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Equality and Global Justice

A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Politics
University of Oxford
July, 2012

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Abstract

This dissertation aims to defend an egalitarian conception of global distributive justice. Many hold that the scope of egalitarian justice should be defined by membership of a single political community but my dissertation will challenge this view. I begin by considering three distinctive arguments against the ideal of global equality. They maintain that egalitarian obligations of justice apply only to those people who are subject to the same sovereign authority which coerces them to abide by its rules; or to those who contribute to the preservation of each other's autonomy through collectively sustaining a state; or to those who belong to the same nation. The first three chapters deal with these arguments respectively. Central to these arguments is the assumption that the domestic and the global contexts are different in some morally relevant way so egalitarian principles of justice apply to the former but not the latter. After rebutting these anti-egalitarian arguments I turn to the more constructive task of developing a form of global egalitarianism that is grounded in the value of equality as a normative ideal of how human relations should be conducted. I argue in Chapter 4 that relational equality—that is, standing in relations of equality to one another (rather than relations characterized by domination or exploitation)—is a demand of justice in the global context. This ideal of relational equality has distributive implications. In Chapter 5 I try to spell out these implications by defending a set of principles of global distributive justice that would follow from our commitment to global relational equality. In the sixth and final chapter, I discuss what responsibilities we have in relation to global injustice, how to distribute the burdens associated with these responsibilities, and whether they are excessively demanding on complying agents.

Acknowledgements

It has been a long and happy journey. Thankfully I have never been alone in it. Oxford is such a splendid place for academic pursuits and I feel deeply grateful for the opportunity to study there.

Many individuals have helped me make this dissertation possible. First, I wish to thank all my friends for their support and kindness throughout these years. Each of them has enriched my life with their friendship. Thanks are also due to fellow students and the participants in numerous classes, lectures, seminars, and workshops. They have shown me what an intellectual community means. Although I am unable to mention here their names individually because the list would be far too long, my gratitude to them remains the same.

When I was a student I was taught by many excellent teachers who served as a light on my path. I shall strive to follow their examples in my own academic career. Three of them deserve particular mention. In my undergraduate years Prof Po-chung Chow of CUHK introduced the fascinating subject of political philosophy to me. He has become my mentor ever since and I owe him the greatest debt of gratitude. Dr Nicholas Bunnin was my supervisor at the Institute for Chinese Studies and he taught me much more than Chinese philosophy. He is the person I know who is closest to the Confucian ideal of *jünzi*. Prof Simon Caney has been a profound and inspiring teacher. I could not wish for a better supervisor. He has read every draft of every chapter of this dissertation meticulously and saved me from many embarrassing mistakes in the writing of this thesis. I am sure a careful reader will not fail to see his influence throughout the text.

I am also indebted to Dr Daniel Butt and Prof David Miller for their insightful comments on the earlier drafts of some chapters. But of course I alone am responsible for any mistake in this dissertation.

Having spent so many hours in different libraries, I must thank the staff at the New Bodleian Library, the Chinese Studies Library and St Antony's College Library for their assistance. I shall never forget my days in the New Bodleian Reading Room,

formerly the Philosophy Reading Room, and its windows through which I gazed at the peaceful garden of Trinity College.

My most sincere thanks go to the Swire Educational Trust for awarding me a full scholarship at St Antony's College. Without its financial support graduate studies would have remained an unfulfilled dream for me. I also thank St Antony's College for giving me a pre-doctoral bursary in the final year of my studies. Dining in the College Hall has been a very pleasant and intellectually stimulating experience for me and I take it to be a kind of informal education.

And last, but certainly not least, I wish to thank Rhonda for her unfailing support, patience, and companionship.

Ka-Wai Ip

July 2012

Hong Kong

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INTRODUCTION

I. THE RESEARCH QUESTION

What form of equality, if any, should be pursued as a matter of justice at the *global* level? Until relatively recently debates about egalitarian justice have often taken it for granted that equality as a demand of justice applies only within the *domestic* context, that is, within the bounds of a given political community. This dissertation, however, will challenge this widely-held view. It seeks to develop and defend a conception of equality which expresses an ideal of how human relations should be conducted and argue that it applies at the global level. This “relational” conception of equality has been defended by some theorists as a social and political ideal within a democratic society.¹ However, there has been very limited discussion about what this ideal of

¹ Elizabeth Anderson, “What Is the Point of Equality?” *Ethics* 109 (1999): 287-337; Samuel Scheffler, “What is Egalitarianism?” *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 31 (2003): 5-39; “Choice, Circumstances, and the Value of Equality,” *Politics, Philosophy & Economics* 4 (2005): 5-28. Anderson has but one footnote about the possible implications of her view for the problem of global justice (p. 321, n.78) and Scheffler likewise focuses his discussion on the relationship between members of the same political community. See also, Martin O’Neill, “What Should Egalitarians Believe?”; and Richard Normans, “The Social Basis of Equality,” *Ratio* 10 (1997): 238-52.

equality may imply for *global* distributive justice. This dissertation will discuss the distributive implications of equality as a relational ideal and defend a set of principles of global distributive justice that are grounded in such an ideal. These include a basic needs principle, a principle of non-exploitation, a principle of equal freedom from domination, and a principle of global equality of opportunity. It may be thought that luck egalitarianism can offer the most compelling objection to global inequality but in this dissertation I shall pursue an alternative path which is relatively underexplored—to ground egalitarian distributive practices in the relational ideal of equality. In the subsequent chapters I shall not discuss the luck egalitarian arguments against global inequalities because I would like to explain why global inequality should matter to someone who does not believe there is a moral presumption against undeserved disadvantages. But it should be noted that I am neither endorsing nor rejecting such a position. My dissertation will therefore steer a middle course between the strong globalist view that the demands of equality apply everywhere with the same strength and the strong statist view that we should only object to inequalities among individuals in the same society. Another point to note is that my concern in this dissertation is largely restricted to the problem of global *distributive* justice. But this term is understood broadly to include not only the allocation of burdens and benefits among individuals *but also* issues regarding the fundamental terms of social and

economic cooperation in the global context. I shall not, however, directly address the problems of *political* justice in this dissertation—such as the possibility of having a cosmopolitan democratic political order or the defensibility of the idea of global democracy.²

Before looking into the recent literature I would like to make a few remarks concerning the meaning of *egalitarianism* or *egalitarian justice*. In my dissertation I shall understand egalitarianism as a class of views which hold that justice at a fundamental level places significant limits on the range of permissible inequalities between individual persons. That is to say, egalitarianism is concerned with the *relative* deprivation of some even when no one suffers from *absolute* deprivation.³ Although egalitarianism does not deny the moral significance of avoiding sufficiency shortfalls, it firmly rejects the view that, above a certain basic minimum, inequalities in individuals' life prospect simply become morally irrelevant.⁴ Nonetheless, an

² For arguments in favor of democratizing global institutions, see, David Held, *Democracy and the Global Order: From the Modern State to Cosmopolitan Governance* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998); Daniel Archibugi and David Held eds., *Cosmopolitan Democracy: An Agenda for a New World Order* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995); Anthony McGrew, "Democracy beyond Borders? Globalization and the Reconstruction of Democratic Theory and Politics," in Anthony McGrew ed., *The Transformation of Democracy? Globalization and Territorial Democracy* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1997), pp.231-66, and Iris Marion Young, *Inclusion and Democracy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000). For an opposing view, see David Miller, "Democracy's Domain," *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 37 (2009): 201-28.

³ For this distinction between absolute and relative deprivation, see Michael Blake, "Distributive Justice, Political coercion and Autonomy," *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 30 (2001): 257-96.

⁴ Paula Casal, "Why Sufficiency is Not Enough," *Ethics* 117 (2007): 296-326.

egalitarian theory of justice does not have to claim that equality is *intrinsically* valuable or without any need to appeal to further reasons. It may be thought that to talk about equality is misguided because whatever good reasons we might have to be moved by egalitarianism actually appeal to some fundamental values distinct from equality itself.⁵ But it seems rather dogmatic to insist that any genuinely egalitarian doctrine must appeal to nothing but equality itself particularly if “equality” is to be understood as an abstract distributive pattern which commends our allegiance apart from all other values. Indeed, it is hard to see why such an arithmetic idea of equality should be so important. To be sure, an egalitarian can appeal to some egalitarian considerations for reducing inequality without committing herself to the idea that equality has intrinsic value.⁶ For example, many egalitarians argue that inequality is objectionable because it is unfair that someone is worse off than others through no fault or choice of one’s own, or it is unfair that equally deserving people are unequally well off.⁷ Although these arguments invoke some account of fairness and do not

⁵ See, for example, David Miller, *National Responsibility and Global Justice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp.51-2. See also, Miller, “Arguments for Equality,” in P. A. French, T. E. Uehling and H. L. Wettstein eds., *Midwest Studies in Philosophy VII: Social and Political Philosophy* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982), pp.73-87.

⁶ Not every egalitarian has to endorse the teleological claim that it is *in itself* bad that some people are worse off than others. See Derek Parfit, “Equality or Priority?” in Matthew Clayton and Andrew Williams eds., *The Ideal of Equality* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000), pp.81-125, at 84; see also Martin O’Neill, “What Should Egalitarians Believe?” *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 36 (2008): 119-56.

⁷ Larry S. Temkin, “Illustrating Egalitarianism,” in Thomas Christiano and John Christman eds., *Contemporary Debates in Political Philosophy* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2009), pp. 155-78. See also G. A.

appeal to the intrinsic value of equality, intuitively we do not seem to have problems regarding these as egalitarian doctrines. Moreover, it is perfectly legitimate for an egalitarian to argue that social and economic inequalities should be reduced because such inequalities may give rise to objectionable forms of domination by some over the others. The underlying idea is that preventing domination is itself an *egalitarian* reason for favoring social and economic equality as it forms part of the background conditions under which people can live with one another as equals, and goes beyond attending to basic needs.⁸ Notice, furthermore, that a global egalitarian may hold that *some* considerations in favor of socio-economic equality have force only within a domestic society. For example, research has shown that some health and social problems are closely related to economic inequality but such a relationship obtains only in rich countries.⁹

In the rest of this introduction I shall first provide a survey of the recent literature on the question of global equality. Next, I shall turn to discuss some methodological issues. In the fourth section, I shall provide an outline of the structure of my

Cohen, "On the Currency of Egalitarian Justice," *Ethics* 99 (1989): 906-44. This is not the place to discuss the precise meaning and implications of these doctrines. My purpose here is not to defend them but simply point out that these positions have been widely regarded as examples of contemporary *egalitarianism*.

⁸ Martin O'Neill, "What Should Egalitarians Believe?" p.125.

⁹ For a discussion of the empirical studies about the social impacts of material inequality, see Richard G. Wilkinson, *The Impact of Inequality: How to Make Sick Societies Healthier* (London: Routledge, 2005).

dissertation. Finally, I shall sketch the current state of global inequality.

II. RECENT LITERATURE ON GLOBAL EQUALITY

Much theorizing about global distributive justice in the recent literature is framed by the debates between cosmopolitan theorists and their opponents.¹⁰ Nonetheless, it is widely (though not universally) accepted that each individual has a justice-based claim to the level of resources that is necessary for a minimally decent life regardless of his country of residence.¹¹ Although the precise content of what is needed for a

¹⁰ Each side of this debate contains a number of distinct approaches. See Caney, "Review Article: International Distributive Justice," *Political Studies* 49 (2001): 974-997; and Charles Beitz, "International Liberalism and Distributive Justice: A Survey of Recent Thought," *World Politics* 51 (1999): 269-96.

¹¹ See, for example, Henry Shue, *Basic Rights: Subsistence, Affluence, and U.S. Foreign Policy*, 2nd ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996); Onora O'Neill, *Faces of Hunger: An Essay on Poverty, Justice and Development* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1986); John Rawls, *The Law of Peoples* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), pp.37, 65; Charles Jones, *Global Justice: Defending Cosmopolitanism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999); Thomas Pogge, *World Poverty and Human Rights: Cosmopolitan Responsibilities and Reforms* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Blake, "Distributive Justice, Political coercion and Autonomy"; Gillian Brock, "Needs and Global Justice," *Philosophy*, supp. vol. 57 (2005): 51-72; David Miller, *National Responsibility and Global Justice* (Oxford: University Press, 2007), and "Justice and Global Inequality," in Andrew Hurrell and Ngaire Woods eds., *Inequality, Globalization, and World Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp.187-210; and Jon Mandle, "Distributive Justice at Home and Abroad," in Thomas Christiano and John Christman eds., *Contemporary Debates in Political Philosophy* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2009), pp. 408-22.

However, not everyone agrees that it is a demand of justice that all persons should be able to meet their basic needs. For example, Thomas Nagel maintains that this is not a matter of *justice* but a matter of *humanity*. See "The Problem of Global Justice," *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 33 (2005): 113-47. Moreover, some realists deny that there is any moral duty to advance the interests of non-citizens

minimally decent life may vary, most people maintain that this requires only minimal principles of global justice.¹² By contrast, there is considerable disagreement, even among those who affirm egalitarian accounts of social justice, about whether there is any duty of global justice that goes beyond eradicating abject misery.

Egalitarian Theories of Global Distributive Justice

A number of arguments have been made in favor of global equality of some sort. To begin with, some theorists defend an egalitarian account of global justice by appealing to what individuals are owed in virtue of their moral status as human beings independent of their respective institutional membership. Their arguments can be summarized as follows. First, one may insist that equality is a morally privileged benchmark in thinking about global justice. Brian Barry, for example, applies the Scanlonian test to the global case and contends that all transnational inequalities of rights, opportunities, and resources have to be justifiable in ways that cannot be reasonably rejected by those who get the least.¹³ Second, it has been argued that the

because the state's duty is to its own people and it should further national interests. See, for example, Hans Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations: the Struggle for Power and Peace*, sixth edition (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1985).

¹² Typically consists of subsistence, basic security and a limited set of freedoms. But some capability theorists argue for a more demanding form of sufficientarianism. See, for example, Nussbaum, *Frontiers of Justice: Disability, Nationality, Species Membership* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2006).

¹³ Barry, "International Society from a Cosmopolitan Perspective," in David Mapel and Terry Nardin eds., *International Society: Diverse Ethical Perspectives* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), pp. 144-63.

principle of fair equality of opportunity should be applied globally. Simon Caney defends this position by arguing that the internal logic of the justification of fair equality of opportunity in the “domestic” case—that it is unfair for a person to have worse opportunities because of his cultural identity—entails that the scope of this principle of justice should be global.¹⁴ Third, a global egalitarian may, like Hillel Steiner, argue that everyone is entitled to an equal share of the values of the world’s unimproved natural resources.¹⁵ Fourth, a global egalitarian can argue for global equality of fortune. The underlying moral conviction of luck egalitarianism that inequalities of advantage deriving from unchosen circumstances are unjust seems to apply across political boundaries. After all, just like one’s family membership, inherited social status, race or gender, citizenship acquired by birth is simply another aspect of people’s circumstances, which, according to luck egalitarianism, should not be allowed to influence people’s relative positions. For example, Cecile Fabre argues that residence in a particular country could be considered an involuntary disadvantage for which people should be compensated.¹⁶ One way to implement this egalitarian

¹⁴ Caney, “Cosmopolitan Justice and Equalizing Opportunities,” *Metaphilosophy* 32 (2001): 113-34, *Justice Beyond Borders: A Global Political Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp.122-3, and “Justice, Borders and the Cosmopolitan Ideal: A Reply to Two Critics,” *Journal of Global Ethics* 3 (2007): 267-74.

¹⁵ Steiner, “Just Taxation and International Redistribution,” in Ian Shapiro and Lea Brilmayer eds., *NOMOS XLI: Global Justice* (New York: New York University Press, 1999).

¹⁶ Fabre, “Global Distributive Justice: An Egalitarian Perspective,” *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*,

principle is to regard birthright citizenship of affluent, stable polities as a special kind of inherited property the transfer of which can be taxed for global distributive purposes. A birthright privilege may be placed on the windfall recipients of citizenship in an affluent polity. The revenues so raised can be devoted to developments projects which promote opportunities of children who are disadvantaged by being born into a poor country.¹⁷ However, my position is different from those of these authors in the sense that it holds that what equality demands of us cannot be wholly insensitive to the degree and nature of interactions and interdependence among the individuals in question.

In contrast to these non-relational arguments, which maintain that a person's justice-based entitlements should not depend on the relation he or she stands to others, some theorists adopt a relational perspective on global justice according to which the demands of equality apply only to individuals who stand in some morally relevant relationship with one other and argue that these relationships obtain at the global level. The current level of global economic interdependence has often been invoked to justify applying certain egalitarian principles of justice to the global context. To take a

supp. vol. 31 (2007): 139-64. See also Alexander Brown, *Ronald Dworkin's Theory of Equality: Domestic and Global Perspectives* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).

¹⁷ For this proposal, see Ayelet Shachar, *The Birthright Lottery: Citizenship and Global Inequality* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009).

prominent example: Charles Beitz argues that, since the global economy constitutes a scheme of social cooperation, individuals from different societies should be represented in a global original position to determine the suitable principles regulating that scheme, and concludes that Rawls' difference principle should apply globally.¹⁸

Darrel Moellendorf, to take another example, argues that an egalitarian account of global distributive justice can be grounded in the inherent dignity of individuals in conjunction of their membership in global institutions because respect for human dignity requires a justification of institutional principles that can be reasonably accepted by those who are unavoidably subject to their rules. In particular, he contends that the principle of equality of opportunity should apply globally because justificatory respect rules out any principle of distribution that permits persons to be privileged merely because of their citizenship or nationality at birth.¹⁹ Although I agree with these authors that a proper account of global equality should be sensitive to the relations that people stand to one another in the global context, my account is

¹⁸ For this kind of view, see Beitz, *Political Theory and International Relations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), pp. 129-53, and Thomas Pogge, *Realizing Rawls* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989). See also, Darrel Moellendorf, *Cosmopolitan Justice* (Boulder: Westview Press, 2002).

However, Beitz later abandons the view that economic interdependence is a necessary and sufficient condition for claims of distributive justice to arise and instead contends that all persons should be included in the global original position simply in virtue of their moral personality, see his "Cosmopolitan Ideas and National Sentiments," *Journal of Philosophy* 80 (1983): 591-600. See also David A. J. Richards, "International Distributive Justice," in J. R. Pennock and J. W. Chapman eds., *NOMOS XXIV: Ethics, Economics and the Law* (New York: New York University Press, 1982).

¹⁹ Moellendorf, *Global Inequality Matters* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2009), esp. chaps 3 and 4.

different from theirs in some important ways. First, unlike the cosmopolitan Rawlsians, I have no intention to extrapolate Rawls' principles of justice to the global case by constructing a global original position of individuals. Second, unlike Moellendorf, I am not committed to the claim that claims of distributive justice only arise among co-participants of some rule-based associations.

My defense of global egalitarianism focuses on the value of equality as a normative ideal of human relations. This "relational" brand of egalitarianism has been advanced by theorists such as Elizabeth Anderson and Samuel Scheffler as an alternative to luck egalitarianism.²⁰ Equality so understood is opposed to oppression, to social hierarchies, to undemocratic distribution of power, and so on. However, these authors are almost completely silent about what their arguments for relational equality may imply for global distributive justice. Iris Young, by contrast, applies the relational theory of equality to the global context but the focus of her discussion is on the problems of global political justice such as global democracy and collective self-determination.²¹ More recently, Gillian Brock invokes the relational theory of equality developed by Anderson to support her own account of global distributive

²⁰ See Anderson, "What Is the Point of Equality?" See also Scheffler, "What is Egalitarianism?" and "Choice, Circumstances, and the Value of Equality."

²¹ Young, "Two Concepts of Self-Determination," in her *Global Challenges: War, Self-Determination, and Responsibility for Justice* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007), pp.39-57; and *Inclusion and Democracy*, chap.7.

justice. However, drawing on Nussbaum's capability approach, she ends up with a set of needs-based minimal floor principles of global justice.²² To sum up, the focus of my dissertation is different from those of these authors—it argues that an attractive ideal of *relational* equality applies at the global level and that such an ideal places significant limits on permissible inequalities among individuals living in different societies.

Finally, Lea Ypi argues for a form of global instrumental egalitarianism that draws on the causal link between absolute deprivation and relative deprivation. She focuses in particular on the unequal distribution of state power in the international arena and argues that such inequality causes absolute deprivation on the part of the global poor. As such, if one is concerned about global poverty, one cannot leave such inequality of state power unchallenged.²³ While I agree with Ypi on the empirical point that the current patterns of global inequalities do cause poverty, I do not hold the view that global inequality matters only when it causes absolute deprivation (and I

²² Brock, *Global Justice: A Cosmopolitan Account* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), chap.3.

²³ Ypi, *Global Justice and Avant-Garde Political Agency* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 112-27. For a similar argument, see Thomas Pogge, "Why Inequality Matters," in David Held and Ayse Kaya eds. *Global Inequality: Patterns and Explanations*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007). I put Ypi in the relational camp because she maintains that global inequality matters as the current global interactions and relations in fact contribute to absolute deprivation.

will elaborate this point in Chapter 4).²⁴

Critiques of Global Equality

Unsurprisingly, the ideal of global equality has been subject to powerful criticisms from different theoretical perspectives. Each of these challenges points out some disanalogy between the domestic and the global contexts which justifies restricting the scope of egalitarian justice to the former. We can identify at least three distinct challenges to global egalitarianism which are not skeptical of the value of equality as such but nonetheless question its applicability in the global realm:

The *Argument from Coercion* maintains that equality is a demand of justice only among those who are subject to the same sovereign authority which coerces them to abide by its rules. On this view what grounds the relevance of egalitarian principles of justice is the fact of *political coercion* and that kind of coercion is absent at the global level. Michael Blake, for example, maintains that political coercion is a *sine qua non* of egalitarian justice because the autonomy-restricting character of the state which

²⁴ Ypi does mention in passing that inequality will affect the autonomy of the poor because “they will always be constrained to endorse whatever more powerful actors determine on their behalf,” (Ibid., p. 126-7) and that a pure sufficientarian approach “creates dependence and cultivates deference.” (Ibid., p. 127) But she does not discuss these points further.

requires a special justification that gives rise to egalitarian claims.²⁵ For Thomas Nagel, it is our *putative* joint authorship of a coercively imposed legal system of the state that generates concerns for equality.²⁶ Mathias Risse, on the other hand, holds that what matters to egalitarianism is not coercion *as such* but coercion that meets the requirements of “political and legal immediacy” which distinguishes coercion exercised by the state from other forms of coercion, say, exercised by supra-state institutions.²⁷

The *Argument from Reciprocity* contends that equality as a demand of justice is a special demand of reciprocity that applies only to those who share in the maintenance and reproduction of a state. On this view global egalitarianism is indefensible because this kind of reciprocity does not exist beyond the domestic society where people contribute to the mutual provision of some basic collective goods. Andrea Sangiovanni, for example, argues that equality is a requirement of reciprocity in the mutual provision of a central class of collective goods necessary for preserving individual autonomy; and, since only states provide these collective goods, we owe a

²⁵ Blake, “Distributive Justice, Political coercion and Autonomy,” p. 289.

²⁶ Nagel, “The Problem of Global Justice.” Nagel holds that all principles of justice must by definition concern the relative gains of people and causes of inequalities between them.

