

The United States of America



Restatement (Second) of Conflict of Laws (1971)

§ 187. Law Of The State Chosen By The Parties

(1) The law of the state chosen by the parties to govern their contractual rights and duties will be applied if the particular issue is one which the parties could have resolved by an explicit provision in their agreement directed to that issue.

(2) The law of the state chosen by the parties to govern their contractual rights and duties will be applied, even if the particular issue is one which the parties could not have resolved by an explicit provision in their agreement directed to that issue, unless either

(a) the chosen state has no substantial relationship to the parties or the transaction and there is no other reasonable basis for the parties' choice, or

(b) application of the law of the chosen state would be contrary to a fundamental policy of a state which has a materially greater interest than the chosen state in the determination of the particular issue and which, under the rule of § 188, would be the state of the applicable law in the absence of an effective choice of law by the parties.

(3) In the absence of a contrary indication of intention, the reference is to the local law of the state of the chosen law.

Comment:

a. Scope of section. The rule of this Section is applicable only in situations where it is established to the satisfaction of the forum that the parties have chosen the state of the applicable law. When the parties have made such a choice, they will usually refer expressly to the state of the chosen law in their contract, and this is the best way of insuring that their desires will be given effect. But even when the contract does not refer to any state, the forum may nevertheless be able to conclude from its provisions that the parties did wish to have the

law of a particular state applied. So the fact that the contract contains legal expressions, or makes reference to legal doctrines, that are peculiar to the local law of a particular state may provide persuasive evidence that the parties wished to have this law applied.

On the other hand, the rule of this Section is inapplicable unless it can be established that the parties have chosen the state of the applicable law. It does not suffice to demonstrate that the parties, if they had thought about the matter, would have wished to have the law of a particular state applied.

Illustration:

1. A contract, by its terms to be performed in state Y, is entered into in state X between A, a domiciliary of X, and B, a domiciliary of Y. The contract recites that the parties "waive restitution in integrum in case of laesio enormis." These notions are foreign to X local law. They exist, on the other hand, in Y local law which furthermore empowers the parties to waive such right of restitution. A court could properly find on these facts that the parties wished to have Y local law applied.

Comment:

b. Impropriety or mistake. A choice-of-law provision, like any other contractual provision, will not be given effect if the consent of one of the parties to its inclusion in the contract was obtained by improper means, such as by misrepresentation, duress, or undue influence, or by mistake. Whether such consent was in fact obtained by improper means or by mistake will be determined by the forum in accordance with its own legal principles. A factor which the forum may consider is whether the choice-of-law provision is contained in an "adhesion" contract, namely one that is drafted unilaterally by the dominant party and then presented on a "take-it-or-leave-it" basis to the weaker party who has no real opportunity to bargain about its terms. Such contracts are usually prepared in printed form, and frequently at least some of their provisions are in extremely small print. Common examples are tickets of various kinds and insurance policies. Choice-of-law provisions contained in such contracts are usually respected. Nevertheless, the forum will scrutinize such contracts with care and will refuse to apply any choice-of-law provision they may contain if to do so would result in substantial injustice to the adherent.

Illustrations:

2. A presents to B for signature a contract which embodies the terms of their prior agreement but which also provides that the rights of the parties under the contract shall be governed by the law of state X. A does not wish B to know of the provision calling for application of X law and therefore says that there is no reason for B to read the contract since it does no more than set forth their earlier agreement. B signs the contract without reading it in

reliance upon A's word. The forum will not give effect to the provision calling for application of X law.

3. In state X, A buys from the B company a ticket on one of B's steamships for transportation from X to state Y. The ticket recites that it shall be governed by Y law and also contains a provision stating that B shall not be liable for injuries resulting from the negligence of its servants. The latter provision is valid under Y local law, but invalid under that of X. In the course of the voyage, A is injured through the negligence of B's servants. A brings suit to recover for his injuries against B in state Z. In determining whether or not to give effect to the choice-of-law provision, the Z court will give consideration to the fact that the contract was drafted unilaterally by B, the dominant party, and then presented to A on a "take-it-or-leave-it" basis.

