for the idea other than by its connection to the general principle of freedom requires consideration of the role of self-determination in political life as such. This is why the argument

in this book does not proceed from "first principles," moral or otherwise. It is important to be clear on the very nature of political life on the international scale—in particular, what a political community entails—before moving to the principles that should govern relations within and between such forms of (political) life. Two points concerning this are made below: first, that the nature of political community entails a right of self-determination, and second, that this precludes advocacy of universal moral principles that contradict this right. And if self-determination is a fundamental feature of political life, its justification follows from an understanding of the nature and importance of political community as such and, in particular, from the values of loyalty and patriotism that are enabling for any community.

Similarly, sovereignty, at least in its external aspect, is just the ethical norm governing relations between communities. This book is in part an argument that sovereignty, sometimes regarded by both moral philosophers and international jurists as a limit on ethical relations, is itself a fundamentally normative concept. A concept of "normative" sovereignty exists alongside that of "effective" sovereignty. In fact, there is but one concept of sovereignty, though it has more than one dimension depending on whether it is regarded from a historical or a philosophical perspective. *Sovereignty* is simply the name for the proper relationship between political communities.

It might be thought that these ideas have been given an insufficient philosophical foundation to warrant their political use. However, this book emphasizes self-determination and sovereignty as ethico-political norms because their moral-legal versions are largely noncontroversial. Self-determination is also a principle having to do with the legitimate claims of moral agents.[26] Similarly, sovereignty is a concept having to do with claims to lawgiving authority.[27] Neither is necessarily a political notion; both, within their respective domains of morality and law, are essential for an understanding of moral agency and legal authority. It is in the arena of political conflict that the controversies occur. One does not need to look long to find critics who argue against the applicability of these concepts to political life—because of their undesirability, infeasibility, redundancy, or indefinability.[28]

For those who think that such concepts have a legitimate political meaning, the need is to show this in the domain of political theory itself. Foundational arguments from morality or law do not answer the worries raised by critics (nor are these criticisms generally about these foundations). Above all, it must be shown that self-determination and sovereignty play an essential role in defining what is necessary for a flourishing ethical life.

To take self-determination first, the argument relies in part on the concept of "ethical community," itself an extrapolation from the Hegelian

notion of "ethical life." Most broadly, the idea is that political action takes place in contexts that may vary from the hostile (war) to the congenial (community). When it is a means of encouraging or enabling an ethical life, it occurs in communal contexts rather than under conditions of conflict or contestation. Self-determination is the idea that the existence of such communal contexts—that is, ethical communities—requires coordinated actions by persons to secure their common freedom. Sovereignty is the idea that others ought to respect this freedom.

While self-determination is fundamentally a claim of right to political action, sovereignty is a correlative principle that establishes the proper relation to other political actors. As such, sovereignty is essentially a *recognitive* norm. Though this may not be the common understanding of sovereignty claims—since they seem to involve the assertion of a unilateral right of some sort—it is firmly established by some classic statements of the principle.[29] Sovereignty today is a principle embedded in the international legal system, which accords recognition only to political communities that similarly recognize all equivalent communities and their rights of self-determination. Thus sovereignty functions as a norm of political legitimacy based on the recognition of others. But what is the value of recognition in the first place? Why is the international political system not merely a de facto accommodation without any normative content? Here the goods of locality, particularity, and diversity, rather than those of solidarity and loyalty, need emphasis. A system of mutual recognition of other peoples and communities allows such goods to flourish. Sovereignty is, if you will, an other-regarding virtue just as self-determination is a self-regarding one. Sovereignty is the "external" norm that protects the "internal" claims of ethical communities to self-determination.

Making these justificatory points involves assessing the relative importance of various norms and the actions or institutions that instantiate them. There is no way to judge this importance other than to make some empirical generalizations based on the best available evidence. In these cases, the evidence must be historical and geographical, and this goes against the grain of much recent philosophy, even political philosophy, which sometimes involves the search for (antecedently justified) moral norms that are regarded as more foundational than are ethico-political ones. From the quasi-Hegelian orientation adopted here, moral norms do not have this foundational character; rather, moral and ethical norms are complementary (or not).

In some philosophy that does not deal with political questions, the methodological assumptions are even more hostile to the use of empirical disciplines to substantiate normative claims. There are various reasons for this. One is that much recent philosophy simply "brackets" empirical claims, insisting that

only the logical or semantic properties of propositions can validate them. The rich historical and geographical details underlying many of the philosophical claims found in thinkers from Plato to Marx are ruled out.

For this reason, the historical case studies discussed in this book may strike some as beside the point. They are not, for it is only the evidence gleaned from historical self-determination claims that can tell us whether the principle contributes to, or undermines, ethical community more generally. Of course, the cases here are not the only ones that can be drawn on, but they do have a more than anecdotal significance. The period of the "Second Thirty Years' War," as some historians are now referring to it—roughly from 1914 to 1945—is one whose greater significance we are only now beginning to understand. In any case, it is certainly the origin of many ongoing conflicts and problems. I draw on the changes in this period in Germany, the Balkans, and Palestine not only because I know something about them but also because of their long and continuing influence on present conflicts over self-determination claims.

The use of geographical research in later chapters may seem another oddity in a philosophical work. However, the development of the "new geography," and its increasing use by other disciplines, is one of the most exciting developments in the social sciences in the last generation. It is high time that philosophy took notice as well. Specifically, if sovereignty is an essentially recognitive norm, what is the appropriate "scale," as geographers say, of political communities seeking recognition? Research by political geographers can materially contribute to what we understand to be communities capable of political solidarity and therefore deserving of recognition.

International ethics has reached something of an impasse in recent years. The major alternatives of liberal nationalism and political cosmopolitanism have been on offer for over a generation, but neither has contributed perceptibly to solving the urgent problems of developing impoverishment and despoliation of much of the planet or the increasingly violent conflicts over remaining resources. It is time for a new departure, if such a thing is possible. As usual in intellectual history, new departures usually involve the recovery or revival of notions thought to have been superseded. It is in this spirit that this book seeks a reconsideration of the ideas of self-determination and sovereignty.