²⁷ Risse, “What to Say about the State,” *Social Theory and Practice* 32 (2006): 671-98.

special duty of egalitarian reciprocity only to our fellow citizens and residents who do their part in sustaining the state's capacity to provide these collective goods.²⁸

Alternatively, some may object to global egalitarianism from a *nationalist* perspective, and argue that substantive principles of equality can apply only within the context of a national community. This kind of objection to global equality, unlike the previous two which focus on the state, holds that *nations* are the privileged context within which egalitarian principle of justice apply.²⁹ On this view belonging to a nation is something that can legitimately affect what a person is entitled to as a matter of justice and global egalitarianism is misguided because it overlooks the moral relevance of nationality in determining people's responsibilities and entitlements. For example, it could be argued that a shared national culture is essential for identifying the appropriate metric for egalitarian principles of justice to work. Besides, the fact that people belong to different self-determining nations poses a serious threat to global egalitarianism because individuals can be held responsible for the collective decisions and preferences of their nation.³⁰

²⁸ Sangiovanni, "Global Justice, Reciprocity, and the State," *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 35 (2007): 3-39.

²⁹ Miller, *National Responsibility and Global Justice*. See also Miller, "Against Global Egalitarianism," *The Journal of Ethics* 9 (2005): 55-79, "Justice and Global Inequality" and *On Nationality* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).

³⁰ Miller, *National Responsibility and Global Justice*, chap. 3.

Three observations can be made about these three major critiques of global equality. First, these arguments are what can be called *disanalogy arguments*. They all share the following structure: (i) concerns for substantive equality are appropriate within a particular context only when certain property is present; (ii) the property that is needed to trigger the concern for substantive equality is present in the context of a domestic society (such as a state or a nation) but not in the global realm; and therefore, (iii) egalitarian principles of distributive justice should be adopted within the state but not at the global level.³¹ Second, it should also be noted that these arguments do not question the merely formal notion of equal consideration, as expressed by the principle that the comparable claims of persons deserve equal respect and should be given equal weight, should apply globally as well as domestically. What they criticize is the view that reducing substantive inequality is morally important in the global context. Third, these arguments do not deny that egalitarian considerations matter domestically so they should be distinguished from the thoroughly anti-egalitarian views which deny that equality is a relevant ideal even within domestic contexts.³²

³¹ For this definition of disanalogy agreement, see Simon Caney, "Global Distributive Justice and the State," *Political Studies* 56 (2008): 487-518.

³² See, for example, Anthony Flew, *The Politics of Procrustes: Contradictions of Enforced Equality* (London: Temple Smith, 1981); Peter Weston, "The Empty Idea of Equality," *Harvard Law Review* 95 (1982): 537-96; Harry Frankfurt, "Equality as a Moral Ideal," *Ethics* 98 (1987): 21-43; Matt Cavanagh, *Against Equality of Opportunity* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002); John Kekes, *The Illusions of Egalitarianism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003), and "A Reasonable Alternative to Egalitarianism," in Christiano and Christman eds., *Contemporary Debates in Political Philosophy*, pp.

III. METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES

My dissertation should be regarded as a work within the tradition of analytic political philosophy. In this section I shall discuss two methodological issues: the first is concerned with the method of justification; and the second is concerned with to extent to which the formulation and justification of basic principles of justice should depend on the *actual* form and structure of the practice they are intended to govern.

Reflective Equilibrium

Let me begin with the first issue. How are we to justify a conception of justice? The general approach to justification that will be employed in this dissertation is the method of reflective equilibrium. This approach suggests that in the process of identifying appropriate principles of justice one should seek to strive for a “reflective equilibrium” between the principles and our considered moral judgments. According to this approach to justification, one should subject one’s moral judgments to critical scrutiny, removing bias, self-interest, and so on and then one should test the proposed

principles against these considered judgments. When they diverge, one would have to consider whether to modify or give up the judgments or to revise the principles. One then continue to work back and forth between one's principles and judgments until they cohere.³³ In addition to this, we may say that for a conception of justice to be justified, it must be able to withstand objections that others may level against it.

Now let us consider three possible objections to the method of reflective equilibrium. I shall argue that they are all unpersuasive. The first objection is that reflective equilibrium is in fact a form of subjective intuitionism which merely systematizes our intuitions and thus cannot be a method of justification.³⁴ However, it is clear that the method of reflective equilibrium does not simply systematize our considered judgments for it permits dramatic revision of those judgments in light of theoretical considerations. No considered judgments, on this account, are held to be fixed and this feature distinguishes reflective equilibrium from intuitionism which is typically foundationalist.³⁵ A second objection is that the method of reflective

³³ Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, rev. ed. (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1999), pp. 40-6, and *Justice as Fairness: A Restatement* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2001), pp.29-32. See also T. M. Scanlon, "Rawls on Justification," in Samuel Freeman ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Rawls* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp.140-1.

³⁴ R. M. Hare, "Rawls' Theory of Justice," in Norman Daniels ed., *Reading Rawls: Critical Studies on Rawls' A Theory of Justice* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1989), pp.81-107.

³⁵ Norman Daniels, *Justice and Justification: Reflective Equilibrium in Theory and Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp.26-8.

equilibrium has justificatory force only when the considered judgments it begins with are initially credible (rather than merely initially believed) for some reason other than their coherence.³⁶ This point seems to me largely correct but, as Scanlon points out, it does not show the method of reflective equilibrium to be flawed. Here it is helpful to bear in mind that we begin with a set of judgments rather than some observations that we, or others, hold certain views, and an important aspect of what it is for them to be judgments is that we are supposed to give supporting reasons for them. Thus, it is unlikely that the method of reflective equilibrium will begin with some judgments that are merely initially believed.³⁷ On the other hand, dogmatically held prejudices are more likely to be exposed to criticisms when we start scrutinizing how we come to hold the beliefs that we hold. A further possible objection is that the method of reflective equilibrium is too conservative as it begins with what people *believe* about justice and those beliefs may simply be socially and historically contingent. In reply, one can say that the method of reflective equilibrium does not merely seek to describe what people believe about justice and determine whether they are internally coherent. It is also *deliberative* in the sense that it helps us to decide what to believe about justice and so the class of considered judgments is not fixed at the first stage, like a set

³⁶ Richard Brandt, *A Theory of the Good and the Right* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), p.20.

³⁷ Scanlon, "Rawls on Justification," p. 149.

of data, but can at least in principle change throughout the process.³⁸ The method of reflective equilibrium begins with our considered judgments because they are most likely to be correct but it also requires us to reflect upon them by considering various reasons for holding them and revise them when appropriate. Therefore, I cannot see how the method of reflective equilibrium is more conservative than other methods of justifications in this respect because it allows us to scrutinize the content of our considered judgments and how we come to hold them.

There are, of course, other criticisms of the method of reflective equilibrium.³⁹ Space precludes a fuller discussion of reflective equilibrium, which is a project that is beyond the scope of this dissertation, but I hope I have at least stated clearly the approach of justification I will employ in this dissertation and explained why I think it is not vulnerable to some oft-stated concerns.

Existing Practices and Basic Principles

Another methodological issue that I need to address is whether the justification and formulation of principles of justice should depend on the form and character of

³⁸ Ibid., p.142.

³⁹ See, for example, James Griffin, *Value Judgment: Improving Our Ethical Beliefs* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), pp.3-18.

actually existing institutions to which they are said to apply. My answer to this question is a negative one. I take the fundamental aim of having a conception of justice to be providing us with a *normative* point of view from which we can evaluate existing institutions and practices so it must be in some important ways unfettered by the actual form and structure of the existing institutions.⁴⁰ However, it may be useful to consider the opposite view for the moment. The practice-dependence thesis states that “the content, scope, and justification of a conception of justice depends on the structure and form of the practices that the conception is intended to govern.”⁴¹ On an *institutionalist* interpretation of this thesis, the appropriate principles of justice for a particular institution depend on the *empirical and interpretative facts* about that institution.⁴² On this view justification of a principle of justice must depend on a proper interpretation of the point and purpose of the institutional practice and of the intended role of justice within it. The acceptance of this practice-dependence view has

⁴⁰ This, however, does not imply that all basic principles of justice should be completely fact-independent. What it denies is that empirical and interpretive facts about the actually existing practices and institutions should condition the justification, scope or content of basic principles of justice. Compare G. A. Cohen, “Facts and Principles,” *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 31 (2003): 211-45. For a critical response to Cohen’s view, see Miller, “Political Philosophy for Earthlings,” in David Leopold and Marc Stears eds., *Political Theory: Methods and Approaches* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp.29-48.

⁴¹ Andrea Sangiovanni, “Justice and the Priority of Politics to Morality,” *The Journal of Political Philosophy* 16 (2008): 137-64, at 138.

⁴² *Ibid.*, pp.138-9, 142-4, 146-52. The other form of practice-dependence view that I am not going to discuss is “social conventionalism” which maintains that the correct principles of justice governing the distribution of a good should depend upon the social meaning of the goods in question. For simplicity, hereafter the term “practice-dependence” view will refer exclusively to the institutionalist version of it.

evident implications for the global justice debates: it *allows* theorists to argue that the egalitarianism should have a more restricted scope because egalitarian principles of justice are appropriate only within certain institutional contexts.⁴³ In the rest of this section I shall discuss this practice-dependence thesis as Sangiovanni has defined it and explain why I think it is problematic.⁴⁴ I shall begin by considering three considerations to which the practice-dependence view owes much of its intuitive appeal and show that these considerations do not in fact count in favor of it. Next, I shall identify three problems with the practice-dependence thesis.

Three considerations can be cited to support the practice-dependence approach to justifying a conception of justice. First of all, it may be thought that the practice-dependence thesis better matches with our intuition that the appropriate regulative principles of a practice should vary according to the nature of that practice.⁴⁵ The practice-dependence view can account for this intuition because it suggests that different principles of justice should apply to different institutions or

⁴³ See, for example, Nagel, "The Problem of Global Justice"; Blake, "Distributive Justice, Political coercion, and Autonomy"; Sangiovanni, "Global Justice, Reciprocity, and the State," and Samuel Freeman, "The Law of Peoples, Social Cooperation, Human Rights, and Distributive Justice," *Social Philosophy & Policy* 23 (2006): 29-68. But this relation is *not* a logical entailment.

⁴⁴ For other defenses of the practice-dependence view, see Aaron James, "Constructing Justice for Existing Practice: Rawls and the Status Qua," *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 22 (2005): 281-316. But I shall focus on Sangiovanni's version in this section.

⁴⁵ As Rawls puts it, "the correct regulative principle of a thing depends on the nature of that thing." (*A Theory of Justice*, p.25.) See also *Justice as Fairness*, pp.10-12.

practices depending on their respective nature.

However, this does *not* show that we should prefer the practice-dependence view to its alternatives because those who reject the practice-dependence thesis can also accommodate this intuition. It could be argued that the actual point and purpose of the institutional practices do not “give rise” to principles of justice as such, but merely affect the application of such principles. A rule-utilitarian, for example, could hold that different rules or regulations should apply to different practices according their respective nature in order to produce the greatest good for the greatest number. Therefore, the intuition that different rules should apply to different practices does not actually favor the practice-dependence view over its alternatives.⁴⁶

Second, the practice-dependence view seems to be more realistic in the sense that it accepts the limits imposed by actually existing institutions when constructing principles of justice. But this reason is also unpersuasive. There is no reason for thinking that all limits imposed by actual institutions are morally acceptable and thus should be treated as moral parameters that must be respected. But to determine which limits are morally acceptable we need to appeal to reasons other than the fact that they

⁴⁶ Alternatively, one may claim that the justification of basic principles should depend not on the actual point and purpose of that institution but only its *normative* point and purpose (i.e. what aims and goals it *ought to* serve). This seems to another kind of practice-dependence view. But to determine what aims and goals a practice ought to serve, one most likely has to appeal to some reasons external to the practice itself. As such, this alternative view will ultimately collapses into a practice-independent approach.

follow from existing institutions. Moreover, a practice-independence theorist can also accept these limits but do so only in a purely descriptive way: so that they will only affect the *implementation* of a conception of justice.⁴⁷ That is to say, one can concede that we should pay attention to the facts about the actually existing institutions and practices in determining what we should do to discharge our duties of justice but only for the reason that these facts determine how and to what extent that justice can be realized in these practices.

Third, and finally, the practice-dependence thesis may be said to embody the idea that “politics is prior to morality.”⁴⁸ Again, this does not show that the practice-dependence view is preferable to its alternatives. How are we to understand this idea? On one reading this priority means that the disputes about what justice requires are essentially *political* disagreements in the sense that each party is trying to justify a particular use of coercive force. But it still does not follow that the particular ways in which actual institutions solve political disagreements should have normative weight in justifying basic principles of justice. Alternatively, the priority of politics over morality can be understood as saying that political institutions are essential for

⁴⁷ Caney, “Global Distributive Justice and the State,” p. 507.

⁴⁸ Sangiovanni, “Justice and the Priority of Politics to Morality,” pp.156-60.

securing the condition of order, trust and security without which pursuit of justice is impossible. But again the practice-independence theorists need not deny this. Finally, if the priority of politics to morality means the question of justice is relevant only when political institutions have solved the question of order, trust and security, it is unclear why we should affirm this priority in the first place.

So none of the reasons we have considered support the practice-dependence thesis. In addition to this, there are three potential problems with the practice-dependence thesis. The first problem is that such a view gives *undue* normative weight to the historically contingent facts (which may well stem from past injustice) about the actually existing institutional practices. As such, it cannot offer us adequate theoretical resources to critically reflect upon whether we should have that institution (and not its possible alternatives) in the first place. Also, it should be noted that the aims that an institution is intended to serve and the reasons why its participants uphold it may themselves be morally objectionable. It is rather unclear why these facts about the institution should be given weight in determining the appropriate principles of justice. This problem becomes most evident when a practice-dependence theorist encounters institutional practices that are grossly unjust such as slavery or caste system. It is rather doubtful that in this kind of cases a theorist should “give some initial plausibility to the structure and form of the institutions as

they are.”⁴⁹

This point highlights a second problem with the practice-dependence view. To be sure, a practice-dependence theorist could also condemn such institutions and recommend their abolishment but he can only do so by temporarily deviating from the practice-dependence view and appeal to some reasons that are themselves independent of the descriptive or interpretation facts about the institutions. For example, he can say that any institution whose survival must rely solely on systematic and unmediated coercion is thereby unjust regardless of its actual point and purpose and of the historical and political context within which it arises. Alternatively, one may claim that the practice-dependence view is a plausible view of justice only if it applies to institutions and practice that meet a certain minimal standard—for example, institutions and practices that do not systematically violate fundamental human rights. However, in so doing one has to rely on at least some reasons and values that one has already endorsed independently of the institutions in question to determine what that minimal standard is.

A further potential problem with the practice-dependence thesis is that it is inapplicable in situations where the relevant practices *do not* but *ought to* exist. For

⁴⁹ Sangiovanni, “Justice and the Priority of Politics to Morality,” p.163 (emphasis added).

example, activities of some agents may have pervasive negative impacts on the life chances of others precisely because these interactions are *not* being regulated by any scheme for coordinating action and this should be regarded as a matter of justice.⁵⁰ In fact, one reason why institutions are the appropriate subject of justice is that it can “secure just background conditions against which the actions of individuals and associations take place.”⁵¹ However, if one adopts the practice-dependence view, one is bound to conclude that there can be no injustice in this case because practice-dependence view maintains that claims of justice arise only when there is a relevant practice.

It may be worth pointing out that the practice-independent approach does not have to deny the normative significance of institutional practices for distributive justice. There are several ways in which institutions have normative significance: (i) *Distributive Consequences*: one commonly cited reason for the normative significance of institutions is that some of them could have pervasive impacts on people’s opportunities and advantages.⁵² However, it should be noted that the persons who are affected by an institution may not be limited to its participants. (ii) *Relations*:

⁵⁰ Arash Abizadeh, “Cooperation, Pervasive Impact, and Coercion: On the Scope (not Site) of Distributive Justice,” *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 35 (2007): 318-58, at 339.

⁵¹ Rawls, *Political Liberalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), p.266.

⁵² See, for example, Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, p.7, and *Justice as Fairness*, pp.55-7.

institutions can fundamentally alter the relations in which people stand to one another. Institutions could alter the moral character of people's relationships by defining the terms of their interaction. For example, the structure and character of institutions may create, maintain, or reinforce domination (or other forms of oppression) of one group over another, or they can relegate inferior status to some participants. It should be noted that the first two ways in which institutions are normatively significant are not practice-dependent because they appeal to general facts about what impacts institutions may have on individuals but not empirical facts about any particular existing institution. (iii) *Instrumental Values*: institutions are instrumentally valuable for the effective pursuit of justice. That is due to their capacities to allocate and enforce duties, arbitrate jurisdictional disputes, overcome collective action problems, promote accountability and ensure fair cooperation.⁵³ (iv) *Impacts on People's Behavior*: institutional change may influence people's preference or generate commitment to certain norms and ideals and thus encourages a more just distribution.⁵⁴

⁵³ Simon Caney, "Cosmopolitan Justice and Institutional Design," *Social Theory and Practice* 32 (2006): 725-56, at 734-42.

⁵⁴ Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, p. 269. See also Joshua Cohen, "Taking People as They Are?" *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 30 (2002): 363-86. This point can also be seen as one of the instrumental values that institutions may possess.

I have in this section discussed the method of reflective equilibrium and explained why I reject the practice-dependence thesis. The next section will outline the structure of my dissertation.

IV. THE STRUCTURE OF THIS DISSERTATION

This dissertation is divided into three parts. Part I aims to defend global egalitarianism against three rival views and it has three chapters. Chapter 1 is concerned with the *Argument from Coercion*.⁵⁵ It will begin with a discussion of the concept of coercion and some possible reasons why it may have seemed important. The Chapter will then examine a number of attempts to associate political coercion with the demand of equality and argue that none of them is persuasive. Finally, it will argue that there is an alternative justificatory approach through which political coercion can be justified without reference to people's distributive shares and

⁵⁵ This view has previously been subject to a fair amount of critical discussions, see, for example, Caney, "Global Distributive Justice and the State"; A. J. Julius, "Nagel's Atlas," *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 34 (2006): 176-92; Joshua Cohen and C. Sabel, "Extra Rempublicam Nulla Justitia," *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 34 (2006): 147-75; Arash Abizadeh, "Cooperation, Pervasive Impact, and Coercion: On the Scope (not Site) of Distributive Justice," *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 35 (2007): 318-58; Ryan Pevnick, "Political Coercion and the Scope of Distributive Justice," *Political Studies* 56 (2008): 399-413; and Moellendorf, *Global Inequality Matters*, chap.2.

therefore one can reject the Argument from Coercion without denying that political coercion needs to be justified to those who are subject to it.

Chapter 2 will discuss the *Argument from Reciprocity*. It will begin by arguing that equality as a demand of justice does not require the prior-existence of a *cooperative* venture that is mutually advantageous. The Chapter will then challenge the view that a person's egalitarian entitlements should depend on his or her contributions to the mutual provision of basic collective goods by pointing out the difficulties of specifying an appropriate account of contribution. It will also critically examine the supposed relevance of reciprocity *in the mutual provision of basic collective goods* to elaborating an egalitarian conception of justice. The fifth section will consider some possible reasons for attributing moral significance to the mutual provision of basic collective goods and argue that none of these reasons justifies restricting the scope of egalitarian justice to the state. The final section will explore a form of global egalitarianism that is not susceptible to the critique of the Argument from Reciprocity but can also account for our intuitions in some real life examples regarding the significance of equality.

Chapter 3 will focus on the *Nationalist* perspective on global justice which presents a direct challenge to global egalitarianism. The Chapter will first consider an

anti-universalist argument which claims that it is reasonable for some people, depending on their worldview, to reject the liberal egalitarian conception of justice. It will then turn to discuss the metric problem—the view that there can be no appropriate metric for egalitarian justice to work beyond the context of a national community because a shared *national* culture is required to give content to the requirements of egalitarian justice. Finally, it will discuss the dynamic problem—the view that egalitarian redistribution across societies is unfair because people belong to different national communities that are politically self-determining. It will also examine the idea of national responsibility which is the key assumption of the dynamic problem.

Part II aims to articulate and defend a relational account of global egalitarian distributive justice and it has two chapters. Chapter 4 will provide an account of what it means for people to stand in a relation of equality to one another in the global context. It will start with a discussion of whether we do stand in some relations to distant strangers in the global context that give rise to claims of distributive justice. It will then argue that we have a duty to construct our relations to one another in the global context in ways that reflect each other's status as equal moral agents. In particular, it will argue that a relational ideal of equality has three aspects: (1) the preservation of self-respect, (2) non-domination, and (3) fair terms of cooperation in

collective endeavors. Chapter 5 will discuss the implications of the relational ideal of equality for global distributive justice. Relational egalitarianism is concerned fundamentally with relational problems but it is not indifferent to the distributions of advantages among individuals. The task of this chapter is to identify a set of principles of global distributive justice that will follow from the relational ideal of equality. These include a principle against exploitation, a basic needs principle, a principle of global non-domination, and a principle of global equality of opportunity.

Part III is about responsibility for global justice and it consists of Chapter 6. The idea is that a satisfactory account of justice should look at the problem not only from the perspective of recipients and rights but also from the perspective of agents and obligations. The Chapter will discuss what duties we have according to the relational account of global egalitarian justice. It will deal with the question of who bears the responsibilities for global justice. The idea is that various agents, including both individual and collective entities, should be responsible for bringing about just outcomes and the content of their responsibilities will depend on their respective position in the global order. Then it will consider the underlying principles that should guide the allocations of burdens associated with pursuing global justice. Because of the gravity of current global injustices, taking responsibilities for global justice may

seem to be a daunting task. This raises the concern that my account of global justice is overly demanding on those who will be required to be the net contributors and should be rejected on this ground.

To sum up, I will in my dissertation try to defend a relational conception of equality and argue that it applies at the global level, to meet the objections to global egalitarianism, and to derive a set of obligations that are entailed by this ideal of equality.

V. *THE CURRENT STATE OF GLOBAL INEQUALITY*

Let me end this introduction by a brief account of the current state of global inequality.

How unequal is the world in socio-economic terms? I shall define socio-economic inequality as the inequality between individuals with respect to their (1) *economic facilities* and (2) *social opportunities*, which are two types of instrumental freedoms that contribute to the general capability of a person to live the way he or she would like to live. To be more specific, economic facilities refer to the opportunities that individuals respectively enjoy to utilize economic resources for the purpose of consumption, production, or exchange. These opportunities will depend on the

resources owned or available for use as well as on the conditions of exchange such as relative prices and the working of markets. Social opportunities refer to the arrangements that society makes for education, health care, and so on. These arrangements are important for the conduct of private lives as well as for more effective participation in economic and political activities.⁵⁶ As such, socio-economic inequality is a broader notion than that of income inequality because socio-economic inequality will take other aspects of deprivation, such as forced unemployment, ill health, lack of education, and social exclusion, into consideration.⁵⁷

The next conceptual question concerns the distinction between *international* and *global* inequalities. International inequality takes country as the basic unit of observation and identifies the difference between the countries' mean figures such as income, assuming that everyone within these countries is the same with respect to the subject being compared. It can either be weighted or unweighted by their populations. This concept of inequality thus ignores within-country differences. Global inequality, by contrast, takes individual as the basic unit of observation. It is inequality among all persons in the world regardless of where they live (and so must be applied to subjects

⁵⁶ For these two concepts, see Amartya Sen, *Development as Freedom* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 38-40.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 107-8.

that admit individual variations). It therefore includes between- as well as within-country inequalities.⁵⁸

Now let us turn to some empirical matters. Given the enormous difficulties in measuring people's economic facilities and social opportunities across societies, we need to find some alternative measurements which could serve as indicators for the disparities in these two dimensions. First, we can assess people's social opportunities by considering how their respective society scores in the Human Development Indicators (HDI) prepared by the United Nations Development Program each year. HDI involves the following criteria: people's access to primary, secondary, and tertiary education; their literacy rates; their access to medical care; their opportunity to gain jobs with comparable purchasing parity; their personal security level; and their access to technology.⁵⁹ HDI scores can certainly give us some rough ideas about the social opportunities that people have in different societies, and these data suggest that the world is very unequal in terms of people's social opportunities.