Comment on Subsection (1):

c. Issues the parties could have determined by explicit agreement directed to particular issue. The rule of this Subsection is a rule providing for incorporation by reference and is not a rule of choice of law. The parties, generally speaking, have power to determine the terms of their contractual engagements. They may spell out these terms in the contract. In the alternative, they may incorporate into the contract by reference extrinsic material which may, among other things, be the provisions of some foreign law. In such instances, the forum will apply the applicable provisions of the law of the designated state in order to effectuate the intentions of the parties. So much has never been doubted. The point deserves emphasis nevertheless because most rules of contract law are designed to fill gaps in a contract which the parties could themselves have filled with express provisions. This is generally true, for example, of rules relating to construction, to conditions precedent and subsequent, to sufficiency of performance and to excuse for nonperformance, including questions of frustration and impossibility. As to all such matters, the forum will apply the provisions of the chosen law.

Whether the parties could have determined a particular issue by explicit agreement directed to that issue is a question to be determined by the local law of the state selected by application of the rule of § 188. Usually, however, this will be a question that would be decided the same way by the relevant local law rules of all the potentially interested states. On such occasions, there is no need for the forum to determine the state of the applicable law.

Illustrations:

4. In State X, A establishes a trust and provides that B, the trustee, shall be paid commissions at the highest rate permissible under the local law of state Y. A and B are both domiciled in X, and the trust has no relation to any state but X. In X, the highest permissible rate of commissions for trustees is 5 per cent. In Y, the highest permissible rate is 4 per cent.

The choice-of-law provision will be given effect, and B will be held entitled to commissions at the rate of 4 per cent.

5. Same facts as in Illustration 4 except that the highest permissible rate of commissions in X is 4 per cent and in Y is 5 per cent. Effect will not be given to the choice-of-law provision since under X local law the parties lacked power to provide for a rate of commissions in excess of 4 per cent and Y, the state of the chosen law, has no relation to the parties or the trust.

Comment on Subsection (2):

d. Issues the parties could not have determined by explicit agreement directed to particular issue. The rule of this Subsection applies only when two or more states have an interest in the determination of the particular issue. The rule does not apply when all contacts are located in a single state and when, as a consequence, there is only one interested state. Subject to this qualification, the rule of this Subsection applies when it is sought to have the chosen law determine issues which the parties could not have determined by explicit agreement directed to the particular issue. Examples of such questions are those involving capacity, formalities and substantial validity. A person cannot vest himself with contractual capacity by stating in the contract that he has such capacity. He cannot dispense with formal requirements, such as that of a writing, by agreeing with the other party that the contract shall be binding without them. Nor can he by a similar device avoid issues of substantial validity, such as whether the contract is illegal. Usually, however, the local law of the state chosen by the parties will be applied to regulate matters of this sort. And it will usually be applied even when to do so would require disregard of some local provision of the state which would otherwise be the state of the applicable law.

Permitting the parties in the usual case to choose the applicable law is not, of course, tantamount to giving them complete freedom to contract as they will. Their power to choose the applicable law is subject to the two qualifications set forth in this Subsection (see Comments *f-g*).

e. Rationale. Prime objectives of contract law are to protect the justified expectations of the parties and to make it possible for them to foretell with accuracy what will be their rights and liabilities under the contract. These objectives may best be attained in multistate transactions by letting the parties choose the law to govern the validity of the contract and the rights created thereby. In this way, certainty and predictability of result are most likely to be secured. Giving parties this power of choice is also consistent with the fact that, in contrast to other areas of the law, persons are free within broad limits to determine the nature of their contractual obligations.

