ABSTRACT. Let us say that an individual possesses a principled preference if she prefers satisfying her preferences without violating the principles of justice governing her community to satisfying her preferences by violating these principles. Although living among possessors of principled preferences benefits individuals, maintaining such a preference is individually costly. Further, individuals can benefit from others possessing principled preferences without themselves possessing one. In this paper, I argue that occupying a choice situation which mirrors key aspects of our own situation, maximizing rationality requires individuals to develop and maintain principled preferences.

To establish that maintaining a principled preference is individually rational for the occupants of such a choice situation, I define a range of individual strategies for them, model their choice of individual strategies as a game, and argue that this game involves an equilibrium in which all of its participants would choose to develop and maintain a principled preference.

KEY WORDS: Justice, sense of justice, rationality, rational choice, contractarianism, contractualism, game theory, game, self-transformation, reconciliation project.

PHILOSOPHICAL CONTEXT

In Morals By Agreement, David Gauthier argues that it is rational for individuals who have settled upon fair and optimal rules of justice to comply with these rules. Gauthier’s argument, however, relies on two controversial assumptions.

First, it assumes that individuals are translucent, that they can determine one another’s strategies (regarding compliance and non-compliance with rules of justice) with an accuracy of better than chance. But whether individuals are translucent, how translucent individuals are if they are translucent, whether translucency is costless, and how much translucency costs if it is not costless are all disputed matters.

Second, Gauthier’s argument for the rationality of compliance assumes the adequacy of his account of constrained maximization
as an interpretation of maximizing rationality. Constrained maximization is the disposition to comply with rules of justice when one expects others to comply, even when one would prefer to violate these rules. Few dispute Gauthier's claim that under some circumstances, it is rational to adopt the disposition to maximize constrainedly. But many have taken issue with his suggestion that counterpreferential compliance with rules of justice is itself rational because required by a disposition the adoption of which was expected to maximize utility at the time it was adopted.\(^3\)

Gauthier's argument for the rationality of compliance with rules of justice will fail to convince anyone who rejects either his assumptions about translucency or his claims about the rationality of constrained maximization. Since shared rules of justice will benefit the members of a community only if most of them comply with these rules, an argument for the rationality of such compliance which relies on neither of Gauthier's controversial assumptions would be a useful thing for individuals who must live together under shared rules of justice to have. In this paper, I shall develop such an argument.\(^4\)

**PRINCIPLED PREFERENCES**

In particular, I shall argue that maintaining a particular sort of a sense of justice, a principled preference, is individually rational for members of a community like our own, one which is governed by some set of rules of justice.\(^5\) A principled preference is a preference governing how one pursues one's other preferences. Possessing such a preference, an individual strongly prefers satisfying her (other) preferences without violating rules of justice to satisfying her (other) preferences by violating rules of justice.\(^6\) The possessor of a principled preference will comply with rules of justice because she prefers doing so to not doing so. Hence, by justifying principled preferences to individuals, we show that it is rational for each to become and remain the sort of person who will choose to comply with rules of justice.

Is there any question as to whether maintaining principled preferences is rational for individuals occupying a community like our own? The widespread possession of principled preferences benefits all members of a community by increasing their opportunities