As for comparing people's economic facilities, one may look at the differences in their (disposable) incomes—in many cases converted into international dollars using

⁵⁸ Branko Milanovic, *Worlds Apart: Measuring International and Global Inequality* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005), chap. 1, and "Globalization and Inequality," in David Held and Ayşe Kaya eds., *Global Inequality: Patterns and Explanations* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007), pp. 26-49. Milanovic confines his discussion to variations in individual incomes (or expenditures) but these concepts can also be applied to other subjects.

⁵⁹ UNDP, *Human Development Report 2009* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), pp. 143-6.

purchasing power parity (PPP) and sometimes based on official exchange rate (FX).⁶⁰

Different measures of inequality have been used to describe worldwide income distribution. Among them Gini coefficient is the most commonly used measurement of income inequality.⁶¹ Global inequality of income as measured by Gini coefficient consists of three parts: (1) Within-country inequality: it is a weighted sum of within-country inequality. Each country's inequality is represented by its own Gini coefficient, and the weight is given by the product of the country's share in world population and the country's share in the world income. (2) Between-country inequality: all countries are ranked by their mean income, and that the relative distance between the two country's mean incomes is weighted by the product of the poorer country's share in world income and the richer country's share in world population. (3) Overlap: when calculating global inequality, one must take into

⁶⁰ For a review of the existing evidence on global inequality, see Sudhir Anand and Paul Segal, "What Do We Know about Global Income Inequality?" *Journal of Economic Literature* 46 (2008): 57-94.

While many economists favor measuring incomes on the basis of PPP, some prefer using FX, see, for example, Roberto Patricio Korzeniewicz and Timothy Patrick Moran, *Unveiling Inequality: A World-Historical Perspective* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2009).

⁶¹ The Gini coefficient compares the income of each person with the incomes of all other people, and the sum of all such bilateral income differences is divided in turn by the number of people who are included in this calculation and the average income of the group. It ranges from 0 (full equality) to 100 (maximum inequality). When represented in geographical terms, Gini coefficient is the ratio of the difference between the line of absolute equality (the diagonal) and the Lorenz curve—representing the cumulative percentage of recipients ranked by income—and the triangular region underneath the diagonal. See Milanovic, *The Haves and the Have-nots: A Brief and Idiosyncratic History of Global Inequality* (New York: Basic Book, 2011), pp. 29-30; and Sen, *On Economic Inequality* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973), pp. 29-31.

consideration the fact that someone who lives in a richer country may still have a lower income than someone who lives in a poor country.⁶² It is a widely shared consensus among economists that global income inequality today is very high. For example, based on the most recent data generated by household survey, Milanovic estimates that global inequality of income is at 70 Gini points; the richest decile receives 57 percent of the global income while the poorest receives merely 0.6 percent.⁶³

While it is widely accepted that the contemporary level of global socio-economic inequality is high, there is considerable disagreement about the recent trend of global income distribution. Some economists, as well as advocates of globalization, argue that the income gap between the rich and the poor is declining globally in the last twenty years. Some of these authors attribute such a decline largely to the benign effects of economic globalization⁶⁴, while others consider this as result of the spread

⁶² For the algebraic formulation of Global income inequality, see Milanovic, *Worlds Apart*, pp. 20-4.

⁶³ Milanovic, "Global Inequality Recalculated: The Effect of New 2005 PPP Estimates on Global Inequality," World Bank Policy Research Working Paper 5061, September 2009. Ideally, for calculating global inequality of income, we should have a world household survey to find out what is the global income distribution. But short of that we have to use individual's country's surveys, collate them and derive global distribution of income across individuals. Also, sometimes expenditures will be used depending on the information that the country collects in its national survey.

⁶⁴ See, for example, David Dollar, "Globalization, Poverty and Inequality since 1980," in Held and Kaya eds., *Global Inequality*, pp. 73-103; Xavier Sala-i-Martin, "The World Income Distribution of Income: Falling Poverty and ... Convergence, Period!" *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 121 (2006): 351-97; and Jagdish Bhagwati, *In Defense of Globalization* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), chap.5.

of industrialization to developing countries (most notably China and India) and predicts that socio-economic inequality will continue to decline.⁶⁵ Against these views, Branko Milanovic contends that the apparent decline in population weighted international inequality is due to the economic growth of China (whose poverty reduction has probably been exaggerated) but this ignores the fact that regional disparity has been increasing rapidly within China, and the decline in international inequality would disappear altogether if China is excluded from the sample.⁶⁶ As for global inequality of income based on the data collected through household surveys, the overall trend of global income inequality is not clear.⁶⁷ It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to settle the debates over the overall trend of global inequality and its relationship with globalization but I would like to stress that the existing level of global socio-economic inequality, which is alterable through collective actions, is high enough to deserve our attention.

⁶⁵ Glenn Firebaugh, *The New Geography of Global Income Inequality* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003).

⁶⁶ Milanovic, "Globalization and Inequality," pp. 31-43. See also Robert H. Wade, "Should We Worry about Income Inequality?" in Held and Kaya eds., *Global Inequality*, pp. 104-131, at 110-14.

⁶⁷ Milanovic, "Global Inequality Recalculated," pp. 11-13.

CHAPTER 1

EQUALITY AND THE STATE (I) —COERCION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Many hold that equality is a demand of justice only among fellow citizens. On this view egalitarian principles of distributive justice should be applied within the state but should not be adopted at the global level. This chapter aims to examine one type of argument for accepting this view—the *Argument from Coercion*—which holds that equality is a demand of justice only among those who are subject to a shared network of coercive governance. On this view no egalitarian principle of distributive justice should be adopted beyond the state because there is no supra-state organization that subjects individuals to coercion in the same way that states do.

The Argument from Coercion has recently been defended by Michael Blake and

Thomas Nagel.¹ These authors have different views regarding what sort of normative duties actually exists beyond state borders. For Blake, concern for autonomy justifies a duty of justice to combat absolute deprivation globally.² For Nagel, however, only humanitarian duties exist in absence of political coercion.³ Nonetheless, both of these authors explicitly reject the idea of global equality. According to Blake, “a concern with relative economic shares is a plausible interpretation of liberal principles only when those principles are applied to individuals who share liability to the coercive network of state governance,”⁴ and therefore, “coercion, not cooperation, is the *sine qua non* of distributive justice, making relevant principles of relative deprivation.”⁵ Nagel also claims that justice, which by its nature concerns with the relative conditions of people and the reasons for such inequalities, applies “only to a form of organization that claims political legitimacy and the right to impose decision by force, and not to a voluntary association or contract among independent parties concerned to

¹ Blake, “Distributive Justice, Political coercion, and Autonomy,” *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 30 (2001): 257-96. Nagel, “The Problem of Global Justice,” *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 33 (2005): 113-47. See also Mathias Risse, “What to Say about the State,” *Social Theory and Practice* 32 (2006): 671-98.

² “Distributive Justice, Political coercion, and Autonomy,” pp. 258-60, 271-2. Blake also contends that “we can defend principles of sufficiency abroad and principles of distributive equality at home.” (p. 258) I take him to be saying that these principles are principles of justice.

³ But given the severity of the problem of poverty in today’s world, the duties of humanity can be more urgent than some duties of justice. See “The Problem of Global Justice,” pp. 118-119.

⁴ “Distributive Justice, Political coercion, and Autonomy,” p. 258

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 289.

advance their common interest.”⁶ It is, however, important to note a coercion theorist does not have to claim that coercion *as such* triggers the concern for substantive equality. Mathias Risse, for example, holds that what triggers egalitarian obligations of justice is not coercion *as such* but coercion that meets the requirements of “political and legal immediacy” and this feature distinguishes the coercion exercised by sovereign states from other forms of coercion exercised by, say, supra-state institutions.⁷ In short, these authors are arguing for a *statist* conclusion with respect to the proper scope of socio-economic egalitarianism which maintains that equality as a demand of justice applies *only* within states.⁸ The Argument from Coercion poses a challenge to global egalitarianism because it asserts that concerns for socio-economic inequalities are relevant only among compatriots and rejects all supra-sufficiency principles of global socio-economic justice. The present chapter will proceed as follows: first, I shall start with a conceptual analysis of coercion and discuss the sense in which the state is a coercive association; then, I shall explore a number of attempts

⁶ “The Problem of Global Justice,” p. 140.

⁷ Risse, “What to Say about the State.”

⁸ By “equality”, and related terms such as “egalitarianism”, I mean roughly any conception of socio-economic justice that places constraints on the range of permissible social and economic inequalities among individuals. My use of these terms is deliberately inclusive. Note that the Argument from Coercion contends that we should be concerned with relative deprivation only within the context of a state and thus it is targeting not just some but all forms of global egalitarianism because any egalitarian theory of global justice must by definition seek to limit permissible socio-economic inequalities at the global level.

to account for the normative peculiarity of political coercion and argue that none of them supports a statist conclusion regarding the scope of equality; finally, I shall discuss an alternative approach through which political coercion can be justified without appealing to the relative distributive shares of individuals. My arguments, if sound, should at least be able to show that shared liability to *political coercion*, though normatively important, is *not* a necessary precondition for demands of egalitarian justice to arise. Nonetheless, it should be made clear from the outset that the arguments I am going to make in this chapter do not—and are not intended to—provide a positive argument for global equality. For the present chapter I want to take a more restricted focus of showing that one particular objection to global egalitarianism is unpersuasive.

Before we proceed, it may be instructive to consider the possible reasons why the Argument from Coercion may appear to be an attractive view to many. In the first place, the fact that the state coerces individuals living within its domain highlights a crucial way in which the domestic realm differs from the global one—no matter how intensive global interdependence is, individuals from different societies are still not subject to political coercion in the same way that citizens of the same state are. The state is often distinguished from other human associations by the means it employs to

enforce its decisions—the ultimate use of physical force. Weber, for example, defines states as political associations that successfully monopolize the legitimate use of *physical force* to impose its rules on all the members of some designated group of people.⁹ Also, it has been argued that nothing is to count as a complete law unless it is related in a certain way to coercive threats.¹⁰ With this distinction in hand, it is possible for the coercion theorists to argue that fundamentally different principles of justice should be adopted at the domestic level, on the one hand, and at the global level, on the other.¹¹ However, it should be noted that the coercion theorists do not have to claim that it is coercion *per se* that distinguishes domestic context from the global one. They can instead claim that the kind of coercion exercised by the state is different from the coercion that may exist in the global realm in some morally relevant ways which call for distinct forms of justification.¹² Therefore, they can

⁹ Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*, trans. A. M. Henderson and Talcott Parsons (New York: Free Press, 1964), p. 156; and “Politics as a Vocation,” in H. H. Gerth and C. W. Mills eds., *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1958), pp. 77-8.

This characterization of the modern state is endorsed by many subsequent scholars. See, for example, Michael Mann, *Sources of Social Power, Vol.1: A History of Power from the Beginning to A.D. 1760* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp. 26-7; Charles Tilly, *Coercion, Capital, and European States: A.D. 990-1992* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1990); and Raymond Geuss, *History and Illusion in Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 28-31.

¹⁰ See, for example, Hans Kelsen, *General Theory of Law and State*, trans. Anders Wedberg (New York: Russell & Russell, 1973), pp. 58-61.

¹¹ This view is perhaps supported by the intuition that what principles are appropriate for an institution should depend on the nature of that institution. As Rawls puts it, “the correct regulative principle of a thing depends on the nature of that thing.” See *A Theory of Justice*, revised edition. (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press, 1999), p. 25.

¹² This seems to be Blake’s view, see “Distributive Justice, Political coercion, and Autonomy,” p. 280

reply to the objection that the presence of coercion is not unique to domestic contexts.

Secondly, the Argument from Coercion can gain further support from the intuition that political coercion should be justified. Note that the state not only coerces the individuals within its jurisdiction but also claims the right to obedience from its citizens as well as the right to prevent other agents from exercising coercion without its authorization.¹³ For example, Dworkin argues that equality is the “virtue of the sovereigns” because “a political community that exercises dominion over its own citizens, and demands from them allegiance and obedience to its laws, must take an impartial, objective attitudes to all.”¹⁴ Therefore, it is not a coincidence that Blake and Nagel pay considerable attention to the issue of justifying political coercion: Blake argues that since coercion stands in prima facie conflict with people’s autonomy, the liberal principle of autonomy requires that either this coercion is justified to all those who are subject to it or it should be eliminated altogether.¹⁵ Nagel similarly argues that the state cannot legitimately claim authority over its citizens without

n.30. See also Nagel, “The Problem of Global Justice,” pp. 128-9, 133, and 140.

¹³ Leslie Green, *The Authority of the State* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), pp. 71-5.

¹⁴ Ronald Dworkin, *Sovereign Virtue: The Theory and Practice of Equality* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), p. 6.

¹⁵ Blake, “Distributive Justice, Political coercion, and Autonomy,” pp. 264-5, 272-3, 284.

justification—otherwise it is pure coercion.¹⁶ Both of these authors maintain that political coercion can be justified by the state's adopting of *egalitarian* principles of distributive justice.

Finally, the Argument from Coercion possesses a further advantage of relying on an impartial approach. It asserts that applying different principles of justice to members and non-members is not a case of partial treatment but simply a consistent application of an impartial principle in different contexts—respecting the liberal principle of autonomy demands equality at home and sufficiency abroad.¹⁷ As such, the coercion theorists do not have to defend any account of patriotic partiality nor do they have to base their arguments on some potentially problematic account of prior group solidarity. Needless to say, this impartial approach may not appeal to those who believe that patriotic partiality is permissible or even morally required. But for liberals, who are otherwise committed to the moral equality of persons and the impartiality of justice, it is important to show that such discrepancy in people's just entitlements can be defended from an impartial point of view.

¹⁶ Note that this requirement also applies to colonial rule and foreign occupation. See Nagel, "The Problem of Global Justice," p. 129.

¹⁷ Blake, "Distributive Justice, Political coercion, and Autonomy," pp. 260-1. See also Nagel, "The Problem of Global Justice," pp. 122-3.

1.2 COERCION AND STATE GOVERNANCE

Before examining the Argument from Coercion, let us consider in this section the concept of “coercion.” It is commonly assumed that states subject individuals within their respective domains to coercion. But what is coercion? Although I am unable to provide a general theory of coercion here, I do wish to propose an account of coercion which I think is plausible and can shed light on the issue of whether political coercion is uniquely linked to socio-economic egalitarianism.¹⁸

Coercion: A Conceptual Analysis

Now let us begin with an account of coercion which involves the following conditions—P subjects Q to coercion only when:

C1: P communicates to Q that he intends to bring about some consequence, X, if Q does not do A.

C2: P is capable of bringing about X.

C3: For Q, that X will happen if she does not do A counts as a strong reason for her to do A.

C4: Q has reason to believe that P will bring about X if she does not do A.

All of the above conditions must be fulfilled for Q to be subject to coercion by P. That

¹⁸ For a much more detailed discussion of the concept of coercion, see Alan Wertheimer, *Coercion* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987).

is to say they are the necessary conditions for the presence of coercion.¹⁹ The reasons are as follows: coercion must, first of all, involve an explicit or implicit demand made to the coerced and some *intentional* acts to link non-compliance to some specific consequences. Thus, coercion is different from the use of brute force in the sense that it must aim at subjecting the will of the coerced to the will of another. For example, people can be assaulted or physically constrained without being coerced if the perpetrator makes no demand to the victim (i.e. C1 is not met). Second, coercion is also different from bluffing: if P is incapable of bringing about X (i.e. C2 is not met) he cannot be said to coerce Q.²⁰ Third, Q is not being coerced if the consequences of non-compliance are simply too trivial to count as a strong reason for her to act differently (i.e. C3 is not met). But this condition can still be met in cases where Q resists the demand to do A despite severe consequences. Finally, P cannot be coercing Q if the latter has no reason to believe that she will do what she proposes to do (i.e. C4 is not met). For example, sayings like “I’m going to kill you if you eat the last cookie,” are not coercive threats if the circumstances are such that no reasonable

¹⁹ These conditions are a modification of Joseph Raz’s account of coercion. See his *Morality of Freedom* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), pp. 148-9. See also, Robert Nozick, “Coercion,” in Peter Laslett, W. G. Runciman and Quentin Skinner eds., *Philosophy, Politics and Society, Fourth Series* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1972), pp. 101-35. Note that for the sake of simplicity I use a two-person case to illustrate these conditions.

²⁰ Here I shall set aside the cases where P *wrongly* believes that she can bring about X. Neither are these cases of bluffing nor cases of coercion because the threat involved is not credible.

person would expect the speaker to act on her words.

However, the fulfillment of the above four conditions does not necessarily mean that there is coercion. For example, when P tries to bribe Q into doing A by offering the latter extremely attractive rewards, all of the above four conditions are met but bribery is *not* coercion.²¹ Therefore, we need to consider the following conditions P's proposal to count as an instance of coercion:

C5: X involves the use of physical force.

C6: X will drastically constrain Q's ability to pursue her own project autonomously.

In addition to C1, 2, 3 and 4 mentioned above, an instance of coercion will have to meet *either* C5 or C6. These last two conditions need more elaboration. First, the use of physical force—to use force against the person in order to cause pain, injury, or even death, or to incarcerate a person—or threat to use such force have long been regarded as a constitutive element of coercion. But physical force need not be directed against the agent who is being subject to coercion. To consider a hypothetical example: P kidnaps Q's son, R, and threaten to hurt R if Q does not do A. Now C5 still applies and the kidnapper is coercing Q (into doing A) even though she is applying physical

²¹ To elaborate: first, P communicates to Q that the latter will be receive the bride only if she does A; second, P is capable of providing the promised rewards; third, for Q, that she would lose the rewards if she does not do A is itself a strong reason for her to do A; finally, Q has reason to believe that P will withhold the rewards if she does not do A.

force to R.

Nonetheless, the use of physical force is not the only means a potential coercer may employ to coerce others. It is possible that Q is being subject to coercion in the sense that the consequences of non-compliance will lead to a situation where her ability to autonomously pursue her own project is drastically constrained.²² Sometimes we do think someone is facing coercion even in cases where non-compliance will not be met with physical force. For example, the threat of social ostracism often constitutes a form of coercion.²³ Another example of this kind of coercion is the threat to remove means of subsistence of some agents. These means can be reasonably regarded as coercive because the person facing these threats has not reasonable alternative but to yield to the will of the coercer.

What is common to these last two conditions for coercion (C5 and C6) is that the coercer deliberately attaches negative consequences to non-compliance. That explains a fundamental distinction between coercion and a genuine offer: in the case of a genuine offer, the cost of refusal is merely forgoing what is on offer; but in the case of coercion, refusal will involve some kind of undesirable consequences that the person

²² Needless to say, some consequences of the use of physical force (such as loss of life or limb) will drastically constrain the victim's ability to pursue any plan of life autonomously. Moreover, incarceration will also remove most options that would otherwise have been open to the prisoner.

²³ This kind of threat is particularly effective if one lives in a small community with a limited chance of migrating.

cannot be reasonably expected to endorse, and in extreme cases, compliance will also bring injury to the person (perhaps through compromising her integrity).²⁴

One possible objection to my account of coercion is that it ignores a fundamental character of coercion, that is, the coercer is threatening to do something that she has no right to do. On this view P is coercing Q *only if* P's bringing about X can be considered as a wrongful act given the circumstances. For example, if P finds Q assaulting his wife and threatens to shoot Q if he does not stop, it is absurd to say that P has coerced Q into not raping his wife.²⁵ But the claim is not absurd for two reasons: for one thing, in cases where Q ceases a wrong act, it is often important to know if he does so only because she has been coerced. For another, there are at least some cases of coercion that many would consider justified. For example, the laws prohibiting certain behavior are coercive in nature while we think that the state does nothing wrong in punishing the offenders and preventing such behavior.²⁶ Therefore, to say that political power is coercive is not to say that it is always illegitimate.²⁷ Notice,

²⁴ Onora O'Neill, "Which are the Offers *You Can't Refuse?*" in *Bounds of Justice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 81-96, esp. 89-90.

²⁵ I borrow this example from Cheney Ryan, "The Normative Concept of Coercion," *Mind* 89 (1980): 481-98.

²⁶ Wertheimer, *Coercion*, p. 188.

²⁷ For an opposite view claiming that justified exercise of political power can never be coercive, see Robert Dahl, *Modern Political Analysis* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1970), p. 33. Quoted in Wertheimer, "Political Coercion and Political Obligation," in J. Ronald Pennock and John W. Chapman eds., *Coercion: NOMOS XIV* (New York: Aldine & Atherton, 1972), pp. 213-42, at 223.

however, my account of coercion is compatible with the view that coercion is a *pro tanto* wrong but it can be justified all things considered.

The above conditions (C1-C6) tell us what it means for P to subject Q to coercion. Nonetheless, as mentioned above, it is possible for Q to be coerced by P but still refuses to comply. If that is the case, P would not succeed in achieving her original intention (i.e. making Q do A). It is therefore important to distinguish between the case in which P coerces Q and the case in which Q is actually coerced by P into doing A.²⁸ Two further conditions need to be met for Q to be actually coerced into doing A:

C7: Q does A.

C8: P's proposal is at least part of the reason that Q does A.²⁹

The last condition needs more discussion: to decide whether Q is actually coerced into doing A, one needs to consider her motivation and the coercive proposal must at least be part of the reason why she does A. Suppose Q would have done A anyway and P's proposal would not make any difference to her action, it would be implausible to suggest that Q is coerced into doing A (i.e. C8 is not met). It may even be the case that Q actually welcomes P's coercive proposal because it serves as a pretext for her to do

²⁸ For this distinction, see Arash Abizadeh, "Democratic Theory and Border Coercion," *Political Theory* 36 (2008): 37-65.

²⁹ Nozick, "Coercion," p. 105.

A.

For the sake of simplicity, I have so far been using two-person cases to illustrate the conditions for coercion to exist. Nonetheless, coercion may also be exercised *collectively* by one group of agents against another. To see this point, consider the following example:

A racist town: Suppose there is a certain neighbourhood in a town has been occupied exclusively by white residents. These residents, moreover, strongly resent the idea of racial desegregation because of their racist beliefs and are ready to harass or even use violence against any ethnic minority should they move into that neighbourhood. Suppose further that their intention is well-known to the entire population of the town, say, through a series of past incidents, rumors and so on. As a result, the ethnic minority in this town believe that they will be exposed to violence or even worse if they decide to move into that neighbourhood.

Now it is intuitive to think that the ethnic minority is being subject to coercion, and if some of them decide not to move into the neighborhood because of the fear for racist violence, they are coerced into making that decision. Moreover, it should be noted that a group of agents can collectively coerce others despite the fact that they act without any collaboration. We may, for example, imagine that each white resident of that particular neighborhood is prepared to act on her racist sentiments *individually* regardless of what the other residents might do but in this case they still subject others to coercion. As such, we can conclude that coercion does not always presuppose the

existence of a centralized authority and coordination. Another point to note is that the availability of other options open to the minority residents does *not* mean there is no coercion. Suppose there are other neighborhoods in town where the ethnic minority can reside without being exposed to violence or harassment. But it is implausible to claim that these residents are not being coerced because the racists leave other options open to them.

It is perhaps more interesting to consider a case in which a group of potential coercers collectively coerce someone without individually coercing that person.