An objection sometimes made in the past was that to give the parties this power of choice would be tantamount to making legislators of them. It was argued that, since it is for

the law to determine the validity of a contract, the parties may have no effective voice in the choice of law governing validity unless there has been an actual delegation to them of legislative power. This view is now obsolete and, in any event, falls wide of the mark. The forum in each case selects the applicable law by application of its own choice-of-law rules. There is nothing to prevent the forum from employing a choice-of-law rule which provides that, subject to stated exceptions, the law of the state chosen by the parties shall be applied to determine the validity of a contract and the rights created thereby. The law of the state chosen by the parties is applied, not because the parties themselves are legislators, but simply because this is the result demanded by the choice-of-law rule of the forum.

It may likewise be objected that, if given this power of choice, the parties will be enabled to escape prohibitions prevailing in the state which would otherwise be the state of the applicable law. Nevertheless, the demands of certainty, predictability and convenience dictate that, subject to some limitations, the parties should have power to choose the applicable law.

On occasion, the parties may choose a law that would declare the contract invalid. In such situations, the chosen law will not be applied by reason of the parties' choice. To do so would defeat the expectations of the parties which it is the purpose of the present rule to protect. The parties can be assumed to have intended that the provisions of the contract would be binding upon them (cf. § 188, Comment *b*). If the parties have chosen a law that would invalidate the contract, it can be assumed that they did so by mistake. If, however, the chosen law is that of the state of the otherwise applicable law under the rule of § 188, this law will be applied even when it invalidates the contract. Such application will be by reason of the rule of § 188, and not by reason of the fact that this was the law chosen by the parties.

Illustrations:

6. In state X, P and D initial an agreement which calls for performance in state Y. The contract states that the rights of the parties thereunder shall be determined by Y law. In X, P sues D for breach of the contract, and D defends on the ground that the contract is void under the X statute of frauds, since it was not signed by him. The contract, however, is valid under Y local law. The X court will find for P.

7. H and W, husband and wife, are domiciled in state X. In state Y, W enters into a contract with C, who is domiciled and doing business in that state, in which C agrees to sell goods to H on credit in return for a guaranty from W in the amount of \$1,000.00. The contract recites that it shall be governed by X law. Under the local law of X, married women have full contractual capacity. Under the local law of Y, however, they lack capacity to bind themselves as sureties for their husbands. In an action by C against W, the contract will not be held invalid for lack of contractual capacity on the part of W.

8. A executes and delivers to B in state X an instrument in which A agrees to indemnify B against all losses arising from B's liability on a certain appeal bond on behalf of C, against whom a judgment has been rendered in state Y. The instrument recites that it shall be governed by the law of Y. It is valid and enforceable under the local law of Y but is unenforceable for lack of consideration under the local law of X. In an action by B against A, the instrument will not be held invalid for lack of consideration.

Comment:

f. Requirement of reasonable basis for parties' choice. The forum will not apply the chosen law to determine issues the parties could not have determined by explicit agreement directed to the particular issue if the parties had no reasonable basis for choosing this law. The forum will not, for example, apply a foreign law which has been chosen by the parties in the spirit of adventure or to provide mental exercise for the judge. Situations of this sort do not arise in practice. Contracts are entered into for serious purposes and rarely, if ever, will the parties choose a law without good reason for doing so.

When the state of the chosen law has some substantial relationship to the parties or the contract, the parties will be held to have had a reasonable basis for their choice. This will be the case, for example, when this state is that where performance by one of the parties is to take place or where one of the parties is domiciled or has his principal place of business. The same will also be the case when this state is the place of contracting except, perhaps, in the unusual situation where this place is wholly fortuitous and bears no real relation either to the contract or to the parties. These situations are mentioned only for purposes of example. There are undoubtedly still other situations where the state of the chosen law will have a sufficiently close relationship to the parties and the contract to make the parties' choice reasonable.

