I. Additional Arguments Can Be Offered for the Foundational Role of Peoples at the Global Level, though None Should Be Seen as Undermining Cosmopolitanism

Despite the relative thinness of Rawls’s own explicit arguments in *The Law of Peoples* for treating peoples (or states—I use the terms interchangeably here) as foundational at the global level, alternative defenses of his position are available. I doubt, however, that any provides good reason to embrace Rawlsian statism rather than cosmopolitanism. A Law of Persons could ground a fair, cooperative global venture for mutual advantage (allowing for a suitably nuanced conception of what it might mean to talk about a society as a venture)—and might merit the loyalty of the world’s people even if it didn’t (Part II). Such a Law could achieve public justification and could, in any case, bind in the absence of the legitimacy conferred by such justification (Part III). States are not inescapable and basic features of the world scene that any account of global justice must treat as foundational (Part IV). The relativist dismissal of commitments to freedom and equality as contingent features of Western liberal thought need not count against cosmopolitan liberalism (Part V). There is good reason to affirm cosmopolitanism despite multiple objections (Part VI).
II. A Cosmopolitan Global Society Could Qualify as a Fair Cooperative Venture for Mutual Advantage

A. Global Society Could Be a Fair Cooperative Venture

In the absence of a world state, a global society could still count as a fair cooperative venture for mutual advantage, depending on how such a venture is understood. Such a society already links people across state boundaries in mutually beneficial relationships, and it could do so even more effectively if states didn’t work to impede global interchange (Section B). It could count as a fair system of cooperation even in the absence of a global government (Section C). The viability of a Rawlsian approach should not be seen as turning, at least at the global level, on the existence of an actual scheme of fair cooperation, which suggests that Rawlsian standards as regards what is to count as a fair system of cooperation need not be unduly high (Section D). Cosmopolitanism should not be ruled out by concerns about the viability of a global scheme of fair cooperation (Section E).

B. A Global Society Could Be a Cooperative Venture for Mutual Advantage

In virtue of the various interconnections that link people across the planet, global society can be understood as a cooperative venture for mutual advantage. Understanding it in this way could help to blunt one sort of Rawlsian objection to treating all persons as morally and politically equal. There are reasons to qualify talk about global society, or any domestic society, as a single venture; it is more reasonable, I will subsequently suggest, to talk about multiple ventures, about overlapping networks of cooperation, rather than a unified cooperative activity. But it is possible to give a not unreasonable sense to talk about global society as a cooperative venture in a way that can be seen as offering some purchase to talk about global justice in Rawlsian terms.

Rawls argues for the equality of persons at the domestic level in virtue of their possession of the two moral powers. But, of course, in *A Theory of Justice* he doesn’t address the question whether the citizens of a given state are equal to citizens of other states; he treats the state as self-contained. The simple fact that people are,