Imagine the following case:

A five-person village: Five persons—P, Q, R, S and T—live in a remote village. P, Q, R and S separately communicate to T that they will shun her if she does not do A. Suppose further that T does not really mind losing the friendship of *just one* of them. Nonetheless, being an outcast in this remote village is something that T fears deeply and out of this fear she does A.

Then, is T being coerced into doing A? It seems to me that T is being coerced into doing A by the other villagers although none of them could coerce T *individually*.

Note that none of their separate proposal is coercive in itself (assuming that losing the friendship of just one villager is not considered a great loss by T). However, the other villagers do coerce T into doing A *collectively* because the combined result of their individual proposal does leave T with no reasonable alternative but to do A (i.e. T will

face social ostracism if she refuses to do A).³⁰ To put it in another way, each of these villagers causes a fraction of the coercion T faces because each of them contributes to the situation in which T is coerced.³¹

The Coercive Nature of the State

Now we have some understanding of the concept of coercion. In light of this understanding, it is clear that states, understood broadly so as to include their various agencies and officials, exercise coercion against individuals to ensure conformity with their norms and are in this sense coercive associations.³² As discussed above, states use physical force or threat of such force to gain compliance of its members. For example, its military, police, border controls and penal system are prepared to inflict violence, kill, deport and incarcerate individuals in order to prevent, preempt or sanction certain behaviors as the state sees fit.³³ In addition to criminal law, the

³⁰ One may compare this case with the situation of the proletariat in a capitalist society: although each member is free to escape from the proletariat, they are collectively unfree to do so. See G. A. Cohen, "The Structure of Proletarian Unfreedom," *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 12 (1983): 3-33.

³¹ This is according to the principle of divisibility which states that harm caused at a sub-threshold level should be assessed as a fraction of a discriminable unit, see Jonathan Glover and M J Scott-Taggart, "It Makes No Difference Whether or Not I Do It," *Proceedings of Aristotelian Society* supp. vol. 49 (1975): 171-209, at 174-5.

³² Alan Wertheimer, "Political Coercion and Political Obligation," pp. 226-8.

³³ Nonetheless, the claim that state is a coercive organization does not mean that the state employs only coercive means to secure compliance. In fact, the cost of relying on coercion alone is simply too great. A state may rely on normative commitments of its members to obtain compliance—its members may, for example, recognize that obeying the law is part of the duty of fair play that they owe to each other as citizens. In addition, a state may employ utilitarian means to gain compliance—it may, for example, provide rewards (material or symbolic) for those who follow its norms. Moreover, that state is

domain of private law—the laws of contract, property, torts and taxation—is also vested with the implicit threat of coercive sanction. For example, property rights are enforced by the state by coercive sanction: the state may use force against some people should they try to gain control over certain things. It is perhaps obvious enough that taxation laws are ultimately backed by the threat of coercive sanctions by the authority.³⁴

Why Coercion has Seemed Important

Now it is time to consider the reasons why the problem of political coercion has seemed important to many.

1. *Power and domination*: coercion often reflects a relation of domination in which the coercer can impose his will on the coerced by interfering with the latter's choices without proper justification. Sometimes agents are coerced by others not because they are poor, unskilled, physically or emotionally weak but because they are

a coercive organization does not mean that all, or even most, citizens are actually coerced into conforming to its norms. Individual citizens may choose to obey the laws not because of fear of coercive sanctions but because of their sense of justice, of civility, of fair play, or because they identify with their community, and so forth. So citizens *could* act voluntarily while living under political coercion. For many, the point of having coercive sanction is to provide some sort of guarantee, at least when the law is effectively enforced, that other citizens will do their part in social cooperation and that they will not be taken advantage of by free-riders when they comply with the rules of their society.

³⁴ Blake, "Distributive Justice, Political coercion, and Autonomy," pp. 276-7.

confronted by those who possess more resources, are more skillful, physically or emotionally stronger and prepared to exploit these advantages. Those who are more powerful will then have the opportunities to link non-compliance with their favored option to some undesirable consequences for their victims.³⁵ Therefore, coercion can serve as a means for the more powerful to effect their preferred outcomes by interfering with the options of others. What is morally troubling here is that some agents are willing and able to exploit the relative powerlessness of others to further their own interests.

2. *Autonomy*: coercion, as intentional acts of subjecting the will of the coerced, poses a threat to personal autonomy and that gives us another reason to care about coercion. It is because, first, the coercer intends the coerced to conform to his will, and, second, the coercer aims to succeed in so doing by restricting the options of others.³⁶ Moreover, coercion in many cases shows disrespect for the coerced for they are not treated as autonomous agents. However, it should be noted that at least in some cases, coercion does not express any disrespect for the coerced if it is motivated not by lack of respect for personal autonomy but by concern for it. For example, in an

³⁵ O'Neill, "Which are the Offers *You* Can't Refuse?" pp. 95-6.

³⁶ Raz, *Morality of Freedom*, p. 155.

ideal liberal state where people have adequate right to political participation, its coercive measures need not express any disrespect to personal autonomy because the state is guided by a public morality expressing concern for personal autonomy.³⁷ Now there is still a question of under what conditions can political coercion be justified in a way compatible with the personal autonomy of those subject to its coercive power.

To sum up, this section has outlined an account of what coercion is and suggested that states are typically coercive associations in the sense that they subject individuals to coercion. However, we have not yet discussed the alleged relation between political coercion and equality as a demand of justice, and this is the task of the next section.

1.3 THE NORMATIVE PECULIARITY OF POLITICAL COERCION

The Argument from Coercion maintains that the presence of coercion, which requires a normative justification, triggers egalitarian obligations of justice. More formally, it can be restated as the following premises and conclusion:

³⁷ Raz, *Ibid.*, pp. 155-7. See also Blake, “Distributive Justice, Political coercion, and Autonomy,” pp. 268-72.

P1: Egalitarian obligations of justice obtain only among those who are subject to a common system of coercion.

P2: Institutions above the state, such as there are, do not constitute a system of coercion.

The Statist Conclusion: *Therefore, egalitarian obligations of justice apply only within states.*³⁸

One problem with this formulation is that coercion is by no means unique to the domestic context (that is to say, P2 is problematic). It may, for example, be argued that coercion also exists beyond the state and if coercion gives rise to egalitarian obligations, we should *not* limit our concern with inequality to the state.³⁹ The current global order is characterized by a system of heavily regulated, semi-closed state borders which grants sovereign states the prerogative to regulate admission to their territories as they see fit (with the exception of providing immediate relief to asylum seekers). Note that border controls are ultimately backed by the use of physical force or the threat of such force and states may use physical force against the persons who attempt to enter without proper authorization. Another example of coercion beyond the state is the “international property regime”—a transnational system of norms regarding property holdings which identifies what belongs to whom, and the

³⁸ Thus understood, the Argument from Coercion is a form of disanalogous argument which maintains that since there is some morally relevant difference between the state and the global context, egalitarian principles of justice should apply to the former but not the latter. See Caney, “Global Distributive Justice and the State,” *Political Studies* 56 (2008): 487-518, esp. 488-9.

³⁹ See, for example, Richard Arneson, “Do Patriotic Ties Limit Global Justice Duties?” *Journal of Ethics* 9 (2005): 127-50.

authoritative agents and procedures for settling property disputes and for enforcing judgments when more than one sovereign jurisdiction is involved. The central elements of the international property regime are (1) a body international private law of contracts, torts, trusts and securities, and (2) a network of investment treaties. Since every individual worldwide is under the coercive mandate (normally issuing from her own government) to respect *foreign* property, the system of transnational holdings touches the life of almost every individual worldwide.⁴⁰

Faced with the above challenge, proponents of the Argument from Coercion have to show that the kind of coercion which states exercise against their own subjects is different in a morally relevant way *and* only this kind of coercion can generate egalitarian obligations of justice (i.e. giving a more precise formulation of P1). Blake, for example, has already anticipated the above critique and is prepared to concede that border controls are in fact coercive, but he maintains that “each distinct form of coercion requires a distinct form of justification... The mere fact that exclusion is coercive does not erase the distinction between prospective and current membership. Only the latter... gives rise to a legitimate concern for relative deprivation.”⁴¹

⁴⁰ Eric Cavallero, “Coercion, Inequality, and the International Property Regime,” *The Journal of Political Philosophy* 18 (2010): 16-31. Cavallero’s claim is based on three observations: (1) individuals often hold properties, directly or indirectly, in more than one national jurisdiction; (2) a substantial proportion of property holdings worldwide is transnational; and (3) the existence of transnational holdings presupposes an integrated international system of property norms. (p. 19)

⁴¹ Blake, “Distributive Justice, Political coercion, and Autonomy,” p. 280, n. 30.

Similarly, Nagel argues that immigration policies “are simply enforced against the nationals of other states; the laws are not imposed in their name, nor are they asked to accept and uphold those laws... It is sufficient justification to claim that the policies do not violate their prepolitical human rights.”⁴² In the rest of this section I am going to consider a number of features which allegedly make *political coercion* different from other forms of coercion that may exist beyond the domestic context. I shall argue that none of these features can vindicate the statist conclusion that equality is a demand of justice only within states.

1.3.1 Coercive Rules with Distributive Consequences

Political coercion is consequential to people’s distributive shares. The most salient form of political coercion is perhaps its enforcement of criminal law but justifying coercion in this context does not seem to require any reference to people’s distributive shares.⁴³ However, the domain of private law—the laws of contracts, property, tort and taxation—is also vested with coercion. More important, such coercion stands in need of justification which can be given by means of hypothetical consent, and,

⁴² Nagel, “The Problem of Global Justice,” pp. 129-30.

⁴³ Blake, “Distributive Justice, Political coercion, and Autonomy,” p. 274.

according to Blake, the fact that the system of private law has consequences on the allocation of goods provides one relevant criterion on which consent can be given or withheld. A system of coercively imposed private laws which shows sufficient concern for people's egalitarian entitlements can pass the test of hypothetical consent and thus become justified to those who are subject to it.⁴⁴ Hence, what gives rise to a legitimate concern of socio-economic inequalities is not coercion per se but coercion *with distributive consequences*.

This argument, however, cannot deliver the statist conclusion that equality as a demand of justice applies only within states. If we ask why shared liability to political coercion gives rise to egalitarian entitlements, the answer would be that political coercion in the domain of private law has enormous impacts on the distribution of burdens and benefits among individuals. As a result, the Argument from Coercion should be understood as saying the following:

Equality as a demand of justice applies to individuals when (i) they are subject to a set of coercively imposed rules, and (ii) these rules have consequences on the allocation of burdens and benefits among them.

Nonetheless, this line of argument does not justify restricting the scope of egalitarian justice to the state because coercion in the global realm also has distributive consequences. Consider the system of semi-closed state borders: it is true that there is

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 282.

no single supra-state organization which exercises this kind of coercion but, as noted in the previous section, the decentralized and uncoordinated manner in which independent states control their respective borders does not mean that the *system* of state borders as a whole is not coercive. More importantly, there is no denying that the system of state borders has tremendous impacts on the distribution of burdens and benefits among individuals worldwide. Most directly, heavily regulated borders prevent many would-be migrants from enjoying the opportunities available in the destination countries, such as better incomes, access to education, healthcare, and so forth. In addition, transnational migration has multiple impacts on the opportunities and well-being of people who do not move in both the countries of origin and destination. For example, families with members who moved abroad usually experience direct financial gains through remittance; the mobility of the skilled and able-bodied young people might affect the economy; immigration may bring about skills, and higher rate of innovation, and so forth. It is for these reasons that increased human mobility has a huge potential for improving human development worldwide.⁴⁵

On the other hand, heavily regulated, semi-closed borders limit the competitive pressures within wealthy countries while at the same time transferring these

⁴⁵ See, for example, United Nations Development Program (UNDP), *Human Development Report 2009—Overcoming Barriers: Human Mobility and Development* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).

competitive pressures abroad. In this sense, the relative privileges enjoyed by many in the affluent societies require the system of semi-closed state borders that ensures the exclusion of the vast majority of others from access to opportunity on basis of their nationality.⁴⁶ In fact, it has been estimated that, with completely closed international borders, 60 percent of variability of a persons' global income position (percentile in world income distribution) would depend on the level of mean income of their country.⁴⁷

In other words, *if* the justification of political coercion requires distributive equality because of its distributive consequences, then the scope of such egalitarian obligations should not be confined to the state because the system of state borders constitutes a set of coercively imposed rules that have distributive consequences globally. To be sure, it is possible to hold that (1) global systemic coercion exists, and (2) such coercion needs to be justified, but deny that (3) the required justification involves any fundamental egalitarian commitment; and so it does not follow that we should adopt an egalitarian theory of global justice.⁴⁸ Note, however, that the

⁴⁶ Roberto Patricio Korzeniewicz and Timothy Patrick Moran, *Unveiling Inequality: A World-Historical Perspective* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2009), chap. 4.

⁴⁷ Branko Milanovic, "Where In the World Are You? Assessing the Importance of Circumstances and Effort in a World of Different Mean Country Incomes and (Almost) No Migration," World Bank Policy Research Working Paper 4493, January 2008.

⁴⁸ For this view, see Laura Valentini, *Justice in a Globalized World: A Normative Framework* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 155-6, 186-203.

coercion theorists cannot take position because they explicitly argue that proper concerns for relative deprivation are needed to justify coercion in the domestic context.

Therefore, the coercion theorists must appeal to something other than the distributive consequences of political coercion to justify restricting the scope of egalitarian justice to the state.

1.3.2 Joint Authorship of Legal Coercion

Another feature about political coercion that might explain its normative peculiarity is that citizens are “both putative authors of the coercively imposed system and subject to its norms.”⁴⁹ And, because of their joint authorship of legal coercion, citizens owe each other a justification which they do not owe to non-members regarding the acceptability the system.⁵⁰ On this view what distinguishes political coercion from other forms of coercion is the idea that citizens are putative joint authors of the coercive institutions through which advantages and disadvantages are created and distributed. It is in this sense that the state can claim to act “in the name of its

⁴⁹ Nagel, “The Problem of Global Justice,” p. 128.

⁵⁰ Ibid., pp. 129-30.

citizens” and make them responsible for its acts.⁵¹

There are two ways in which the idea of joint authorship can be understood. First, it can be understood as a descriptive fact. On this understanding people have egalitarian obligations of justice to each other only if they are *in fact* the joint authors of the legal coercion of their own state. This way of understanding the idea of joint authorship, however, has morally perverse implications and should therefore be rejected.⁵² No matter how broadly one defines joint authorship there could be some states whose citizens are not the putative joint authors of the laws and institutions that bind them.⁵³ If being a joint author of coercive rules is a necessary condition for the “special standards of fairness and equality” to apply, we have to conclude that such standards do not apply to these states on the ground that their citizens are not the putative joint authors of the laws and institutions of their country. But it is absurd to think that egalitarian principles do not apply simply because those in power do not

⁵¹ For the sake of simplicity, let us assume that citizens can be regarded as the joint authors of the laws and institutions of their state where there exist a well-functioning democracy. For example, citizens should have the right to participate in the political process through which such laws and institutions are shaped and have a roughly equal chance to influence its outcomes.

⁵² A. J. Julius, “Nagel’s Atlas,” *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 34 (2006): 176-92, at p. 183. See also Abizadeh, “Cooperation, Pervasive Impact, and Coercion,” pp. 351-2.

⁵³ Each year Freedom House studies the conditions of political rights and civil liberties in countries all over the world and gives each country ratings from 1 (best) to 7 (worst). A rating of 7 in political rights indicates the absence of such rights enjoyed by the people and a rating of 7 in civil liberties indicates a general lack of freedom. In 2009, 8 countries were given ratings of 7 in both political rights and civil liberties: Burma, Equatorial Guinea, Libya, North Korea, Somalia, Sudan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. See Freedom House, *Freedom in the World 2009*, at <<http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=475&year=2009>>. It is evident that citizens of these states are not, and cannot be reasonably regarded as, the joint authors of the coercive laws and institutions of their state.

bother to rule with the willing cooperation of the weak and vulnerable.

Alternatively, the idea of joint authorship can be understood as a normative demand that applies to those who are subject to political coercion. Thus understood, it is not the case that the demand of equality applies to a group of individuals only when they are in fact the joint authors of the coercive laws and institutions. Instead, the coercive nature of laws and institution of the state implies that individuals facing such coercion *ought to* be treated as the putative joint authors of these laws and institutions. This interpretation seems more plausible than the last one. But it is entirely unclear what this idea of joint authorship has to do with the proper scope of egalitarian justice although it does tell us something about how we should organize our political system in the domestic context.

To sum up, the idea of joint authorship of political and legal coercion does point out a way in which shared citizenship can be morally significant but it does not imply that egalitarian obligations of justice obtain only between people who are subject to the same sovereign authority.

1.3.3 Involuntary Subjection

A third attempt to show that political coercion is normatively peculiar focuses on its involuntariness. One common way to distinguish the state from other non-state

associations is to say that the former is not a voluntary association. Rawls, for example, famously asserts that the state is an involuntary association in the sense that it is a kind of association which people “enter only by birth and exit only by death.”⁵⁴

Voluntariness of membership here refers to the ease with which membership of an association can be avoided or dissolved and to the kinds of consequences which follow non-membership or resignation.⁵⁵ So there are two ways in which an association can be involuntary. First, involuntariness can mean that the members have *no choice* but to join the association (and thus subject to its rules). Second, it can mean that the option of exit is either non-existent or is sufficiently costly so that leaving is not a realistic option. An association is involuntary if one or both of these conditions are true. To be sure, involuntariness is a matter of degree and it makes sense to say that an association is more or less involuntary depending on the degree to which joining or leaving it is subject to personal choice.

States are involuntary associations in which one is not permitted to declare oneself not a member of one's state and hence not subject to its rules, and the state may coerce one into compliance if one refuses. It may be argued that an association that one has no choice but joining must offer terms of membership that meet the

⁵⁴ *Political Liberalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), pp. 135-7.

⁵⁵ Wertheimer, “Political Coercion and Political Obligation,” pp. 225-6.

heightened standard of distributive justice which presumably demands some form of equality.⁵⁶ This involuntary nature of political coercion is contrasted with transnational economic interactions, participation in international organization or contractual relations among independent parties concerned to advance their common interests which are *not* coercively imposed on the individuals whose life they affect and thus give rise to less stringent obligations.⁵⁷ By contrast, the terms of social interaction within a state are imposed upon its members, and this makes state membership particularly demanding to individuals. Therefore, the terms of state membership should be evaluated by the more stringent standard of egalitarian justice. Let us call this the argument from involuntary subjection.

Three objections can be made against this argument. First, it does not show that standards of equality apply only to associations that are involuntary. Second, it implies that those who join a state voluntarily have no right to egalitarian treatments. Third, even if we accept the premises of the argument, it does not yield the statist conclusion because participation in the global economic order is also involuntary in

⁵⁶ For Nagel, states are different from other voluntary associations for the pursuit of common ends because “adherence to them is not voluntary: Emigration aside, one is not permitted to declare oneself not a member of one’s society and hence not subject to its rules, and other members may coerce one’s compliance if one tries to refuse. An institution that one has no choice about joining must offer terms of membership that meet a higher standard.” (“The Problem of Global Justice,” p. 133.)

⁵⁷ Ibid., pp. 138-40.

the relevant sense. In what follows I shall discuss these problems in turn.

Let us now begin with the question of whether the standard of equality should apply only to the terms of membership of involuntary associations. Consider the following two examples:

1. *Sexist corporation*: suppose there is a private corporation which systematically treats its female employees less favorably. For example, female employees receive less pay for the same work, are less likely to be promoted to supervisory roles, and are often assigned to less pleasant tasks.
2. *Migrant workers*: a factory in country A employs a number of migrant workers from country B, a neighboring country, who voluntarily sign up for the program. But these workers are paid less than their counterparts who are citizens of country A. Moreover, these workers are treated more harshly by the management, for example, they are subject to arbitrary dismissal (and then deportation from country A).⁵⁸

In these examples, the fact that membership is voluntary (both the female employees and the migrant workers, we may assume, take up their jobs voluntarily) cannot be invoked to justify unequal treatments. The management of the company, for example, cannot justify the inequality in question by pointing out that the female employees have signed up voluntarily and they can leave if they so choose. Therefore, it is implausible to insist that the special standards of fairness and equality apply *exclusively* to involuntary associations such as states.

⁵⁸ There is an estimated 50 million people today who are living and working abroad with irregular status. And some countries, including the United States, tolerate a large number of unauthorized workers. See UNDP, *Human Development Report 2009*, pp. 2-3.

Note that, for many people, subjection to political coercion is not involuntary in the sense that they did not choose to become members. It is true that most people become members of a state simply because they were born into that state (and so they had *no choice* but joining). But there are also a significant number of people who choose to migrate into a particular state and thus become its member voluntarily.⁵⁹ If involuntary subjection is a necessary precondition for egalitarian entitlements to arise, then those who have chosen to join a particular state will have no claim to equality. But this view will lead to a morally objectionable conclusion that it would be acceptable to offer these immigrants less favorable terms of membership so long as they are still willing to join.⁶⁰ This implication of the argument from involuntary subjection then casts doubt on the original claim that involuntary subjection to coercion is a necessary condition for equality as a demand of justice to apply. It may be objected that although subjection to political coercion is not always involuntary in the first sense, the vast majority of people became members of their state simply by

⁵⁹ International migration is by no means an insignificant phenomenon. The total number of cross-country immigrants in 2010 is estimated to be over 200 million. There are of course some people who are displaced by conflicts or insecurity but these refugees amount to around 0.7 million (in 2007). See UNDP, *Human Development Report* 2009, pp. 143, 156.

⁶⁰ Nagel argues that immigration policy is justifiable as long as it does not violate the “prepolitical rights” of the foreigners (which include only the most basic rights and duties, and there is no prepolitical right to equal treatment). See Nagel, “The Problem of Global Justice,” pp. 129-30. Therefore, it is hard for him to deny that it is permissible for states to offer less favorable terms of membership to immigrants as if that were a result of voluntary bargaining between the destination state and the would-be immigrants.

birth, so it is reasonable to claim that the state is an involuntary association to a sufficient degree within which the heightened standard of socio-economic justice applies. This reply, however, cannot save the argument because the point here is not about how many (or how few) people joined a state voluntarily but whether the demand of equality *only* to those who became members involuntarily.

The second sense of involuntariness focuses on not on the choice of joining but the option of exit. It may be argued that leaving the state where one is currently living is sufficiently costly so that people have no choice but to remain in the state and be subject to its rules. However, it should be noted that at least for some people (particularly the well-off) leaving is a feasible alternative so for them remaining in a state is no longer involuntary. As such, the argument from involuntary subjection will imply that these persons have no claim of equality because they stay in their current state *voluntarily*.

For the sake of argument, let us grant that states are involuntary associations because opting out is not a real alternative and for this reason principle of equality applies. But even then one cannot conclude that equality as a demand of justice applies only within states. This is so because participation in the global economic order is also involuntary in this second sense particularly for the less powerful states

and it is rather unrealistic to suppose that the global economic order is something that individual states can freely choose to join or leave. For example, the WTO is a “take it or leave it” arrangement: once joined, member states have to comply with all its trade rules and its arbitration concerning trade disputes. More important, states are expected to amend their domestic laws that are in conflict with WTO rules.⁶¹ Therefore, even if one agrees that involuntary subjection is required for equality as a demand of justice to apply, one does not have to agree that this is in tension with global egalitarianism.

In response, a proponent of the Coercion Argument can argue that the coercion exercised by these international organizations (if they are coercive) is completely mediated through states. In contrast, political coercion is normatively distinct because states can coerce individuals in an unmediated way. In the next section I shall discuss the normative peculiarity of political coercion in terms of “immediacy.”