The parties to a multistate contract may have a reasonable basis for choosing a state with which the contract has no substantial relationship. For example, when contracting in countries whose legal systems are strange to them as well as relatively immature, the parties should be able to choose a law on the ground that they know it well and that it is sufficiently developed. For only in this way can they be sure of knowing accurately the extent of their rights and duties under the contract. So parties to a contract for the transportation of goods by sea between two countries with relatively undeveloped legal systems should be permitted to submit their contract to some well-known and highly elaborated commercial law.

g. When application of chosen law would be contrary to fundamental policy of state of otherwise applicable law. Fulfillment of the parties' expectations is not the only value in contract law; regard must also be had for state interest and for state regulation. The chosen law should not be applied without regard for the interests of the state which would be the state of the applicable law with respect to the particular issue involved in the absence of an effective

choice by the parties. The forum will not refrain from applying the chosen law merely because this would lead to a different result than would be obtained under the local law of the state of the otherwise applicable law. Application of the chosen law will be refused only (1) to protect a fundamental policy of the state which, under the rule of § 188, would be the state of the otherwise applicable law, provided (2) that this state has a materially greater interest than the state of the chosen law in the determination of the particular issue. The forum will apply its own legal principles in determining whether a given policy is a fundamental one within the meaning of the present rule and whether the other state has a materially greater interest than the state of the chosen law in the determination of the particular issue. The parties' power to choose the applicable law is subject to least restriction in situations where the significant contacts are so widely dispersed that determination of the state of the applicable law without regard to the parties' choice would present real difficulties.

No detailed statement can be made of the situations where a "fundamental" policy of the state of the otherwise applicable law will be found to exist. An important consideration is the extent to which the significant contacts are grouped in this state. For the forum will be more inclined to defer to the policy of a state which is closely related to the contract and the parties than to the policy of a state where few contacts are grouped but which, because of the wide dispersion of contacts among several states, would be the state of the applicable law if effect were to be denied the choice-of-law provision. Another important consideration is the extent to which the significant contacts are grouped in the state of the chosen law. The more closely this state is related to the contract and to the parties, the more likely it is that the choice-of-law provision will be given effect. The more closely the state of the chosen law is related to the contract and the parties, the more fundamental must be the policy of the state of the otherwise applicable law to justify denying effect to the choice-of-law provision.

To be "fundamental," a policy must in any event be a substantial one. Except perhaps in the case of contracts relating to wills, a policy of this sort will rarely be found in a requirement, such as the statute of frauds, that relates to formalities (*see* Illustration 6). Nor is such policy likely to be represented by a rule tending to become obsolete, such as a rule concerned with the capacity of married women (*see* Illustration 7), or by general rules of contract law, such as those concerned with the need for consideration (*see* Illustration 8). On the other hand, a fundamental policy may be embodied in a statute which makes one or more kinds of contracts illegal or which is designed to protect a person against the oppressive use of superior bargaining power. Statutes involving the rights of an individual insured as against an insurance company are an example of this sort (*see* § § 192-193). To be "fundamental" within the meaning of the present rule, a policy need not be as strong as would be required to justify the forum in refusing to entertain suit upon a foreign cause of action under the rule of § 90.

Illustrations:

9. In state X, A and B, who are both domiciled in that state, negotiate the terms of a contract which is to be performed in X. The contract provides that it shall be governed by the law of state Y; it is signed first by A in X and then by B in Y. A suit involving the validity of the contract is brought before a court of state Z. The court will be more inclined to deny effect to the choice-of-law provision in deference to X policy than it would have been if the elements had not been massed to so great an extent in X.

10. In state X, the A insurance company issues a life insurance policy insuring the life of B. A is incorporated and has its "home office" in X while B is domiciled in state Y. The policy contains a provision stating that the rights of the parties thereunder shall be determined by X law. In his application for the policy, given by B to A's agent in Y, B made a misstatement which under the local law of X would serve as a complete defense to the insurer in a suit on the policy, but would not have this effect under a statute of Y. B brings suit on the policy in a court in state Z. Under the rule of § 192, Y is the state whose local law would govern the validity of the contract in the absence of an effective choice of law by the parties. The Z court will deny effect to the choice-of-law provision.

Comment on Subsection (3):

h. Reference is to "local law" of chosen state. The reference, in the absence of a contrary indication of intention, is to the "local law" of the chosen state and not to that state's "law," which means the totality of its law including its choice-of-law rules. When they choose the state which is to furnish the law governing the validity of their contract, the parties almost certainly have the "local law," rather than the "law," of that state in mind (compare § 186, Comment *b*). To apply the "law" of the chosen state would introduce the uncertainties of choice of law into the proceedings and would serve to defeat the basic objectives, namely those of certainty and predictability, which the choice-of-law provision was designed to achieve.

i. Choice of two laws. The extent to which the parties may choose to have the local law of two or more states govern matters that do not lie within their contractual capacity is uncertain. For example, it is uncertain whether the parties may effectively provide that their capacity to make the contract shall be governed by the local law of one state and the question of formalities by the local law of another. When the parties are domiciled in different states and each has capacity to enter into the contract under the local law of his domicile, they should, subject to the conditions stated in the rule of this Section, be able effectively to provide in the contract that the capacity of each shall be determined by the local law of his domicile.

Chapter 8. Contracts

Topic 1. Validity of Contracts and Rights Created Thereby

Title A. General Principles

s 188. LAW GOVERNING IN ABSENCE OF EFFECTIVE CHOICE BY THE PARTIES

(1) The rights and duties of the parties with respect to an issue in contract are determined by the local law of the state which, with respect to that issue, has the most significant relationship to the transaction and the parties under the principles stated in s 6.

(2) In the absence of an effective choice of law by the parties (see s 187), the contacts to be taken into account in applying the principles of s 6 to determine the law applicable to an issue include:

(a) the place of contracting,

(b) the place of negotiation of the contract,

(c) the place of performance,

(d) the location of the subject matter of the contract, and

(e) the domicile, residence, nationality, place of incorporation and place of business of the parties.

These contacts are to be evaluated according to their relative importance with respect to the particular issue.

(3) If the place of negotiating the contract and the place of performance are in the same state, the local law of this state will usually be applied, except as otherwise provided in ss 189-199 and 203.

COMMENTS

Comment:

a. Scope of section. The rule of this Section applies in all situations where there has not been an effective choice of the applicable law by the parties (see s 187).

COMMENTS

Comment on Subsection (1):

b. Rationale. The principles stated in s 6 underlie all rules of choice of law and are used in evaluating the significance of a relationship, with respect to the particular issue, to the potentially interested states, the transaction and the parties. The factors listed in Subsection (2) of the rule of s 6 can be divided into five groups. One group is concerned with the fact that in multistate cases it is essential that the rules of decision promote mutually harmonious and beneficial relationships in the interdependent community, federal or international. The second group focuses upon the purposes, policies, aims and objectives of each of the competing local law rules urged to govern and upon the concern of the potentially interested states in having their rules applied. The factors in this second group are at times referred to as "state interests"

or as appertaining to an "interested state." The third group involves the needs of the parties, namely the protection of their justified expectations and certainty and predictability of result. The fourth group is directed to implementation of the basic policy underlying the particular field of law, such as torts or contracts, and the fifth group is concerned with the needs of judicial administration, namely with ease in the determination and application of the law to be applied.

The factors listed in Subsection (2) of the rule of s 6 vary somewhat in importance from field to field and from issue to issue. Thus, the protection of the justified expectations of the parties is of considerable importance in contracts whereas it is of relatively little importance in torts (see s 145, Comment b). In the torts area, it is the rare case where the parties give advance thought to the law that may be applied to determine the legal consequences of their actions. On the other hand, parties enter into contracts with forethought and are likely to consult a lawyer before doing so. Sometimes, they will intend that their rights and obligations under the contract should be determined by the local law of a particular state. In this event, the local law of this state will be applied, subject to the qualifications stated in the rule of s 187. In situations where the parties did not give advance thought to the question of which should be the state of the applicable law, or where their intentions in this regard cannot be ascertained, it may at least be said, subject perhaps to rare exceptions, that they expected that the provisions of the contract would be binding upon them.