1.3.4 Legal and Political Immediacy

A last attempt to explain the normative peculiarity of political coercion focuses on the fact that only states have the immediate day-to-day power to enforce its rules against

⁶¹ See, for example, David Singh Grewal, *Network Power: the Dynamics of Globalization* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), chap. 8.

individuals. There are two aspects of “immediacy”. First, political coercion is *politically* immediate in the sense that it provides the environment for the realization of people’s basic moral rights, such as freedom of thought and liberties of conscience, political liberties, the right to physical and psychological integrity, and so forth. Second, political coercion is *legally* immediate in the sense that its enforcement agencies have direct and unmediated access to its citizen’s bodies and assets. Thus, the relationship between citizens and the state is such that there is no organization “in between”. In short, the condition of political immediacy refers to the profundity of political coercion whereas the condition of legal immediacy refers to its directness and pervasiveness.⁶² Thus, one may conclude that shared subjugation to coercion characterized by political and legal immediacy gives rise to fellow citizens of a single state.

The idea of political and legal immediacy does help us distinguish the form of coercion exercised by sovereign states from other forms of coercion but it is much more controversial to claim that the presence of political and legally immediate coercion is a necessary precondition for egalitarian principles of justice to apply. Let us consider the political dimension first: the fact that political coercion provides the

⁶² Risse, “What to Say About the State,” pp. 671-98. See also Nagel, “The Problem of Global Justice,” p. 139, and Blake, “Distributive Justice, Political coercion, and Autonomy,” p. 280.

background conditions necessary for the realization of people's basic moral rights does tell us that this form of coercion is morally significant. But it is still unclear how this fact can be related to a claim about people's egalitarian entitlements. One possible response is to claim that the profundity of political coercion means that the rules enforced by the state should be justifiable to each person subject to them. However, if political coercion helps to secure people's basic moral rights, it seems reasonable to suggest that in this case such coercion is morally justified to those who are subject to it and there is no need to make further reference to people's distributive shares in order to justify such coercion. Also, as far as the legal dimension of immediacy is concerned, it is implausible to suggest that only shared subjugation to *unmediated* coercion can give rise to egalitarian entitlements. The reason is that, from the perspective of those whose autonomy is restricted by coercion, whether such coercion is mediated by some other agents or is directly applied to them does not seem to make any real moral difference regarding the conditions under which such coercion can be morally justified.

Alternatively, it may be thought that shared subjugation to political coercion gives rise to special associative duties that hold only among citizens, and do not hold among people who are not subject to the same coercive structures characterized by

political and legal immediacy.⁶³ However, it is not immediately apparent that the existence of such special duties presents a threat to global egalitarianism. For example, a defender of global egalitarianism may accept these special duties but hold that they have value only when they operate within the parameters provided by global egalitarianism itself.⁶⁴ A second possible response is that, although we have special duties to secure the just entitlements of our fellow citizens, these entitlements should be specified by some egalitarian theory of global justice.⁶⁵

I have examined in this section four attempts to account for the normative peculiarity of political coercion and argued that none of them succeeds in vindicating a statist conclusion that equality is a demand of justice only in presence of political coercion. Moreover, my discussion shows that one can recognize the normative significance and distinctiveness of *political coercion* without believing that its boundary should determine the scope for egalitarian principles of justice. At the same time, my arguments raise some questions about the assumption that political coercion needs to be justified by appealing to its distributive consequences. But I do not mean

⁶³ Risse, “What to Say About the State,” p. 688.

⁶⁴ Arash Abizadeh and Pablo Gilabert, “Is There a Genuine Tension between Cosmopolitan Egalitarianism and Special Responsibilities?” *Philosophical Studies* 138 (2008): 349-65.

⁶⁵ Caney, “Cosmopolitanism and Justice,” in Thomas Christiano and John Christman eds., *Contemporary Debates in Political Philosophy* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), pp. 357-407, esp. 401-2.

to deny that political coercion needs justification, and so in the next section I will propose an alternative approach through which political coercion can be justified.

1.4 POLITICAL COERCION AND DEMOCRATIC JUSTIFICATION

The previous section has considered a number of reasons for thinking that coercion exercised by a sovereign state is somewhat normatively special and argued that none of them supports the Argument from Coercion. But of course one would *not* be wrong to think that political coercion needs to be justified to those who are subject to it. The proponents of the Argument from Coercion can readily draw on this intuition to affirm their view by arguing that political coercion could be justified when the resulting laws and institutions of the state respect the citizens' egalitarian entitlements (and therefore *could* be agreed to by these individuals). This may be called a *distributive* approach to justification because it holds that political coercion is morally justified when the coercively imposed rules and institutions uphold the appropriate standard of distributive justice. It should be noted, however, that there are other possible ways to justify political coercion do not make any reference to people's *relative* distributive shares. Just to mention a few examples: (1) it can be argued that political coercion

requires legitimacy understood as certain rights and fair political procedures;⁶⁶ (2) a state's exercise of coercive power is morally justified as long as it meets the minimal standard of justice, understood as the protection of basic human rights;⁶⁷ (3) political coercion is morally justified when it serves to reduce, or prevent the increase of, the amount or effectiveness of other and definitely worse types of coercion;⁶⁸ (4) coercion is either justified by its results or rationale or it is not justified at all, so it does not require an independent justification via distributive justice.⁶⁹ If any of these alternatives works then we can conclude that those who reject the Argument from Coercion can also address the problem of justification of political coercion.

This section will focus on a *democratic* approach to justification of political coercion: on this view political coercion needs to be justified *to* and *by* the very people who are subject to it in the sense that all such persons have the opportunity to actually participate in the political process that determine how coercion is exercised on terms that are consistent with their freedom and equality.⁷⁰ Thus, for the

⁶⁶ Caney, "Cosmopolitanism and Justice," pp. 402-3.

⁶⁷ Alan Buchanan, *Justice, Legitimacy, and Self-Determination* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 234.

⁶⁸ See, for example, Christian Bay, *The Structure of Freedom* (New York: Atheneum, 1965), pp. 103-4, 133-5.

⁶⁹ Ryan Pevnick, "Political Coercion and the Scope of Distributive Justice," *Political Studies* 56 (2008): 399-413; see also Richard Arneson, "Do Patriotic Ties Limit Global Justice Duties?" *The Journal of Ethics* 9 (2005): 127-50, esp. 136-8.

⁷⁰ Abizadeh, "Democratic Theory and Border Coercion," p. 41.

democratic approach, political coercion is justified to those who are subject to it when the *actual* process that determine how political coercion should be exercised fulfill the above two conditions of democratic legitimacy.⁷¹

In what follows I shall present three considerations in favor of the democratic approach. By arguing that there is an alternative approach through which political coercion can be justified to those subject to coercion *without* appealing to its distributive consequences, I hope to show that there is *no* necessary link between the need to justify political coercion, on the one hand, and equality, on the other.

1.4.1 The Question of Political Legitimacy

One advantage of the democratic approach is that it can provide a satisfactory answer to the question of *political legitimacy* and thus better addresses our concern for the moral justification of political coercion. The reason is that what motivates us to look for a moral justification for political coercion is the fact that the state often employs coercive power to bring about certain collective ends. Moreover, it is important to

⁷¹ My purpose is not to provide a full-blown defense of any particular theory of democracy. So I shall not try to answer the question of what is the best interpretation of the democratic ideal (e.g. whether it requires public deliberation, or direct participation etc.), which is clearly beyond the scope of this chapter.

However, the second condition of democratic legitimacy—the political institutions themselves must be based on terms that are compatible with the freedom and equality of citizens—does rule out some theories of democracy. For example, it rules out reducing democracy to unconstrained majoritarianism which allows an entranced majority to rule over a vulnerable minority without any constraints. For this point, see Abizadeh, “Democratic Theory and Border Coercion,” p. 42.

note that the state does not only exercise coercive power within a particular territory but also attempts to do so monopolistically. Thus, in providing a moral justification for political coercion, we cannot ignore the question of under what conditions a state can justifiably prevent other agents from using coercive means to bring about certain ends (regardless of whether these ends are “just” in themselves). Therefore, a valid justification of political coercion should provide an account of under what conditions a political agent is morally justified in wielding political power which is coercive in nature. And this is a question of *political legitimacy*.⁷²

The democratic approach presents an answer to this question: political coercion is justified to those who are subject to it only if the political process in which the exercise of coercive power is determined respects citizens’ democratic rights. In fact, it has been suggested by some theorists that democratic institutions are valuable partly because they provide a framework through which political coercion can be justified. Michael Walzer, for example, argues that, “men and women are either subject to the state’s authority, or they are not; and if they are subject, they must be given a say, and ultimately an equal say, in what that authority does.”⁷³ Elizabeth Anderson also

⁷² For this characterization of the problem of political legitimacy, see Buchanan, *Justice, Legitimacy, and Self-Determination*, chap. 5. See also A. J. Simmons, “Justification and Legitimacy,” in his *Justification and Legitimacy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 122-57.

⁷³ *Spheres of Justice: A Defense of Pluralism and Equality* (New York: Basic, 1983), p. 61.

argues that,

“For the purpose of political justification, that the consequences are autonomously willed by citizens as a collective goal is not an accidental feature of most goals of a democratic state, but critical to legitimating the use of political coercion to bring them about. Hence, the justification of political goals does not rest outside of democratic processes. Which goals are legitimately pursued by the state is itself determined within democratic process, and justified in part because those processes embody a form of collective autonomy.”⁷⁴

The distributive approach, in contrast, cannot provide a satisfactory answer to the problem of political legitimacy. Consider the following case: suppose an enlightened autocrat establishes a set of *egalitarian* laws and institutions which are just according to some appropriate standard of justice and impose them on her subjects. According to the distributive approach, coercion in this case can be justified to those subject to it because of its distributive consequences, but it will still lack democratic legitimacy.⁷⁵

This example suggests that the question of political legitimacy is quite separate from the questions concerning the nature of distributive justice, and it is the democratic approach, not the distributive one, which can provide a satisfactory answer to the question concerning political legitimacy.

1.4.2 The Consideration of Autonomy

⁷⁴ Anderson, “Democracy: Instrumental vs. Non-Instrumental Value,” in Christiano and Christman eds., *Contemporary Debates in Political Philosophy*, pp. 213-28, at 224.

⁷⁵ Abizadeh, “Democratic Theory and Border Coercion,” p. 42.

At least one reason why coercion has seemed important is that it is in *prima facie* conflict with the value of autonomy. Blake repeatedly suggests that (for liberals who value autonomy so highly) a valid justification of political coercion must be consistent with autonomy.⁷⁶ But it is doubtful that the test of hypothetical consent, on which the distributive approach relies, is the only way in which political coercion can be rendered compatible with personal autonomy.

The democratic approach expresses the concern for personal autonomy by demanding that the ways in which political coercion is exercise should be determined by a political process that can be seen as a medium for collective self-determination. The democratic institutions required by the democratic approach might follow from the ideal of personal autonomy in either of the following: first, such institutions may be instrumentally necessary for protection of personal autonomy against the coercive encroachment by the state; second, being able to see oneself as the author of laws to which one is subject is inherently necessary for a justification of coercion consistent with autonomy.⁷⁷ To be sure, it may be thought that the distributive approach can also provide a justification consistent with personal autonomy, but it does so only by appealing to the hypothetical acceptability of the coercively imposed laws and

⁷⁶ Blake, "Distributive Justice, Political coercion, and Autonomy," pp. 268-72, 280, 282-3, 286.

⁷⁷ Abizadeh, "Democratic Theory and Border Coercion," p. 42.

institutions. That is to say, for the distributive approach, the exercise of political coercion is compatible with respecting the personal autonomy of those subject to coercion when it can be *hypothetically* agreed to by all such persons. But this approach says nothing about the *actual* process that determines the exercise of political coercion.

1.4.3 The Consideration of Particularity

The last argument in favor of the democratic approach involves the consideration of particularity. Note that the state does not merely use coercive means to make people comply but also attempts to do so monopolistically, that is, the state may forcibly prevent other agents from exercising coercion within its jurisdiction. Therefore, any satisfactory account of moral justification of political coercion must provide an answer to two distinct particularity problems: (1) what makes any *particular* wielder of political power justified in doing so, and (2) why should we comply with the rules imposed by the particular agent that happens to exercise coercive power in *our own society*?⁷⁸

The democratic approach can provide answers to these two particularity

⁷⁸ For these two particularity problems, see Buchanan, *Justice, Legitimacy, and Self-Determination*, p. 254.

problems because democratic institutions, which are required by, and at the same time express, the fundamental equality of persons, provide a framework through which a particular agent can gain political legitimacy over the use of coercive power in the pursuit of justice. First, if a political agent is chosen to wield political power through a democratic process, it is justified in doing so monopolistically over the members of the state which it represents because it is *this* particular agent that has been chosen by a process in which all members can presumably participate as equals. Once this selection is achieved, any other agent who attempts to impose rules on the members of that state without enjoying democratic authorization would not be justified in doing so.⁷⁹ Second, when an agent has been authorized to wield political power via a democratic process in which all those who are subject to its coercive power can participate, these individuals have a weighty moral reason to comply with the rules that *this* agent imposes. The reason is that one has an obligation to show proper respect for one's fellow citizens as equal participants in the process of collective self-determination. This, however, does not mean that one has an unconditional obligation to obey a democratically created law but only that the fact that such a law was created in a democratic process provides one with a morally weighty reason to

⁷⁹ Ibid., pp. 254-5.

comply.⁸⁰

It may be objected that the distributive approach can also provide answers to the two particularity problems. To the first problem the distributive approach can reply that a particular wielder of political power is justified in doing so if it is the most effective agent with respect to the realization of justice. To the second problem the distributive approach can reply that one should comply with the rules imposed by the particular agent that exercise coercive power in one's society because these rules help to secure one's entitlements. However, these responses are not without their own limitations. For example, suppose there are more than one potential claimants of political power which can pursue domestic justice effectively, there needs to be some procedure, which is consistent with viewing each citizen as a free and equal participant in the political process, to determine which agent should wield political power. Moreover, within the parameters given by justice, citizens may still disagree with one another about the collective ends that should be pursued by the state and the exercise of political coercion in these cases cannot be justified by appealing to the distributive approach alone.

⁸⁰ This obligation to show proper respect for other citizens as equal participants in the political process can explain why one has a moral reason to comply with the collective decisions reached democratically even when one is in the dissenting minority. See *Ibid.*, pp. 255-6.

Now let us consider a possible objection to my arguments for the democratic approach. It may be argued that my distinction between the democratic and the distributive approach is nothing but a false dichotomy, and justifying political coercion requires *both* political legitimacy and distributive justice. In fact, Blake himself claims that both material equality and universal suffrage are part of the justificatory strategy by which the coercive legal system might be justified to individuals.⁸¹ If this view is correct, then the arguments in favor of the democratic approach will not undermine the plausibility of the distributive approach. I have two replies to this objection.

First, the view that justification of political coercion requires both democracy and distributive justice is not as plausible as it might first seem. Consider the following example: suppose a democratically elected government in Society S implements a set of policies which fail to meet the standard of egalitarian justice but are nonetheless consistent with people's basic rights. It is not immediately clear why the exercise of political power in this case, which enjoys political legitimacy, is not justified to those who are subject to it.

Second, and more importantly, the above objection does not entail that equality is

⁸¹ See, for example, Blake, "Distributive Justice, Political coercion, and Autonomy," pp. 295-6.

a demand of justice *only* within states. Let us suppose that the justification of political coercion does require a democratic process that determines the exercise of political power as well as a commitment to some egalitarian conception of justice. The conclusion that follows from this is that equality applies among those subject to the same system of coercive governance. But it does not follow that equality applies *only* among those subject to the same system of coercive governance.⁸² Thus, this view is in fact compatible with global egalitarianism.

To conclude this section, I have suggested there are at least three arguments in favor of the democratic approach of justifying political coercion—the consideration of autonomy, the concern for coerciveness, and finally, the concern for particularity. By presenting these arguments, I hope to show that it is possible to justify the state’s exercise of coercive political power without being committed to the view that equality as a demand of justice applies only within states. As such, one can reject the Argument from Coercion but still make sense of our tendency to demand moral justification for the state’s exercise of coercive power against its members.

⁸² For this point, see Caney, “Global Distributive Justice and the State,” *Political Studies* 56 (2008): 487-518, esp. 502-3. See also Abizadeh, “Cooperation, Pervasive Impact, and Coercion,” p. 354.

1.5 CONCLUSION

Throughout this chapter, I have sought to argue that being subject to a sovereign authority, which coerces its subjects to abide by its rules, is *not* a necessary precondition for egalitarian justice. First I presented an analysis of the concept of coercion, and then I examined certain features of political coercion that are thought to ground the relevance of equality as a demand of justice within a single state. These include: (1) political coercion has profound distributive consequences; (2) each member of the political community is a joint author of the coercion to which she is subject; (3) subjugation to political coercion is involuntary; and (4) the state exercises direct and unmediated coercion against its own members. I have shown that none of these features supports the claim that equality applies only within states. Having disputed the view that equality is meant to justify political coercion, this chapter explored an alternative way in which political coercion can be justified to those who are liable to it. I have argued that the democratic approach, which focuses on political legitimacy, is more consistent with autonomy, better reflects our concern about the coercive nature of the state, and meets the requirement of particularity. Therefore, that fact that political coercion needs to be justified does not necessarily mean that we

should support the Argument from Coercion.

All in all, I have in this chapter presented some critical responses to the Argument from Coercion. It is my aim in this chapter to show that shared subjugation to political coercion is not a necessary precondition for the demands of egalitarian justice to apply. Again, my critique of the Argument from Coercion should not be taken as an independent argument for global equality. I have not yet articulated what may global equality require of us and what the basis of these requirements is and I shall leave this task to Part II. There are, of course, other objections to global equality which maintain that equality is a demand of justice only within states but do not rely on the fact that the state is directly coercive against individuals. For example, it can be argued that it is the special relationship of reciprocity, not shared subjugation to coercion, which grounds the relevance of egalitarian principles of justice at the domestic level. It has been argued that since equality as a demand of justice is a demand of *reciprocity* in the mutual provision of a set of important collective goods that obtain only between fellow citizens and residents, no egalitarian principles of justice should be applied at the global level. I shall discuss this Argument from Reciprocity in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 2

EQUALITY AND THE STATE (II) —RECIPROCITY

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The state is a system of political coercion, but this is surely not the only way in which it can be normatively significant. An alternative view suggests that the state is normatively significant not because it coerces individuals but because it provides them with a set of important collective goods necessary for developing and acting on their plan of life. Now the question is whether it implies that the state is the only context within which egalitarian principles of justice can apply. This chapter will discuss what I shall call the *Argument from Reciprocity*, according to which egalitarian obligations of justice obtain only between citizens and residents of the same state because equality is a requirement of *reciprocity* in the mutual provision of

some important collective goods that are only provided by the state. On this view global egalitarianism is indefensible because the concern for relative deprivation becomes relevant only when there is a special relationship of reciprocity but this relationship obtains only within states. This line of argument has recently been articulated and defended by Andrea Sangiovanni, and the present chapter will therefore focus on his arguments.¹

Like the Argument from Coercion Thesis discussed in the first chapter, the Argument from Reciprocity is a disanalogy argument and it contains empirical as well as normative premises.² The empirical premise of a disanalogy argument is intended to show that the domestic society possesses certain properties that distinguish it from the global context. For the Argument from Reciprocity, the relevant property is the fact that the state—with its legal system, police, military, and administrative bodies—has the extractive, regulative, and distributive capacities to provide a set of basic collective goods for its members, such as protection against physical aggression, access to a legally regulated market, and a system of property rights. But the state's

¹ See Sangiovanni, "Global Justice, Reciprocity and the State," *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 35 (2007): 3-39.

² For this definition of disanalogy arguments, see Simon Caney, "Global Distributive Justice and the State," *Political Studies* 56 (2008): 487-518, p. 489. Here I shall set aside the distinction between "comprehensive" and "partial" disanalogy arguments. The Argument from Reciprocity is a partial disanalogy argument because it maintains only that egalitarian principles of justice should not be applies at the global level but not that no principles of justice applies globally. See also Sangiovanni, "Global Justice, Reciprocity, and the State," p. 8.

capacity to provide these goods depends crucially on the contributions of its citizens and residents.³ The global order, on the other hand, is fundamentally different because it does not (and perhaps cannot) provide these collective goods for individuals worldwide.⁴

In addition to an empirical premise, a disanalogy argument must also contain a normative premise which offers a set of normative reasons explaining why egalitarian obligations of justice arise only in presence of the proposed property. Only from these two premises can one reach a *statist conclusion* that equality as a demand of justice applies only in the domestic context.⁵ The Argument from Reciprocity contends that the concern for socio-economic equality becomes relevant only within a state because equality as a demand of justice is a requirement of reciprocity in the mutual provision of a class of collective goods necessary for developing and acting on a plan of life.⁶

The Argument from Reciprocity deserves our attention for at least three reasons.

First of all, it points out an important and uncontroversial way in which the special

³ Sangiovanni, “Global Justice, Reciprocity, and the State,” pp. 20-1.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 29, 38-9. Sangiovanni calls this an “internationalist conclusion” but it may be more appropriate to call it a “statist conclusion” because this conclusion holds that equality as a demand of justice applies only within *states*. The point is that, from the perspective of the Argument from Reciprocity, what matters is not one’s national (or cultural) identity but whether one stands in the special relationship of reciprocity of sharing in the maintenance and reproduction of a state with others.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 22-7. This position will be examined in more detail below in light of Sangiovanni’s arguments.

relationship of sharing a state is morally significant. The state provides its members with the necessary background conditions and guarantees to pursue their respective life plans. Thus, the exercise of coercion by the state is morally significant because it not only restricts people's freedom but is also *instrumentally* valuable for pursuing personal autonomy. Moreover, the Argument from Reciprocity argues that fundamentally different principles of justice should apply within and outside of a domestic society through an *impartial* approach. As such, what appears to be a morally arbitrary discrepancy is in fact a consistent application of the principle that equality is a requirement of reciprocity in the mutual provision of basic collective goods, and it appears to be perfectly consistent with the cosmopolitan premise that equal moral concern is owed to every human being considered as such.⁷ Finally, the Argument from Reciprocity can make sense of our intuition that one owes a special duty of reciprocity to one's fellow citizens and residents, who collectively sustain the state, which one does not have with respect to foreigners.

Three points of clarification need to be made here. First, although Sangiovanni focuses his discussion on a narrower set of egalitarian theories which seek to mitigate morally arbitrary inequalities, his objection actually applies to all forms of global

⁷ Ibid., pp. 3-4.

egalitarianism.⁸ These include relational global egalitarianism that appeals to global interdependence. For example, he argues that the kind of interdependence between an Italian and Slovenian textile workers is not sufficient for obligations of egalitarian justice to arise.⁹ Second, it should be noted that the Argument from Reciprocity does *not* deny that there can be some duties of reciprocity beyond the context of the state. For example, transnational trade and economic cooperation clearly gives rise to some duties of reciprocity. However, for the Argument from Reciprocity, the consideration of reciprocity can give rise to egalitarian duties of justice only in circumstances where individuals share the maintenance and reproduction of the state because equality is a requirement of reciprocity in the mutual provision of a *special* class of collective goods. Third, and finally, according to the Argument from Reciprocity, the sort of reciprocity that is needed to generate egalitarian obligations involves the mutual provision of certain collective goods which enable individuals to develop and pursue their respective plans of life. In what follows I shall call these collective goods “*basic*

⁸ “Showing how the argument from moral arbitrariness can be grounded in the idea of state-based reciprocity will,” argues Sangiovanni, “support the idea that this form of egalitarianism is best understood as an *internationalist* rather than a *globalist* ideal. Yet it is important to note that, in presenting the case for RBI [Reciprocity-based Internationalism] in terms of this narrower set of egalitarian theories [luck egalitarianism], I do not mean to imply that RBI could not be developed for other (potentially weaker) forms of egalitarianism. Although I do not do so here, one could work out a reciprocity-based conception of internationalism from the notion that distributive norms capture the fair return owed to those who aid in maintaining and reproducing the state without appeal to the argument from moral arbitrariness, and hence without committing oneself to the stronger egalitarianism of, for example, a Rawlsian or Dworkinian kind.” (Ibid., p. 23.)