The need for protecting the expectations of the parties gives importance in turn to the values of certainty, predictability and uniformity of result. For unless these values are attained, the expectations of the parties are likely to be disappointed.

Protection of the justified expectations of the parties by choice-of-law rules in the field of contracts is supported both by those factors in Subsection (2) of s 6 which are directed to the furtherance of the needs of the parties and by those factors which are directed to implementation of the basic policy underlying the particular field of law. Protection of the justified expectations of the parties is the basic policy underlying the field of contracts.

Protection of the justified expectations of the parties is a factor which varies somewhat in importance from issue to issue. As indicated above, this factor is of considerable importance with respect to issues involving the validity of a contract, such as capacity, formalities and substantial validity. Parties entering a contract will expect at the very least, subject perhaps to rare exceptions, that the provisions of the contract will be binding upon them. Their expectations should not be disappointed by application of the local law rule of a state which would strike down the contract or a provision thereof unless the value of protecting the expectations of the parties is substantially outweighed in the particular case by the interest of the state with the invalidating rule in having this rule applied. The extent of the interest of a state in having its rule applied should be determined in the light of the purpose sought to be

achieved by the rule and by the relation of the transaction and the parties to that state (see Comment c).

Protection of justified expectations plays a less significant role in the choice-of-law process with respect to issues that involve the nature of the obligations imposed by a contract upon the parties rather than the validity of the contract or of some provision thereof. By and large, it is for the parties themselves to determine the nature of their contractual obligations. They can spell out these obligations in the contract or, as a short-hand device, they can provide that these obligations shall be determined by the local law of a given state (see s 187, Comment c). If the parties do neither of these two things with respect to an issue involving the nature of their obligations, as, for example, the time of performance, the resulting gap in their contract must be filled by application of the relevant rule of contract law of a particular state. All states have gap-filling rules of this sort, and indeed such rules comprise the major content of contract law. What is important for present purposes is that a gap in a contract usually results from the fact that the parties never gave thought to the issue involved. In such a situation, the expectations of the parties with respect to that issue are unlikely to be disappointed by application of the gap-filling rule of one state rather than of the rule of another state. Hence with respect to issues of this sort, protection of the justified expectations of the parties is unlikely to play so significant a role in the choice-of-law process. As a result, greater emphasis in fashioning choice-of-law rules in this area must be given to the other choice-of-law principles mentioned in the rule of s 6.

c. Purpose of contract rule. The purpose sought to be achieved by the contract rules of the potentially interested states, and the relation of these states to the transaction and the parties, are important factors to be considered in determining the state of most significant relationship. This is because the interest of a state in having its contract rule applied in the determination of a particular issue will depend upon the purpose sought to be achieved by that rule and upon the relation of the state to the transaction and the parties. So the state where a party to the contract is domiciled has an obvious interest in the application of its contract rule designed to protect that party against the unfair use of superior bargaining power. And a state where a contract provides that a given business practice is to be pursued has an obvious interest in the application of its rule designed to regulate or to deter that business practice. On the other hand, the purpose of a rule and the relation of a state to the transaction and the parties may indicate that the state has little or no interest in the application of that rule in the particular case. So a state may have little interest in the application of a rule designed to protect a party against the unfair use of superior bargaining power if the contract is to be performed in another state which is the domicil of the person seeking the rule's protection. And a state may have little interest in the application of a statute designed to regulate or to deter a certain business practice if the conduct complained of is to take place in another state.

Whether an invalidating rule should be applied will depend, among other things, upon whether the interest of the state in having its rule applied to strike down the contract outweighs in the particular case the value of protecting the justified expectations of the parties and upon whether some other state has a greater interest in the application of its own rule.

Frequently, it will be possible to decide a question of choice of law in contract without paying deliberate attention to the purpose sought to be achieved by the relevant contract rules of the interested states. This will be so whenever by reason of the particular circumstances one state is obviously that of the applicable law.

d. The issue involved. The courts have long recognized that they are not bound to decide all issues under the local law of a single state. Thus, in an action on a contract made and to be performed in a foreign state by parties domiciled there, a court under traditional and prevailing practice applies its own state's rules to issues involving process, pleadings, joinder of parties, and the administration of the trial (see Chapter 6), while deciding other issues-- such as whether the defendant had capacity to bind himself by contract--by reference to the law selected by application of the rules stated in this Chapter. The rule of this Section makes explicit that selective approach to choice of the law governing particular issues.

Each issue is to receive separate consideration if it is one which would be resolved differently under the local law rule of two or more of the potentially interested states.

COMMENTS

Comment on Subsection (2):

e. Important contacts in determining state of most significant relationship. In the absence of an effective choice of law by the parties (see s 187), the forum, in applying the principles of s 6 to determine the state of most significant relationship, should give consideration to the relevant policies of all potentially interested states and the relative interests of those states in the decision of the particular issue. The states which are most likely to be interested are those which have one or more of the following contacts with the transaction or the parties. Some of these contacts also figure prominently in the formulation of the applicable rules of choice of law.

The place of contracting. As used in the Restatement of this Subject, the place of contracting is the place where occurred the last act necessary, under the forum's rules of offer and acceptance, to give the contract binding effect, assuming, hypothetically, that the local law of the state where the act occurred rendered the contract binding.

Standing alone, the place of contracting is a relatively insignificant contact. To be sure, in the absence of an effective choice of law by the parties, issues involving the validity of a contract will, in perhaps the majority of situations, be determined in accordance with the local

law of the state of contracting. In such situations, however, this state will be the state of the applicable law for reasons additional to the fact that it happens to be the place where occurred the last act necessary to give the contract binding effect. The place of contracting, in other words, rarely stands alone and, almost invariably, is but one of several contacts in the state. Usually, this state will be the state where the parties conducted the negotiations which preceded the making of the contract. Likewise, this state will often be the state of the parties' common domicile as well. By way of contrast, the place of contracting will have little significance, if any, when it is purely fortuitous and bears no relation to the parties and the contract, such as when a letter of acceptance is mailed in a railroad station in the course of an interstate trip.

The place of negotiation. The place where the parties negotiate and agree on the terms of their contract is a significant contact. Such a state has an obvious interest in the conduct of the negotiations and in the agreement reached. This contact is of less importance when there is no one single place of negotiation and agreement, as, for example, when the parties do not meet but rather conduct their negotiations from separate states by mail or telephone.

The place of performance. The state where performance is to occur under a contract has an obvious interest in the nature of the performance and in the party who is to perform. So the state where performance is to occur has an obvious interest in the question whether this performance would be illegal (see s 202). When both parties are to perform in the state, this state will have so close a relationship to the transaction and the parties that it will often be the state of the applicable law even with respect to issues that do not relate strictly to performance. And this is even more likely to be so if, in addition, both parties are domiciled in the state.

On the other hand, the place of performance can bear little weight in the choice of the applicable law when (1) at the time of contracting it is either uncertain or unknown, or when (2) performance by a party is to be divided more or less equally among two or more states with different local law rules on the particular issue.

It is clear that the local law of the place of performance will be applied to govern all questions relating to details of performance (see s 206).

Situs of the subject matter of the contract. When the contract deals with a specific physical thing, such as land or a chattel, or affords protection against a localized risk, such as the dishonesty of an employee in a fixed place of employment, the location of the thing or of the risk is significant (see ss 189-193). The state where the thing or the risk is located will have a natural interest in transactions affecting it. Also the parties will regard the location of the thing or of the risk as important. Indeed, when the thing or the risk is the principal subject of the contract, it can often be assumed that the parties, to the extent that they thought about the

matter at all, would expect that the local law of the state where the thing or risk was located would be applied to determine many of the issues arising under the contract.