⁹ Ibid., p. 34.

collective goods”. These goods include: i.) protection from physical attacks, ii.) access to a legally regulated market, and iii.) a stable system of property rights and entitlements.¹⁰ Note that even a nightwatchman state—that is, a state with a very limited government—provides its citizens and residents with these basic collective goods, and therefore its citizens and residents are under a duty of reciprocity to replace the libertarian policies the institutions of their state with egalitarian ones.¹¹ However, it may be worth pointing out not every state provides its citizens and residents with the basic collective goods just mentioned, for example, failed states, states under foreign occupation, and states that are tyrannical.

The chapter will proceed as follows. The next section will question the view that the proper scope of egalitarian justice should be defined by the bounds of pre-existing *cooperative* ventures for the mutual provision of basic collective goods. The third section will challenge the view that one’s egalitarian entitlements should be conditional upon one’s contributions to the state’s capacity to provide basic collective goods. The fourth section will challenge the normative relevance of reciprocity *in the mutual provision of basic collective goods* to equality as a demand of justice. It will

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 20.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 35.

ask whether the demands of equality can be grounded in state-based reciprocity. It will also try to show that the reasons one may have for thinking that egalitarian obligations arise from state-based reciprocity actually implies that the scope of such obligations is global. The fifth section will discuss some other possible reasons for attributing moral significance to the mutual provision of basic collective goods and argue that none of these reasons implies that concerns for equality should be bounded to the state. The aim of this section is to show that one can reject the statist conclusion without denying the moral significance of the mutual provision of basic collective goods. Finally, in the sixth section, I will try to show that there are some arguments for equality which are not subject to the critique of the Argument from Reciprocity and these arguments can also accommodate the three real world examples that Sangiovanni introduces to motivate support for his version of reciprocity-based egalitarianism.

2.2 COOPERATION FOR BASIC COLLECTIVE GOODS

Why should we think that equality is a demand of justice only within states? The state is often regarded as a cooperative venture for mutual advantage among its citizens and

residents because it exhibits two features: first, the existence of a political order will in general benefit those who live under it because of the provision of certain collective goods, such as protection from external attacks, and a stable system of property rights, which enable them to pursue common purposes or act on their respective plan of life; and, second, the provision of these goods requires its participants to do their part in sustaining the state (by, for example, accepting certain constraints on their liberty, contributing their efforts, undertaking certain sacrifice, and so forth).¹² Therefore, it is natural to think that participants in this cooperative venture should reciprocate the goods they receive that would not exist but for the cooperation and sacrifice of others.¹³ But in some places Sangiovanni seems to be suggesting that equality is a demand of justice *only* when there is reciprocity.¹⁴

Nonetheless, if we maintain that equality as a demand of justice *presupposes* the existence of cooperative practices for the mutual provision of basic collective goods, it would lead to some morally perverse conclusions because not all states are *cooperative* in the required sense and it implies that obligations of egalitarian justice

¹² See, for example, Richard Dagger in *Civic Virtues: Rights, Citizenship, and Republican Liberalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. 46-8.

¹³ Sangiovanni, "Global Justice, Reciprocity, and the State," pp. 20-1.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 3-4, 20, 29, 33.

do not obtain between persons whose social interactions with each another are not cooperative.¹⁵ To illustrate this point, consider the following example:

The *class-divided society*: imagine there is a society where the population is divided into two classes—the dominating and the dominated. Suppose that the dominating class cooperate only among themselves for the mutual provision of basic collective goods whereas the dominated class is deprived of these goods (for example, physical security, right to private property, and so on). Suppose further that in this society, social order is maintained through sheer coercion exercised by the dominating class.

It is perhaps plain enough that, by hypothesis, this society is not a scheme of social cooperation for the mutual provision of basic collective goods because a system of social cooperation by definition includes the idea of fair terms of cooperation and reciprocity of the system of interactions.¹⁶ But *if* the applicability of egalitarian justice presupposes social cooperation of the specific kind, we would have to conclude that egalitarian principles of justice do not apply to this society precisely *because* some of its members are being treated unfairly. But this conclusion is plainly perverse and it casts doubt on the original claim which compels such a conclusion. The point here is that whatever reason one might have for rejecting egalitarian principles in this hypothetical case, it cannot be the fact that the social interaction

¹⁵ Charles Beitz, *Political Theory and International Relations* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999), p. 131.

¹⁶ Rawls, *Justice as Fairness: A Restatement*, ed. Erin Kelly (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), p. 6.

involved are not genuinely *cooperative* or *reciprocal*.

To be sure, one may respond to this critique by arguing that a scheme of social cooperation is itself a demand of justice in the sense that the state *should* be conceived as a scheme of social cooperation among its citizens and residents that is responsible for providing basic collective goods for its participants. And therefore its participants owe each other a duty of egalitarian reciprocity. But what follows from this is that social cooperation for the mutual provision of basic collective goods is itself a requirement of justice but not that joint participation in social cooperation of this kind is a necessary precondition for the demand of equality to arise.¹⁷

2.3 CONTRIBUTION TO THE PROVISION OF BASIC COLLECTIVE GOODS

The previous section has argued against the view that egalitarian principles of justice apply only to those who participate in social *cooperation* for the mutual provision of basic collective goods. It is, however, possible to argue that what triggers egalitarian obligations of justice is not cooperation but *mutual contribution* to the state's capacity

¹⁷ Arash Abizadeh, "Cooperation, Pervasive Impact, and Coercion: On the Scope (not Site) of Distributive Justice," *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 35 (2007): 318-358, at 330-4.

to provide basic collective goods. Therefore, equality as a demand of justice may still apply to those whose social interaction is unfair because those who are treated unfairly under the prevailing system of social interactions can and do contribute to the provision of basic collective goods from which other citizens and residents benefit.

Sangiovanni seems to be advancing this view, as he argues:

“What triggers the special presumption against arbitrary inequalities is not the idea that no one should be worse off than anyone else through no fault of their own. The basis is fair, rather than narrowly self-interested, reciprocity: others are owed a fair return for what they have given you, just as you are owed a fair return for what you have given others. More specifically, those who have submitted themselves to a system of laws and social rules in ways necessary to sustain our life as citizens, producers, and biological beings are owed a fair return for what those who have benefited from their submission have received.”¹⁸

This means egalitarian treatment is owed to persons who contribute in the relevant way to the maintenance and reproduction of their state regardless of whether they are fairly treated in their social interactions with other citizens and residents. On this understanding, the Argument from Reciprocity does not lead to the morally problematic conclusion stated in the previous section.¹⁹

This interpretation, however, is not without its own problems. The most obvious problem is that the range of persons who are contributing members of a state does not

¹⁸ “Global Justice, Reciprocity, and the State,” pp. 26-7.

¹⁹ In fact, it may even be argued that their claims to equality are more urgent from the perspective of reciprocity precisely because they have not been given a fair return for what they have given others through their contributions to the maintenance and reproduction of the state.

always match with its citizens *and* residents.²⁰ Presumably, by adopting the formulation “fellow citizens and residents” Sangiovanni means to suggest that egalitarian obligations of justice do not obtain exclusively among fellow citizens because resident non-citizens may also contribute to the mutual provision of basic collective goods in various ways and thus have legitimate claim to egalitarian treatment.

Nonetheless, if contribution is the only proper criterion for assignment egalitarian statement, it is impossible to hold on to the claim that egalitarian obligations of justice apply to fellow citizens and residents. First of all, it is not the case that all citizens *qua* citizens are contributing members in the relevant sense. Non-resident citizens, for example, may not be contributing in any way to the state’s capacity to provide basic collective goods. Nor do they necessarily benefit from the provision of these goods by their original state. Besides, *if* whether a person is contributing to the mutual provision of basic collective goods within a state is determined by her place of residence, then we should simply say that egalitarian obligations of justice obtain only between fellow residents of the state and the formulation “fellow citizens and residents” will immediately becomes redundant.

²⁰ Chris Armstrong, “Coercion, Reciprocity, and Equality Beyond the State,” *Journal of Social Philosophy* 40 (2009): 297-316, pp. 305-6.

To be sure, it is entirely possible for Sangiovanni to accept the full implications of basing egalitarian entitlements on one's contributions to the provision of basic collective goods and adjust his original formulation accordingly. This seems to be the most sensible option. So he may now claim that contribution is the relevant criterion and it only corresponds to citizenship and residency contingently and imperfectly.

However, *if* one's egalitarian entitlements depend crucially on one's being a contributor to the provision of basic collective goods, the Argument from Reciprocity must contain a sensible account of what this kind of contribution amounts to. Such an account must meet two conditions: first, it must possess the kind of moral significance that triggers egalitarian obligations of justice, and, second, it must entail a division between contributors and non-contributors that roughly coincides with the boundaries of the state. But it is doubtful that the Argument from Reciprocity can actually provide such an account of contribution. On the one hand, if the account of contribution is too thin, then it is hard to explain why a fair return for such contributions must involve egalitarian entitlements. On the other, if the account of contribution is too stringent, the risk is that too many persons within the state will fail to measure up and are therefore not entitled to egalitarian treatment.²¹

²¹ Ibid., pp. 306-7.

We may either adopt a thin or a thick account of contribution: on the thin account, one can contribute to the mutual provision of basic collective goods simply by complying, however reluctantly, with the prevailing laws and institutions of one's society. The stringent account goes beyond mere compliance and requires trust, resources, and participation. Sangiovanni vacillates between a thin account of contribution and a stringent one. At some point he seems to adopt a very thin account which maintains that contributions to the mutual provision of basic collective goods only require "submission to a system of laws and social rules" through which these goods are produced.²² An obvious advantage of this account is that it regards all law-abiding persons as contributing to the mutual provision of basic collective goods in their state, and they are therefore entitled to egalitarian treatments. Note, however, that a reciprocity theorist does *not* have to argue that egalitarian entitlements presuppose indiscriminate compliance with the existing system of laws and social norms. This view is implausible because it implies that, in some cases, submission to

²² As he puts it, "those who have submitted themselves to a system of laws and social rules in ways necessary to sustain our life as citizens, producers, and biological beings are owed a fair return for what those who have benefited from their submission have received." ("Global Justice, Reciprocity, and the State," pp. 26-7.)

As for those who are able but unwilling to work, he suggests that "if they continue to comply with the laws (and if they continue to pay taxes, assuming they have any to pay), they are participating and contributing to the maintenance of the state according to RBI [reciprocity-based internationalism], hence aiding to the mutual provision of a system of societal norms which allow me, along with others, to develop and make use of my talents and abilities. They are, therefore, rightful beneficiaries of equality as a demand of justice." (Ibid., p. 28, n. 45.)

unjust laws and social norms may be required for one to have a claim to egalitarian treatment. It is therefore more plausible to argue that egalitarian entitlements only require compliance with the laws and social norms that are reasonably just. As such, to be qualified for egalitarian treatments, the oppressed do not have to comply with the laws and social norms which treat them unjustly, but they will have to comply with the other laws which provide the legal background for others to develop and act on their life plan.

Nonetheless, the problem with this thin account is that it is hard to see why this kind of contribution should have the normative significance which defines the proper scope of egalitarian justice. Why is mere compliance sufficient to generate egalitarian obligations of justice? This question is even more difficult to answer when what is required by justice is to neutralize the distributive impacts of brute luck.²³ Suppose I comply with a system of laws and social rules in my society and thereby contribute to the provision of personal security. Is it not enough that, as a matter of reciprocity, they are to accept the same restraints? Why does it require some sort of egalitarian redistribution to take place? Thus, the link between compliance and egalitarian entitlements is more problematic than it may first seem.

²³ I shall for the moment remain agnostic about whether this is the best available interpretation of what equality demands of us. But I do want to stress that Sangiovanni argues that reciprocity in the mutual provision of basic collective should entails a commitment to luck egalitarianism.

Although the thin account of contribution seems problematic as the ground for egalitarian reciprocity, Sangiovanni has suggested a more stringent account elsewhere in his article. For instance, he states that contributions to maintenance and reproduction of the state are paid in the form of “compliance, trust, resources, and participation”.²⁴ To be more specific, such contributions include taxation, participation in various forms of political activity, and the full range of our everyday, legally regulated activity.²⁵ This account seems to be a better way to understand the kind of reciprocity that is at work within a normally functioning state because people do contribute to the provision of basic collective goods in their state through many activities other than simple compliance with laws and social norms. With this more stringent account in hand, it is perhaps easier to explain the moral significance of a person’s contribution to the provision of basic collective goods. But the danger here is that too many citizens and residents will fail to meet such a heightened standard and are thus disqualified from egalitarian treatment. If contributing to the *de facto*

²⁴ Ibid., pp. 20-1. In another place of the text, he argues that the duty of egalitarian reciprocity also applies in a libertarian state because: “other citizens and residents contribute via compliance with extant private law (through which the well off have acquired their possessions and on which the private services from which they have benefited have depended), taxation (through which the military, police, and legal systems are maintained, and hence the physical security and the possessions secured), and in many cases military services (through which the well-off, along with everyone else, are protected from external attack).” This passage seems to support a more stringent account of contributions to the provision of basic collective goods than simple compliance. (Ibid., p. 35.) This point confirms his view that contribution to the mutual provision of basic collective goods requires something more than mere compliance.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 20.

authority of the state requires compliance, resources, trust, and participation, then there is a possibility that those who are politically inactive, the untrusting, and the untrustworthy should also be excluded from the scope of egalitarian treatments.²⁶

Persons with disability are another example. Sangiovanni makes a distinction between contributing and non-contributing disabled persons and suggests that the disabled who contribute to the provision of the collective goods necessary for society to function are entitled to engage with others on footing of equality in political and social life.²⁷

But he also concedes that those who cannot contribute in the required sense to the reproduction of the state because of their disability have no claim to equality even though they have *some* claim of justice.²⁸

Here it should be noted that this exclusion of the *non-contributing* disabled is inconsistent with the sort of egalitarian view favored by Sangiovanni himself in the domestic context. Sangiovanni's principal contention is that luck egalitarianism is best understood as an internationalist rather a globalist ideal.²⁹ However, suppose this form of egalitarianism, such as Dworkin's equality of resources, is adopted at the

²⁶ Armstrong, "Coercion, Reciprocity, and Equality Beyond the State," p. 306.

²⁷ Sangiovanni, "Global Justice, Reciprocity, and the State," pp. 30-1.

²⁸ Ibid., p.31, n. 50. For example, these persons have claims to "the alleviation of suffering and pain, where possible", that derive from their equal moral worth and dignity as human beings.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 23.

domestic level, it will contain a program of compensation for the non-contributing disabled which is based on the counterfactual judgment about the value of insurance that most people would purchase against general disability (which cannot be attributed to individual choice).³⁰ Therefore, the exclusion of non-contributing disabled persons will certainly be objectionable according to any egalitarian theory which states that inequalities due to factors that are the result of brute luck should be mitigated. The reason is that if the point of equality is to mitigate morally arbitrary inequalities, then it is hard to see why a factor which is just as arbitrary from a moral point of view should make so much difference regarding when we ought to treat the outcomes of natural and social contingencies as morally arbitrary.

Last but not least, on the stringent account of contribution, some citizens and residents contribute more to the provision of the basic collective goods in their society. If people's contributions to the provision of basic collective goods are so important to their justice-based entitlements, and people do contribute to various degrees, then why shouldn't those who have contributed more have claims to higher levels of social and economic advantages?

³⁰ The average member of the community, one may suppose, would purchase insurance against general disability in the hypothetical insurance market, see Dworkin, *Sovereign Virtue: The Theory and Practice of Equality* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), pp. 77-9.

To conclude, if what triggers the demand for equality is people's contribution to the maintenance and reproduction of the state, then Sangiovanni must offer a sensible account of contribution that can give rise to egalitarian entitlements. However, this section has demonstrated the difficulty of identifying the appropriate account of contributions for the Argument from Reciprocity to work.

2.4 THE NORMATIVE RELEVANCE OF STATE-BASED RECIPROCITY

Having explored two problems with the Argument from Reciprocity, let us now turn to a third one which is concerned with the normative relevance of state-based reciprocity to the applicability of egalitarian justice. According to the normative premise of the Argument from Reciprocity, the demand of substantive equality can only be grounded in the idea of reciprocity in the mutual provision of basic collective goods. As Sangiovanni puts it,

“...equality as a demand of justice is a requirement of *reciprocity* in the mutual provision of a central class of collective goods, namely those goods necessary for developing and acting on a plan of life. Because states (except in cases of occupied or failed states) provide these goods rather than the global order, we have special obligations of egalitarian justice to fellow citizens and residents, who together sustain the state, that we do not have with respect to noncitizens and

nonresidents.”³¹

But why is equality a requirement of state-based reciprocity? Sangiovanni contends that one cannot defend the egalitarian principle that morally arbitrary factors should not influence individuals’ relative positions simply by appealing to a distinction between choice and luck. In addition to this argument from moral arbitrariness, one must also appeal to citizens’ sense of reciprocity. To illustrate this point, he gives two normative reasons to explain why, instead of receiving a return proportional to her individual contribution as defined by the marginal product of her labor, a well-off citizen should accept the constraints of equality:

Normative reason 1: the market in which one’s talents are valued depend not only on the preferences and tastes of others but also on the legal background provided by the shared legal corpus of the state.

Normative reason 2: the very ability to develop and make use of one’s talents depends on the institutional framework and the basic collective goods that other members of the state have sustained and reproduced.

For these reasons, her ability to win social and economic advantages through her talents, efforts, and skills depends crucially on the participation and contributions of other citizens and residents in the maintenance and reproduction of the state, and therefore the idea of fair reciprocity requires that these others should be given a fair return to other citizens and residents for their contributions to the provision of basic

³¹ “Global Justice, Reciprocity, and the State,” p. 4 (emphasis in the original). For a similar point, see pp. 19-20.

collective goods.³²

Two distinct challenges can be raised against this line of argument: first, it is far from obvious that reciprocity in the mutual provision of basic collective goods requires us to endorse the egalitarian principle that morally arbitrary factors should not influence people's relative positions; second, even if we accept that reciprocity does entail egalitarian obligations within the states, the underlying rationale for doing so will imply that the scope of such obligations should be global. In what follows I shall discuss these two challenges in turn.

Fair Return and Egalitarian Justice

It is perhaps uncontroversial that we owe a fair return to our fellow citizens and residents for their contributions to the provision of basic collective goods. But it may be asked why they are owed something *more* than the enjoyment of these basic goods as a matter of reciprocity. This is where the idea of moral arbitrariness comes into play: on this view the fair return owed to those who contribute to the mutual provision of basic collective goods is captured by the distributive norm that strives to mitigate the unequal influence of social and natural contingencies on people's distributive

³² Sangiovanni, "Global Justice, Reciprocity, and the State," pp. 25-6.

shares. It is because the ability of the well off to make use of their talents, efforts and capacities to win social and economic advantages depends crucially on the contributions of others.³³ By understanding fair return in this way, state-based reciprocity is related to egalitarian justice in two ways: first, such reciprocity is indispensable in the derivation of egalitarian principles of justice; and second, it determines the scope of egalitarian obligations of justice which is owed to citizens and residents as a fair return for their contributions to the maintenance and reproduction of the state.

Nonetheless, it is far from obvious that nothing but egalitarian justice can capture the fair return required by state-based reciprocity as Sangiovanni has not considered any other account of fair return in the mutual provision of basic collective goods. For instance, it may be thought that giving a fair return to other citizens and residents requires one to make reciprocal and proportionate contributions to the provision of basic collective goods. To elaborate: acts of contribution are reciprocal in the sense that they are undertaken as acts of reciprocation for the goods one has received; and contribution is proportionate when the burdens it incurs are scaled to the benefits one has received or to one's ability to contribute. For instance, the demand of

³³ Ibid., pp. 25-6, 35.

proportionality is met when the system of law is sensitive to people's ability to comply when giving out punishments, tax obligations are in general scaled roughly to people's ability to pay, and conscriptions for military service is sensitive to the extraordinary burdens it might place on some people, and so forth.³⁴ Moreover, by making reciprocal and proportionate contributions, one also helps to sustain the background conditions that enable fellow citizens and residents to develop and act on their respective plan of life. Furthermore, such contributions may be made in various forms such as compliance with the law, trust, resources, and participation, or other acts that would help to sustain the legal and political institutions of the state on which provision of basic collective goods depends. Even more importantly, according to this account of reciprocity, the fair return that is owed to those who aid in maintaining and reproducing the state is not egalitarian entitlements but similar contributions.

However, it may be objected that my criticism is misplaced because Sangiovanni does not claim that state-based reciprocity is itself sufficient to generate egalitarian obligations of justice, so it can be argued that state-based reciprocity is a necessary but not sufficient condition for egalitarian justice. Moreover, he could respond to my criticism by saying that if state-based reciprocity cannot generate egalitarian

³⁴ For this idea of reciprocity, see Lawrence C. Becker, *Reciprocity* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986), pp. 260-1.

obligations of justice, then equality is not a demand of justice even within the domestic context. Therefore, by arguing that reciprocity does not necessarily give rise to egalitarian obligations, my criticism of Sangiovanni's account actually undermines domestic egalitarianism without rescuing its global counterpart. I am not convinced by this objection for two reasons.

First, my point is that there is more than one way to understand what constitutes a fair return in the mutual provision of basic collective goods and one cannot simply assume that such a fair return can only be captured by egalitarian entitlements. In fact, if we can discharge our duty of reciprocity in the mutual provision of basic collective goods by making reciprocal and proportionate contributions, then it is unclear in what sense equality as a demand of justice is *a requirement of reciprocity*. To be sure, this does not imply that we should not support an egalitarian conception of justice in the domestic context because there are other ways in which such a conception of justice can be justified. Second, renouncing domestic equality is not an option open to Sangiovanni, or anyone who maintains that egalitarian justice applies domestically but not globally, because his position is not that distributive egalitarianism *itself* is flawed but that it becomes relevant only in the presence of some institutionally mediated relationship of reciprocity. We can find some textual support for this

position: (1) he argues explicitly that equality as a demand of justice *is* a requirement of justice in the mutual provision of basic collective goods and we owe our fellow citizens and residents a duty of egalitarian justice;³⁵ and (2) he suggests that the well-off in a nightwatchman state do owe other citizens and residents a duty of egalitarian reciprocity to reform the libertarian policies and institutions of their society.³⁶

Now, for the sake of argument, let us assume that Sangiovanni's argument for why well off citizens should endorse the constraints of egalitarian justice is plausible and consider whether it follows that the scope of equality should be confined to the state.

Ability to Secure Differential Gains and Egalitarian Obligations

Sangiovanni contends that the well off citizens should constrain themselves by egalitarian principles as a matter of fair reciprocity because their ability to make use of their talents, efforts and capacities to obtain social and economic advantages depends on the contributions of their fellow citizens and residents to the maintenance

³⁵ Sangiovanni, "Global Justice, Reciprocity, and the State," p. 4.

³⁶ In his own words: "Without the contributions of other citizens and residents, the well off would not be able to maintain any of the benefits and advantages that establish their favored perch. In continuing to support the nightwatchman state, RBI says that the well off are therefore failing to provide a fair return—captured by principles that treat their natural and social advantages as morally arbitrary—for what fellow citizens and residents give them." (Ibid., p. 35.)

and reproduction of the state.³⁷ However, if this is the underlying reason why we should endorse egalitarian principles of justice in the domestic context, then the scope of egalitarianism should not be restricted to the state because it is not the case that we owe our ability to secure differential social and economic gains only to our compatriots.

Arguably, our ability to secure social and economic advantages for ourselves depends on the cooperation and compliance of many other individuals worldwide. For instance, how one is able to develop and make use of one's talents and efforts depends significantly on the economic development (or underdevelopment) of one's own state, which is in turn heavily influenced by the settings of the global economic order.³⁸ Moreover, individuals living in affluent societies are able to maintain their current level of social and economic advantages partly due to a stable system of international borders which prevents others (particularly from less well off societies) from entering and driving down wages. Furthermore, some individuals are able to secure higher returns than others because of the existence of an international system of property norms regarding contracts, torts, trusts, and securities and a complex network of

³⁷ Ibid., pp. 25-6, 35.

³⁸ For this general point, see Pogge, *World Poverty and Human Rights: Cosmopolitan Responsibilities and Reforms* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2002), pp. 22-4, 112-17.

bilateral investment treaties which enable them to invest in foreign markets as well as protect and delineate their transnational holdings.³⁹

Therefore, if the underlying rationale for thinking that egalitarian obligations arise from mutual provision of basic collective goods is that the provision of these goods enables the well off to secure differential returns by using their talents and efforts, then there is no reason for thinking that egalitarian obligations of justice obtain only within states. To illustrate this point, consider the following example. In the case of a well off American CEO, the Argument from Reciprocity claims that she has egalitarian obligations of justice to her worse off compatriots because without their support of the state system she would not be able to secure her current level of social and economic advantages. However, she also would not be able to secure these social and economic advantages without the system of international intellectual property rights and the trade agreements that allow her company access to developing markets.⁴⁰

Sangiovanni is nevertheless aware of this objection and gives two replies: first, global interdependence is not enough to trigger egalitarian obligations of justice

³⁹ Eric Cavallero, "Coercion, Inequality, and the International Property Regime," *The Journal of Political Philosophy* 18 (2010): 16-31.

⁴⁰ I owe this example to Rekha Nath, "Global Institutionalism and Justice," *Studies in Global Justice* 6 (2010): 167-81, at 179-80.

because people do not depend upon foreigners for the maintenance of a legal-political authority that is ultimately responsible for protecting them from physical attack and sustaining a stable system of property rights and entitlements. For example, the ability of an Italian textile worker to keep her job depends to some extent on the decisions made by the Slovenian government and Slovenian textile manufacturers but the Slovenian government neither provides her with security from physical attack or protects or delineates her property rights and entitlements.⁴¹ However, this reply is unpersuasive because it simply restates the point that is being disputed. A reciprocity theorist needs to explain why only mutual provision of basic collective goods and not other forms of interdependence can trigger egalitarian obligations of justice. But if the reason is that our ability to secure social and economic advantages depends on others' contributions to the provision of these goods, then we should maintain that the scope of such egalitarian obligations should be global because, as noted above, one's ability to win social and economic advantages through one's talents and efforts is also determined by global factors.

Second, Sangiovanni argues that our ability to secure differential gains from our

⁴¹ As noted above, this example shows that Sangiovanni objects not only to non-relational global luck egalitarianism but also to the arguments for global equality that appeal to global interdependence, such as the forms of global egalitarianism advanced by Charles Beitz and Thomas Pogge. See Beitz, *International Relations and Political Theory* and Pogge, *Realizing Rawls*.

talents and efforts depends to a much greater extent on the contributions of our fellow citizens and residents than on foreigners.⁴² The problem with this second reply is that it reduces the distinction between the domestic and the global contexts to a matter of degree. It seems to suggest that egalitarian obligations would obtain only when a certain level of interdependence with respect to people's ability to win social and economic advantages has been met and this level of interdependence exists only within the state. But then Sangiovanni needs an account of what level of interdependence is required for egalitarian principles to apply. And, without such an account, it is hard to insist that only state-based reciprocity can give rise to egalitarian entitlements.⁴³

To conclude this section, I have argued that, first, state-based reciprocity does not require us to endorse an egalitarian principle of justice; and, second, even if we grant that state-based reciprocity entails egalitarianism, it still will not follow that equality is a demand of justice only within states. However, there are some reasons for attributing moral significance to the provision of basic collective goods that do not appeal to its influence on people's ability to win social and economic advantages. The

⁴² As Sangiovanni puts it, "if she were to lose her job, it would be the *Italian* state that would provide or guarantee some form of unemployment compensation, retraining, housing, and so on. When seen in this perspective, it is clear that her capability to find and keep a job depends in the last instance to a much greater extent on the contributions of her fellow citizens and residents than on the Slovenian state." ("Global Justice, Reciprocity, and the State," p. 34.)

⁴³ See also Armstrong, "Coercion, Reciprocity, and Equality beyond the State," pp. 310-12.

next section will consider these reasons.

2.5 THE MORAL SIGNIFICANCE OF BASIC COLLECTIVE GOODS

The previous sections have been critical of the Argument from Reciprocity but they do not mean to deny that there are reasons for attributing moral significance to the fact that citizens and residents of the same state are mutually dependent for the provision of basic collective goods, such as physical security and access to a legally-regulated market. These reasons include: (1) basic collective goods are necessary for preserving individual autonomy; the mutual provision of these goods (2) has profound and pervasive impacts on people's life chances, and (3) gives rise to a special relationship between fellow citizens and residents. This section will discuss these reasons in turn and show that they supply no reason for thinking that the scope of equality should be restricted to the domestic context.

2.5.1 Autonomy

The provision of basic collective goods is morally significant because these goods are autonomy preserving in the sense that they provide the necessary background

conditions against which one can develop and pursue one's plan of life.

It is perhaps uncontroversial that personal autonomy is impossible (or will at least be severely constrained) without some collective goods provided by the legal and political authority of the state. Thus, membership of a state is not necessarily autonomy infringing. To the contrary, it is autonomy preserving in the sense that it grants individuals the background conditions against which they can develop and act on their respective plan of life.⁴⁴ Admittedly, the fact that basic collective goods are autonomy-preserving does give us a strong reason for thinking that the provision of these goods is morally significant. But it is in fact quite arbitrary to insist that egalitarian principles of justice apply *only* among those who help each other preserve their autonomy. To see this point, we can consider some instances where it is reasonable to think that equality applies. To take a micro-level example: suppose two persons worked a plot of land together, sharing fully in the business of tilling the land, growing the crops, and harvesting them. It seems to me that, in absence of countervailing reasons, the appropriate way to divide the fruit of their cooperation is to take equal shares.⁴⁵ It should be noted that, in this example, whether or not they provide each other with the conditions that preserve their autonomy does *not* affect

⁴⁴ "Global Justice, Reciprocity, and the State," p. 13.

⁴⁵ For this example, see Richard Norman, "The Social Basis of Equality," *Ratio* 10 (1997): 238-52, at 245.

our judgment about whether equality should apply. My point here is not to suggest that people have claims to equality only when they have made equal contributions to the production of some goods but simply to undermine the claim that equality applies only in situations where people contribute to the preservation of each other's autonomy.

2.5.2 Impacts on People's Life Chances

The mutual provision of basic collective goods is morally significant because it has profound and pervasive impacts on people's life chances.

A second reason for thinking that the mutual provision of basic collective goods is morally significant appeals to the profound and pervasive impacts it has on people's life chances. One of Rawls' justifications for his claim that a society's basic structure is the primary subject of justice is that "its effects are so profound and pervasive, and present from birth".⁴⁶ It may be thought that pervasive impact is a necessary condition for obligations of egalitarian distributive justice to arise, and at least one reason why the basic structure of a society has such a profound and pervasive impact is that it regulates the mutual provision of basic collective goods. For instance, the

⁴⁶ Rawls, *Theory of Justice*, revised edition (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1999), p. 96. See also his *Justice as Fairness: A Restatement*, p. 10.

collective goods provided through a society's basic structure, such as physical security or access to a legally regulated market, provide the background conditions against which a person can develop and pursue her plan of life.

Nonetheless, this reason for attributing moral significance to the mutual provision of basic collective goods does not undermine global egalitarianism. The reason is that if belonging to the same state has moral significance because it has profound and pervasive impacts on people's life chances, then being subject to the global order would have the same kind of moral significance, for the latter also has profound and pervasive impacts on people's life chances.⁴⁷ Hence, this reason for attributing moral significance to the mutual provision of basic collective goods does not point out a morally relevant difference between the domestic context and the global one. More important, if we think that egalitarian principles of justice should be adopted at the domestic level because the state's provision of basic collective goods has profound and pervasive impacts on people's life chances, then we should for the same reason think that egalitarian principles of justice should be adopted at the global level because global interdependence clearly also has profound and pervasive impacts on people's life chances worldwide.

⁴⁷ For this point, see Arash Abizadeh, "Cooperation, Pervasive Impact, and Coercion: On the Scope (not Site) of Distributive Justice," *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 35 (2007): 318-58, pp. 341-5. See also Beitz, *Political Theory and International Relations*, part III, and Pogge, *Realizing Rawls* (Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1985), chap. 6.

2.5.3 *Special Duties to Fellow Citizens*

The mutual provision of basic collective goods is morally significant because it entails special duties to one's fellow citizens and residents.

It is common to think that mutual provision of basic collective goods possesses moral significance because participation in it generates special duties among fellow citizens and residents. There are duties to reciprocate for the goods one receives from the contributions of one's fellow citizens and residents to maintenance and reproduction of the state.⁴⁸ These duties are special, as opposed to general, because they are owed exclusively to those who have contributed to the provision of basic collective goods in the relevant way and not to any other.⁴⁹

This reason does imply that the mutual provision of basic collective goods is morally significant because participation in it gives rise to some moral duties that would not otherwise exist. However, the acceptance of this point does not mean that equality is a demand of justice only in the domestic context where people stand in a special relationship of institutionalized reciprocity mentioned above. First, it does not

⁴⁸ See, for example, Dagger, *Civic Virtues*, pp. 41-60.

⁴⁹ For this terminology, see H. L. A. Hart, "Are There Any Natural Rights?" in Jeremy Waldron ed., *Theories of Rights* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), pp. 77-90.

follow from the fact that this duty of reciprocity is owed exclusively to our fellow citizens and residents that egalitarian obligations of justice obtain only within states. That is to say, the “specialness” of this duty does not, in itself, entail that the concern for substantive equality becomes relevant only in the presence of mutual reliance for the provision of basic collective goods. Second, it is important to note that the special duties we are concerned with here the duties of reciprocity is generated by mutual reliance for the provision of basic collective goods, and, as argued above, it is not the case that these duties must involve a demand of substantive equality. Thus, it is doubtful that the boundaries of such duties should limit the scope of equality as a demand of justice. Last but not least, the presence of special duties does not tell us anything about what people’s “general” entitlements should be. For example, it can be argued that our special duties to fellow citizens are acceptable only when certain background justice is upheld at the global level and the existence of special duties does not tell us that the requirements of background justice cannot involve some egalitarian principles of justice. Moreover, it is possible that people’s just entitlements are defined by some egalitarian principles of distributive justice but we have special duties to secure these egalitarian entitlements for our fellow citizens.⁵⁰

⁵⁰ Caney, “Cosmopolitanism and Justice,” in Thomas Christiano and John Christman eds., *Contemporary Debates in Political Philosophy* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), pp. 387-407.

I have in this section examined three possible reasons for attributing moral significance to the mutual provision of basic collective goods, and argued that they supply no reason for thinking that the scope of egalitarian justice should be restricted to the state. Therefore, one can affirm these reasons for attributing moral significance to the mutual provision of basic collective goods without accepting the statist conclusion that equality is a demand of justice only within states.

2.6 *MUST EGALITARIAN JUSTICE BE RECIPROCITY-BASED?*

In the last two sections I have questioned the normative relevance of state-based reciprocity to egalitarian principles of justice. This section will take a different perspective. On one reading the Argument from Reciprocity is suggesting that the special relationship of reciprocity in the mutual provision of basic collective goods is a necessary condition for *any* egalitarian conception of justice to apply. As such, it should be regarded as an objection to all forms of global egalitarianism.⁵¹ However, when discussing the normative premise of the Argument from Reciprocity,

⁵¹ Sangiovanni, “Global Justice, Reciprocity, and the State,” pp. 3-5.

Sangiovanni moves away from this inclusive reading and restricts his attention to a narrower set of egalitarian theories that strive to mitigate the unequal influence of natural and social contingencies on distributive shares, or the so-called “luck egalitarianism”, and argues that this form of egalitarianism can only be grounded in the idea of reciprocity.⁵² To show the implausibility of the non-relational globalist view, Sangiovanni asks us to consider a hypothetical example in which the inhabitants in country A has just discovered a heretofore unknown people, B, who are twice as rich, twice as happy, and have twice as many opportunities for leisure, education, and gainful employment as the inhabitants of A have. On the global luck egalitarian view, the inhabitants of A now have a claim of compensation against the inhabitants of B.⁵³ Sangiovanni thinks that his own account can provide a better response to this hypothetical example. However, this contrast between global luck egalitarianism and reciprocity-based internationalism is too crude, and he has not considered other possible arguments for equality that do not fit on either side of this distinction. Instead, he simply assumes that one can work out a reciprocity-based argument regarding other egalitarian theories of justice and show that they should apply only

⁵² Ibid., pp. 22-3.

⁵³ Ibid., pp. 24-5. A similar example appears in Derek Parfit, “Equality of Priority?” in Matthew Clayton and Andrew Williams eds., *The Ideal of Equality* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2000), pp. 81-125, at 87.

domestically.⁵⁴ To counter this claim, I shall discuss a form of egalitarianism, termed *non-intrinsic egalitarianism* by Martin O'Neill. This form of egalitarianism does not assume that demands of equality apply everywhere regardless of the nature of the relations that people stand to one another, and therefore it does not yield a counter-intuitive response to the example just mentioned. And yet non-intrinsic egalitarianism does not appeal to any reciprocity-based argument that applies only in the domestic context. Next, I shall try to show how Non-intrinsic egalitarianism can also account for our intuitions in the real world examples that Sangiovanni introduces to illustrate the plausibility of his reciprocity-based internationalism. My aim in this section is to show that even if one finds global luck egalitarianism unpersuasive, one does not have to fall back to Sangiovanni's reciprocity-based internationalism.

Non-intrinsic Egalitarianism

Non-intrinsic egalitarianism appeals to the following considerations for reducing social and economic inequalities between individuals: (1) these inequalities create stigmatizing differences in status, whereby the badly-off feel like, and are treated as, inferiors; (2) give rise to objectionable relations of power and domination; (3) weaken

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 23.

self-respect (especially of the worse-off); (4) encourage servility and deferential behavior; and (5) undermine healthy fraternal social relations.⁵⁵ This form of egalitarianism maintains the badness of distributive inequality is explained in terms of the badness to human relationship it brings about. These considerations to which non-intrinsic egalitarianism appeals are themselves *egalitarian* reasons for favoring distributive equality in the sense that they are the elements that together constitute a complex background picture of how people are to live together as equals.⁵⁶

So can we construct some sort of reciprocity-based argument to limit the scope of non-intrinsic egalitarianism as described above? I think the answer is “No” because none of the above considerations appeals to a pre-existing relationship of reciprocity. In fact, it seems more plausible to suggest that if one is committed to the view of non-intrinsic egalitarianism, one should also deny that the scope of egalitarian justice is bounded to the state because social and economic inequalities between individuals from different societies could also give rise to status-harms, to forms of domination, and to offensive forms of social relations that exist across state borders. According to non-intrinsic egalitarianism, if transnational inequalities give rise to objectionable forms of human relationships, there is reason to reduce or eradicate such

⁵⁵ For this form of egalitarianism, see Martin O’Neill, “What Should Egalitarians Believe?” *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 36 (2008): 119-56, esp. 123-34.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 125-6.

inequalities.⁵⁷ Take domination for example: members of economically vulnerable societies are exposed, without any effective recourse, to the consequences of decisions immensely affecting their life prospects which originate elsewhere. They range from the acts of private foreign currency speculators to the macroeconomic restructuring conditions imposed on emergency lending by multilateral financial organization dominated by governments of wealthy societies. This dimension of global inequality is even more troubling than its domestic parallel as there is no effective restraining or compensating mechanisms at the global level.⁵⁸ To be sure, I do not mean to settle the issue here. It is beyond the scope of the present chapter to determine the global implications of non-intrinsic egalitarianism. But for our present purpose it will suffice to say that one cannot give a reciprocity-based argument for limiting the scope of Non-intrinsic egalitarianism to the state. The idea is that the considerations to which Non-intrinsic egalitarianism appeals will still be morally relevant in absence of the special relationship of state-based reciprocity.

Note that non-intrinsic egalitarianism does not draw on the idea that the fact that people who are worse off through no fault of their own have a claim to compensation

⁵⁷ Ibid., pp. 136-8.

⁵⁸ Beitz, "Does Global Inequality Matter?" *Metaphilosophy* 32 (2001): 95-112, pp. 106-7.

against anyone anywhere. Therefore, non-intrinsic egalitarianism can provide a more reasonable response to the hypothetical case mentioned above. For example, the extent to which inequalities between the two countries would be objectionable would depend in part on the degree of interaction between them and if they have no possibility of interaction, then there would be nothing objectionable about the inequalities that exist between them.⁵⁹

In conclusion, although I am unable to provide a full-blown argument for non-intrinsic egalitarianism here, I hope my discussion can show that it is indeed possible to argue for equality without appealing to any luck egalitarian or reciprocity-based arguments.

Accommodating Sangiovanni's Examples

In his article, Sangiovanni offers three real world examples to show that his reciprocity-based internationalism better matches our considered convictions regarding the place of egalitarian ideals in our social and political life than its non-relational competitor.⁶⁰ But it may be instructive to consider how a global

⁵⁹ But a non-intrinsic egalitarian is bound to care about whether such inequalities would give rise to domination or other objectionable forms of social relationships between individuals living in these two countries.

⁶⁰ To be sure, he does *not* claim that these examples provide a justification for his version of

egalitarian might respond to these examples. In what follows I am going to argue that, in the cases of the first two examples, one can account for our intuitions in these examples without appealing to the idea of reciprocity, and, as for the last example, the empirical observation involved does not entail that egalitarian obligations of justice obtain only within states. Therefore, these examples do not count in favor of the Argument from Reciprocity.⁶¹

The Disability Rights Movement

The first example that Sangiovanni introduces is the case of the disability rights movements: he argues that the central complaint of the disability rights movement is about the lack of equal standing as a citizens despite the fact that the disabled persons also contribute to the provision of those basic goods and services necessary for their society to function.⁶²

First of all, if one accepts the premise that one's egalitarian entitlements are a fair return for one's contribution to the mutual provision of basic collective goods, then one must also maintain that *non-contributing* disabled persons can have no complaint

reciprocity-based egalitarianism.

⁶¹ For a response to Sangiovanni's examples from a non-relational perspective, see Gabriel Wollner, "Framing, Reciprocity, and the Ground of Egalitarian Justice," *Res Publica* 16 (2010): 281-98, esp. 292-4.

⁶² Sangiovanni, "Global Justice, Reciprocity, and the State," pp. 30-1.

about the lack of equal standing. But this position is hardly appealing to the supporters of the disabled rights movement. Thus, it is questionable that the disabled rights movement in favor of Sangiovanni's view.

Besides, it is entirely possible to account for the appeal of the disabled rights movement without reference either to state-based reciprocity or to the luck egalitarian position. It may, for example, be argued that the inferior standing in social and economic life relegated to the disabled persons by the rest is objectionable from an egalitarian point of view because such treatment (1) stigmatizes the disabled persons, (2) weakens their self-respect, and (3) undermines the fairness of the political process (because the disabled persons have to face extraordinary obstacles in public life). Notice that these reasons can account for the complaint about unequal standing by the disabled persons but they do not make them victims of brute bad luck, nor do they appeal to the disabled persons' supposed contributions to the legal and political institutions of their society. More important, none of these reasons suggests that we should limit the scope of egalitarian justice to the state. Therefore, our moral conviction regarding the case of the disabled rights movement does not in fact count in favor of the Argument from Reciprocity.

The Situation of Chinese Migrant Workers

The second example that Sangiovanni gives to illustrate the plausibility of his reciprocity-based internationalism is the situation of migrant workers in contemporary China: these migrant workers, who have migrated from rural areas to cities to find jobs, are not entitled to a wide range of services and social benefits that are available to other residents of the city where they work because of their status as internal migrants. For Sangiovanni, these inequalities are morally more troubling than the similar inequalities between a Chinese citizen and a Dane because the Chinese migrant workers, like their fellow countrymen in the city, contribute to the same system of legal and political institutions that make up the Chinese state.⁶³

This example assumes that inequalities among compatriots are morally more troubling than similar inequalities among citizens of different states. Granting this, we may still disagree about why it is the case. For instance, a non-intrinsic egalitarian may argue that the unequal treatment of internal migrants in contemporary China is more morally problematic because such unequal treatment may have additional bad effects such as (1) creating stigmatizing differences in status, (2) weakening the

⁶³ Sangiovanni uses a microcase where three young girls died in a traffic accident in a small city in central China but the parents of one girl received much less compensation than the parents of the other two girls because of their status as migrant workers. *Ibid.*, pp. 31-2.

self-respect of the migrant workers, and (3) undermining healthy, fraternal social relations of their community. These considerations do not make any reference to the fact that these migrants workers has contributed to the same set of legal and political institutions of the same state. Moreover, it should be noted that a global egalitarian needs not deny that it may sometimes be morally more urgent to eradicate domestic inequalities.

Support for the Welfare State

The third and last example that Sangiovanni puts forward is the case of contemporary welfare state: he points out that one major motivational source supporting the welfare state, which is the real world institutional framework commonly associated with contemporary egalitarianism, is reciprocity. In addition: the idea of welfare state “is a system of ‘organized and generalized’ reciprocity constitutes a prominent argument for the emergence of the welfare state”. The underlying idea is that individuals are more willing to grant their consent to the policies and institutions in which burdens and benefits so generated are perceived to be widely and fairly shared and less willing when public services are inconsequential or inefficient or when free-riding and

parasitism are rife.⁶⁴

But the empirical claim that people are mainly motivated by a sense of reciprocity to support the practice of welfare state is not beyond dispute. It may be worth pointing out that what underpins the popular support for the welfare state may be something other than reciprocity. Empirical studies of public opinions toward the welfare state suggest that people are sometimes motivated by their beliefs about recipient deservingness and their self-interest (for example, expectation to benefit from these welfare programs or seeing them as insurance against potential hardships) to support the practice of the welfare state.⁶⁵ These motivations appear to be more important in social welfare programs which are selective in the sense that only some citizens receive the benefits and so some line between the needy and the non-needy must be drawn (as opposed to a universal program in which the state furnishes *all* citizens with basic capabilities).⁶⁶ Some other studies may emphasize the role of affectionate and emotional grounds—the degree to which people perceive a common

⁶⁴ “Global Justice, Reciprocity, and the State,” pp. 32-3.