Domicil, residence, nationality, place of incorporation, and place of business of the parties. These are all places of enduring relationship to the parties. Their significance depends largely upon the issue involved and upon the extent to which they are grouped with other contacts. So, for example, when a person has capacity to bind himself to the particular contract under the local law of the state of his domicil, there may be little reason to strike down the contract because that person lacked capacity under the local law of the state of contracting or of performance (see s 198). The fact that one of the parties is domiciled or does business in a particular state assumes greater importance when combined with other contacts, such as that this state is the place of contracting or of performance or the place where the other party to the contract is domiciled or does business. As stated in s 192, the domicil of the insured is a contact of particular importance in the case of life insurance contracts. At least with respect to most issues, a corporation's principal place of business is a more important contact than the place of incorporation, and this is particularly true in situations where the corporation does little, or no, business in the latter state.

COMMENTS

Illustrations:

1. A, who is domiciled in state X, is declared a spendthrift by an X court. Thereafter, A borrows money in state Y from B, a Y domiciliary, who lends the money in ignorance of A's spendthrift status. Under the terms of the loan, the money is to be repaid in Y. A does not pay, and B brings suit in state Z. A would not be liable under X local law because he has been declared a spendthrift; he would, however, be liable under the local law of Y. The first question for the Z court to determine is whether the interests of both X and Y would be furthered by application of their respective local law rules. This is a question that can only be determined in the light of the respective purposes of these rules (see Comment c). The purpose of the X local law rule is obviously to protect X domiciliaries and their families. Hence the interests of X would be furthered by application of the X spendthrift rule. On the other hand, Y's interests would be furthered by the application of its own rule, which presumably was intended for the protection of Y creditors and also to encourage persons to enter into contractual relationships in Y. Since the interests of X and Y would each be furthered by application of their respective rules, the Z court must choose between them. Among the questions for the Z court to determine are whether the value of protecting the justified expectations of the parties and the interest of Y in the application of its rule outweigh X's interest in the application of its invalidating rule. Factors which would support an affirmative answer to this question, and which indicate the degree of Y's interest in the application of its rule, are that A sought out B in Y, that B is domiciled in Y, that the loan was negotiated and made in Y and that the contract called for repayment in Y (see

s 195). If it is found that an X court would not have applied its rule to the facts of the present case, the argument for applying the Y rule would be even stronger. For it would then appear that, even in the eyes of the X court, X interests were not sufficiently involved to require application of the X rule (see s 8, Comment k).

2. A, a married woman, who is domiciled in state X, comes to state Y and there borrows money from B. The loan contract provides that the money is to be repaid in Y. A does not pay, and B brings suit in state Z. A defends on the ground that under Y local law married women lack capacity to bind themselves by contract; they do have such capacity, however, under the local law of X. It is questionable in this case whether the interests of either X or Y would be furthered by application of their respective rules. Y's rule of incapacity was presumably designed to protect Y married women. On the other hand, X's rule of capacity was presumably designed, at least primarily, to protect X transactions. It seems clear in any event that the value of protecting the justified expectations of the parties is not outweighed in this case by any interest Y may have in the application of its rule of incapacity. Under the circumstances, the contract should be upheld on the issue of A's capacity by application of the X rule.

COMMENTS

Comment on Subsection (3):

f. When place of negotiation and place of performance are in the same state. When the place of negotiation and the place of performance are in the same state, the local law of this state will usually be applied to govern issues arising under the contract, except as stated in ss 189-199 and 203. A state having these contacts will usually be the state that has the greatest interest in the determination of issues arising under the contract. The local law of this state should be applied except when the principles stated in s 6 require application of some other law. As stated in Comment c, the extent of a state's interest in having its contract rule applied will depend upon the purpose sought to be achieved by that rule.

g. For reasons stated in s 186, Comment b, the reference is to the "local law " of the state of the applicable law and not to that state's "law" which means the totality of its law including its choice-of-law rules.

h. As to the situation where the local law rule of two or more states is the same, see s 186, Comment c.