⁶⁵ See, for example, Fay Lomax Cook and Edith J. Barrett, *Support for the American Welfare State: The Views of Congress and the Public* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), pp. 94-109, 149-60. The criteria for recipient deservedness are as follows: 1. Really need money; 2. Want to be independent; 3. Spend benefits wisely; 4. Not responsible for their neediness; and 5. No alternative sources of meeting their needs. (pp. 96-100)

⁶⁶ For this observation, see Bo Rothstein, “The Universal Welfare State as a Social Dilemma,” in Bo Rothstein and Sven Steinmo eds., *Restructuring the Welfare State: Political Institutions and Policy Change* (New York: Palgrave, 2002), pp. 206-22, esp. 214-15.

identity—for supporting welfare programs.⁶⁷

Second, and perhaps more important, one can concede to the descriptive point that the idea of reciprocity is a major motivational source for supporting the real world embodiment of the egalitarian ideal without also accepting the normative conclusion that equality as a demand of justice must be grounded in the idea of reciprocity. The reason is that the above empirical observation can at best indicate a feasibility condition for fully realizing the ideal of equality but not an existence condition for egalitarian obligations to arise. As such, it can tell us little, if anything, about the scope of our obligations of egalitarian justice.⁶⁸ Perhaps this empirical observation about people's motivation can support the statist conclusion (that equality is a demand of justice only within states) only if we assume that people have egalitarian obligations of justice to one another only when they are actually motivated to discharge such obligations. But this assumption is highly implausible. For example, imagine a state whose welfare system is rife with free-riding and parasitism. In this case, it is unlikely that individuals would be motivated by reciprocity to comply with the egalitarian policies and institutions of their society. However, what follows from this is that, given the circumstances, it may be unreasonable to expect people to

⁶⁷ See, for example, Leon Mayhew, *Society: Institutions and Activity* (Illinois: Glenview Press, 1971).

⁶⁸ Abizadeh, "Cooperation, Pervasive Impact, and Coercion," pp. 339-40.

support the welfare state out of the spirit of reciprocity,⁶⁹ but not that egalitarian obligations of justice do not arise in the first place. Therefore, the fact that reciprocity is a motivational source support the practice of welfare state does not entail that equality as a demand of justice can only be grounded in state-based reciprocity.

2.7 CONCLUSION

This chapter has examined the Argument from Reciprocity as *an* objection to global egalitarianism. More specifically, it has argued for the following positions. First, the applicability of egalitarian principles of justice does not presuppose actually existing *cooperative* practices for the mutual provision of basic collective goods. Second, it is unlikely that we could have an appropriate account of *contribution* to the state's capacity to provide basic collective goods for the Argument from Reciprocity to work. Third, it is unclear that reciprocity in the mutual provision of basic collective goods

⁶⁹ This is because (1) one may not in fact receive any genuine good as a result of these policies and institutions, and (2) compliance in this case will not in the long run serve to promote reciprocal social relations. Moreover, compliance will not be a requirement of reciprocity when free-riding and parasitism is rife. This is because compliance with such policies and institutions when most others are doing the same will not be a proportionate response to the good one receives as it will place an unfair burden on those who comply. However, one may have a reciprocity-based reason to undertake actions with an aim to reform these policies and institutions in a way that will promote reciprocal relationships in the future.

has some special relevance for elaborating an egalitarian conception of justice. Fourth, the reasons why state-based reciprocity has seemed morally significant do not imply that the proper scope for egalitarian justice is domestic. Consequently, one can reject the Argument from Reciprocity without denying the moral significance of being interdependent for the mutual provision of basic collective goods. Lastly, even if we grant that (1) equality is a requirement of state-based reciprocity, and that (2) this kind of reciprocity obtains only within states, we may still have reason to reject the conclusion that the scope of egalitarianism should be restricted to the domestic context because there is another possible argument for global equality that does not appeal to state-based reciprocity or the distinction between choice and luck.

This chapter and the last one have examined two distinct reasons for restricting the scope of egalitarian justice to the state, and argued that neither of them is persuasive. The next chapter, however, will deal with the *Nationalist Arguments*. These arguments hold that substantive egalitarian principles of justice are relevant only within the context of a *nation* which implies a shared identity, a common public culture, and collective reasonability.

CHAPTER 3

EQUALITY AND NATIONALITY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In the last two chapters I have critically examined two separate arguments against global egalitarianism that draw on the normative significance of the state: namely, the *Argument from Coercion* and the *Argument from Reciprocity*. Now let us turn to the normative significance of belonging to the same *nation*. I shall focus on the works of David Miller which present a sophisticated and powerful challenge to global egalitarianism from a *nationalist* perspective. Miller's objection to global egalitarianism is nationalist because he maintains that the *nation-state*—a state constituted in such a way that its citizens are of single nationality—is the unique context within which substantial forms of egalitarian treatment can be demanded as a

matter of justice.¹ According to Miller, the global context is different from the national one in two important ways. First, at the global level, there can be no non-arbitrary way of finding the appropriate metric (or metrics) to determine whether two persons are equally well-off whereas within a national community, the public culture of the nation will contain a range of shared understandings about the value of the goods being distributed and thus the appropriate metric for specifying what equality might mean in that community.² Second, the world is now divided into separate national communities and inequalities among individuals at the global level will inevitably follow from the legitimate exercise of national self-determination. As such, the practice of holding *nations* responsible for their actions will pose an intractable problem for any egalitarian theory of global justice.³

Before we consider these arguments we must first define a nation. According to Miller, a nation is a group of people (1) with a common identity; (2) marked off from other communities by its distinct public culture; (3) whose members recognize special

¹ Miller, "National Self-Determination and Global Justice," in *Citizenship and National Identity* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000), pp. 161-79, esp. 172-4. See also his *Principles of Social Justice* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999), pp. 236-9, and "Justice and Global Inequality," in Andrew Hurrell and Ngaire Woods, *Inequality, Globalization, and World Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 187-210, at p. 190.

² Miller, *National Responsibility and Global Justice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 56-68, and *Principles of Social Justice*, pp. 18-19.

³ Miller, *National Responsibility and Global Justice*, pp. 68-75, and "National Self-Determination and Global Justice," p. 176.

obligations to one another, (4) regard the continued existence of the nation as a valuable good, and (5) aspire to be politically self-determining. It is important not to confuse “nation” with “state” because the latter refers to the set of political institutions that are seen as embodying the national will.⁴ There are some states that contain more than one national group whereas there are some nations that are stateless in the sense that they lack the set of political institutions to be politically self-determining.

Miller maintains that there are four kinds of duties of global justice: (1) the duty to assist others, irrespective of their nationality, in securing their basic needs;⁵ (2) the duty to uphold fair terms of international cooperation;⁶ (3) the duty to redress historical injustices committed by one’s nation;⁷ and (4) the duty to provide other nations with the opportunity to achieve national self-determination and social justice

⁴ Miller, *National Responsibility and Global Justice*, pp. 124-7. See also *On Nationality* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), chap. 2.

⁵ Miller, *National Responsibility and Global Justice*, pp. 163-200. By *basic* needs, Miller means a subset of human needs must be met for people to lead a minimally decent life in *any* society. These needs include: food and water, clothing and shelter, physical security, health care, education, work and leisure, freedoms of movement, conscience, and expression. (p. 184). For him, these needs have compelling moral force and are owed to everyone by everyone else independent of the special relationships people may stand to one another. See also Miller, “The Limits of Cosmopolitan Justice,” p. 176; “Justice and Global Inequality,” at 198; “National Self-Determination and Global Justice,” pp. 174-5; and “A Response,” in Daniel Bell and Avner de-Shalit eds., *Forms of Justice: Critical Perspectives on David Miller’s Political Philosophy* (Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003), pp. 349-72, at 370.

⁶ Miller, *National Responsibility and Global Justice*, pp. 251-3. See also “National Self-Determination and Global Justice,” p. 175, and “Justice and Global Inequality,” pp. 204-9.

⁷ Miller, *National Responsibility and Global Justice*, pp. 143-59.

which involves ensuring that they have an adequate resources base, and a tolerable economic environment, against which they can make decisions.⁸ But none of these duties can plausibly be translated into a demand for global *equality*. To be sure, Miller is *not* defending the current pattern of global inequalities and he has suggested some reasons for wanting the scale of the existing global inequalities to be reduced; but he insists that these reasons see inequality only as an indirect source of injustice. These reasons include, first, material inequalities may lead to unjustified domination; second, gross inequality may undermine self-determination for the worse-off nations; and finally, large inequalities will undermine the prospect for achieving fair terms of cooperation internationally.⁹

There is, however, a nationalist argument that I am not going to discuss in detail in the following sections, that is, the argument that egalitarian theory of global justice would be incompatible with the special duties we owe to our fellow nationals. I just have three short replies to this line of argument. The first thing to note is that the special duties that we owe to our fellow nationals in virtue of our common nationality are not necessarily duties of justice.¹⁰ Second, even if we assume for the sake of

⁸ Miller, "National Self-Determination and Global Justice," p. 176.

⁹ Miller, *National Responsibility and Global Justice*, pp. 75-6; and *On Nationality*, p. 192. These comments suggest that Miller does not hold a pure sufficiency view with respect to global distributive justice.

¹⁰ See, for example, Caney, "Nationality, Distributive Justice, and the Use of Force," *Journal of*

argument that special duties exist among fellow nationals, it still does not follow that the domestic context and the global one is disanalogous in a morally relevant way. After all, special duties of various kinds—for example, the special duties that one owes to one's family or friends, and the special duties that arise from promise or contracts, and so on—do exist within any single society. These duties are not any less important from an ethical standpoint than the duties we may owe to our fellow nationals. Now it is unclear why only the special duties arising from common nationality can count against egalitarian conceptions of justice while special duties of other kinds—which exist within all national communities (or states)—cannot. Third, the existence of special duties among fellow nationals is not in tension with global egalitarianism. This is because an egalitarian theory of global justice does not necessarily require us to be impartial between our fellow nationals and foreigners; just like an egalitarian theory of social justice does not necessarily require us to be impartial between family or friends and strangers.¹¹ For instance, it may be the case that a theory of justice applies to background institutions while individuals are free to

Applied Philosophy 16 (1999): 123-38.

¹¹ Unsurprisingly, some may deny that special duties have any intrinsic value. A utilitarian, for example, may insist that special duties to one's family, friends or compatriots have only instrumental value and can be justified only when they serve the utilitarian ends. That means our special duties to compatriots are derivative from our more general duty of promoting overall utility. See, for example, Robert E. Goodin, "What is So Special about Our Fellow Countrymen?" *Ethics* 98 (1988): 663-86.

show preference to those who stand in special relations to them as long as they act within the rules provided by these institutions.¹² In fact, it could be argued that special duties which arise from common nationality are valuable only when they are within the constraints provided by an egalitarian conception of global justice.¹³ Therefore, affirming the special duties to compatriots is not necessarily in conflict with global egalitarianism.

The chapter is organized as follows. The next section considers an anti-universalist argument which claims that it is reasonable for some people, depending on their worldview, to reject the liberal egalitarian account of justice. The third section examines the argument that global egalitarianism is indefensible because we cannot come up with an appropriate measurement of resources or opportunities that would specify what equality means at the global level. The fourth section considers the claim that global egalitarianism is incompatible with national responsibility.

3.2 MORAL UNIVERSALISM AND “REASONABLE REJECTION”

¹² For this idea, see Rawls, *Political Liberalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), pp. 265-9.

¹³ Arash Abizadeh and Pablo Gilabert, “Is There a Genuine Tension between Cosmopolitan Egalitarianism and Special Responsibilities?” *Philosophical Studies* 138 (2008): 349-65.

Let me begin by considering an anti-universalist argument which claims that it is reasonable for some people, depending on their worldview, to reject the liberal egalitarian account of justice.¹⁴ In his critique of Brian Barry,¹⁵ Miller argues that the “reasonable rejection” test, if applied consistently, undermines global egalitarianism.¹⁶

His argument can be restated as the following:

- (1) One can reasonably reject a proposed principle of justice when it conflicts with another principle that one holds.¹⁷
- (2) There is a great deal of variation in different societies in how justice is understood, and therefore people hold and act on conflicting principles of justice.¹⁸
- (3) Thus, it would be reasonable for people, depending on their deepest worldview, to reject the liberal egalitarian principles of justice.¹⁹
- (4) Therefore, each society should be allowed to pursue its local conception of justice which may or may not be egalitarian in nature (as long as it

¹⁴ Miller, “Limits of Cosmopolitan Justice,” in David Mapel and Terry Nardin eds., *International Society: Diverse Ethical Perspectives* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), pp. 175-9.

¹⁵ For Barry’s view, see “International Society from a Cosmopolitan Perspective,” in Mapel and Nardin eds., *International Society*, pp. 144-63.

¹⁶ Miller is himself skeptical about whether the Scanlonian test can play an independent role in ethical argument, but his point is that *if* we apply the reasonable rejection test consistently, we will have to reject an egalitarian conception of global justice. See Miller, “Limits of Cosmopolitan Justice,” p. 180, n.8. I decide to include this anti-universalist argument because it implies that global egalitarianism is indefensible due to the cultural diversity among nations.

¹⁷ Miller, “Limits of Cosmopolitan Justice,” pp. 167-9.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 176.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 177-8.

respects the basic rights of its members).²⁰

I decide to include this argument in the present chapter because, if it is sound, it can undermine global egalitarianism in three ways: first, this argument denies that the egalitarian conception of justice has universal validity; second, implementing principles of equality across societies will involve imposing on some people a conception of justice that they can, depending on their worldviews, reasonably reject; third, and finally, the global egalitarian ideal will be seriously constrained if it is acceptable for a community, depending on its culture, to institute an inegalitarian social order which systematically disadvantages a subset of its members.

3.2.1 Cultural Diversity and Principles of Justice

For Miller, the holding of conflicting conceptions of justice by people from different cultures implies that people may reject a particular principle of justice that conflicts with their worldview. But how can we distinguish *reasonable* rejections of principles of justice from *unreasonable* ones? It may be thought that whether one's rejection is reasonable or not depends on the worldview that one sincerely holds and such a worldview should reflect one's cultural identity and is constituted by one's religious belief and the conception of justice affirmed by one's culture (as shared by other members of one's community). As such, cultural diversity creates a serious problem

²⁰ Ibid., pp. 178-9.

for global egalitarianism because some communities do sincerely embrace a worldview which conflicts with the liberal egalitarian conception of justice. For example, the principle demanding gender equality in some key aspects can be reasonably rejected by someone who is committed to a religious worldview that endorses gender discrimination.²¹ However, this account of “reasonable rejection” seems quite implausible. The fact that a proposed principle *x* conflicts with another principle *y*, which is entrenched in someone’s worldview (assuming there is real inconsistency) does not by itself invalidate the proposed principle. It may be the case that principle *y* is mistaken, or that the person’s worldview is itself morally objectionable (and thus cannot justify his rejection), or that the person’s worldview does not in fact prefer principle *y* over *x*. Without rejecting any of these possibilities, one cannot derive the claim that it is reasonable for people, depending on their worldview, to reject the liberal egalitarian principles of justice from the fact that some cultures do not share this conception of justice. Therefore, all this account can show is that people may reject a certain conception of justice depending on the worldview they embrace, but not that such a rejection is *reasonable*.

3.2.2 Miller’s Minimal Universalism

²¹ Ibid., pp. 177-8.

Another aspect of the “reasonable rejection” argument I wish to consider is its compatibility with Miller’s own conception of global justice. In what follows I shall try to show that this argument, *if* sound, has force not only against the egalitarian principles of justice but also against the principles endorsed by Miller himself. So it raises the question whether Miller can consistently uphold his own minimalist conception of global justice and at the same time attack global egalitarian principles for being subject to reasonable rejection.

We can identify at least two requirements of justice that should be guaranteed throughout the world in various cultural contexts: (1) a set of basic human rights; and (2) the right to equal citizenship.²² However, his interpretation of reasonable rejection actually does not live up to these two requirements.

First, let us look into what Miller means by basic human rights (or basic rights) and consider how some of these rights may be at odds with the reasonable rejection test as he understands it. Miller maintains that when we consider what we owe to other human beings considered as such, without any particular relationship, the best answer is to respect their basic rights.²³ This minimal list of rights defines a global

²² Miller explicitly states that in a just world, all societies would grant their members full rights of citizenship and none would discriminate on grounds of sex or race. See Miller, “A Response,” in D. Bell and A. De-Shalit eds., *Forms of Justice* (Lanham, MD.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003), pp. 349-72, at 370.

²³ This will involve the negative duty not to infringe such rights and in some cases duty to provide

minimum below which no one should be allowed to fall, and they include the rights to subsistence, personal security, freedom of movement, *and* freedom of thought and expression.²⁴ However, even this minimal list of rights may be vulnerable to reasonable rejection because principles demanding the fulfillment of some of these rights could be reasonably rejected by others depending on their worldviews. Miller holds that, as a general matter, only a few propositions could not be reasonably rejected, for example, truths of mathematics, some basic empirical propositions and some very basic moral propositions such as it is wrong to disable someone without good cause.²⁵ This view implies that it is reasonable for some people to reject principles guaranteeing the right to freedom of thought and expression. For instance, people who come from an intolerant culture may sincerely endorse a conception of justice that prohibits the expression of “heresy”.

Another way that Miller’s interpretation of reasonable rejection may have tension with his own conception of global justice is that it is in direct conflict with the requirement of equal citizenship. The reasonable rejection argument as set out above

positive aid.

²⁴ Miller, *National Responsibility and Global Justice*, chap. 7; see also “National Self-Determination and Global Justice,” in *Citizenship and National Identity* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000), p.174-5, and “Justice and Global Inequality,” p. 198.

²⁵ Miller, “Limits of Cosmopolitan Justice,” p. 177.

will clearly suggest that the principle guaranteeing the right to equal citizenship (within a domestic context) should not be implemented globally because it can be reasonably rejected by people whose worldview favors an inegalitarian social order. For example, this argument will suggest that this principle could be reasonably rejected by someone who holds a worldview which regards unequal treatment of people as flowing naturally from the structure of a hierarchically ordered universe.²⁶

Surely Miller can defend his own conception of global justice by arguing that principles protecting basic rights are not vulnerable to reasonable rejection. However, in doing so, he must come up with an independent argument that does not rely on consensus among cultures. In fact, when Miller tries to derive basic rights from people's basic needs, he takes an objective approach which focuses on what is *actually* necessary for people to lead a minimally decent life in different cultural contexts (as opposed to what people in different cultures may believe as necessary).²⁷ The moral urgency of protecting people's basic rights does not, however, vindicate Miller's claim that egalitarian principles of justice (but not his minimalist principles) are vulnerable to reasonable rejection.

To sum up, in this section I have argued that, first, the holding of conflicting

²⁶ This is Miller's own example, see *ibid.*, pp. 177-8.

²⁷ Miller, *National Responsibility and Global Justice*, p. 184.

conceptions of justice by people with different worldviews does not show that the liberal egalitarian principles of justice can be reasonably rejected by some people; and, second, Miller cannot consistently adhere to the “reasonable rejection” argument and his own minimalist conception of global justice.

3.3 NATIONAL CULTURE AND THE “METRIC PROBLEM”

This section considers what Miller has termed the “*metric problem*”: the problem of specifying the appropriate metric (or metrics) that would allow us to determine whether two persons in different societies are equal in some relevant aspect—for example, have equal resources or opportunity—as required by an egalitarian conception of *global justice*.²⁸ According to this argument global egalitarianism is indefensible because the sheer diversity of national cultures prevents us from finding appropriate metrics for egalitarian principles justice to work at the global level. This problem is not merely a technical problem of measurement: it is not the problem that we lack the data that would allow us to make cross-national comparison of people’s

²⁸ Ibid., pp. 56-68.

relative shares but instead a problem of saying what equality would mean in a culturally plural world in which different societies will construct goods in different ways and also rank them differently.²⁹ The underlying thought is perhaps that there is no point in pursuing an ideal that one would not recognize if one has achieved it.

In his discussion of the metric problem, Miller focuses on resources and opportunities as two paradigmatic goods that egalitarian theories of global justice seek to equalize.³⁰ But here I shall focus on Miller's claim that there can be no appropriate metrics for comparing people's opportunities at the global level and set aside the issue of whether there is a culturally neutral way for determining the value of unimproved natural resources.³¹ One reason is that the principle of global equality of resources focuses too narrowly on people's shares of the values of the world's natural resources and it neglects many other factors that significantly affect people's level of well-being.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 67.

³⁰ It is of course possible to come up with some theory of global equality which relies on some readily measurable metric for making interpersonal comparisons. For example, it may be argued that justice requires everyone regardless of her nationality to have an equal level of monetary income (perhaps adjusted to Purchasing Power Parity). Although such a theory of global justice would not suffer from the metric problem, it is indefensible for other reasons.

³¹ According to Miller, property values, even of unimproved sites, are to a large extent an artifact of human choice and human decision. More precisely, there are three sets of factors which may determine the value of natural resources: (1) the rules and conditions under which the property may be used; (2) the ability and preferences of the people who might use the property and consume what is produced there; and (3) the neighborhood effect on site value. And since Nations contribute to the creation of their own aggregate property values, if they are taxed on the value of their resources then they are to a considerable extent being taxed according to the values they adhere to collectively and the choices they have made. See *National Responsibility and Global Justice*, pp. 58-61.

3.3.1 Arguing from the Metric Problem

Miller contends that we cannot find the appropriate metrics for making opportunity comparisons across national communities. As he puts it,

“If education, for instance, takes different forms in different places, how can we judge whether a child in country A has better or worse educational opportunities than a child in country B? ... Suppose, for instance, we can find a measure of education such that people in Iceland plainly have better educational opportunities than people in Portugal, but that people in Portugal equally plainly have superior leisure opportunities than people in Iceland (sunny beaches, swimming pools, etc.). Is it legitimate to say that people in one of these places are better (in the global sense) than people in the other, or can we say only that according to metric E Icelanders are better off while according to metric L the Portuguese are better off, and nothing beyond this?”³²

This metric problem argument against global equality of opportunity can be formulated as follows:

- (1) For the principle of equality of opportunity to work, there must be some appropriate metric (or metrics) that allows us to determine whether two persons have equal opportunities.
- (2) When making interpersonal opportunity comparisons, we *need* “a set of common cultural understandings” to tell us which metric or metrics are appropriate.
- (3) Within a *nation*-state, such shared cultural understandings are readily available so a number of specific opportunities can be singled out as significant and non-substitutable.
- (4) At the global level, however, such shared understandings are absent because different societies construct goods and rank them in different ways,

³² Ibid., p. 66.

and thus we cannot know which metric or metrics it is appropriate to use when attempting to draw cross-national opportunity comparisons.

(5) Therefore, we cannot specify what it means for opportunities to be equal at the global level. And we should not understand *global* justice as requiring that people across the world should enjoy equal opportunity.³³

The first thing one may notice about this “metric problem” argument is that it is not an argument against the global egalitarian ideal as such. As argued by Simon Caney, the metric problem argument does not establish that there is nothing morally objectionable about people facing worse life chances simply in virtue of their nationality; nor does it entail that it is morally irrelevant whether people have equal opportunity. As such, what follows from this argument is not that the principle of equality of opportunity should be rejected but that we should be more cautious in applying this principle in the global context and in doing so we can never hope for too much precision.³⁴

Another point to note is that the argument wrongly assumes that the metric problem arises only at the global level. The reason is that cultural diversity exists across as well as *within* nations. For instance, sub-national cultural groups—such as religious communities and ethnic groups—may also construct and rank goods in

³³ Miller, *Ibid.*, pp. 62-7. See also “National Self-Determination and Global Justice,” pp. 168-9, and *On Nationality*, p. 106.

³⁴ Caney, “Justice, Borders and the Cosmopolitan Ideal: A Reply to Two Critics,” *Journal of Global Ethics* 3 (2007): 267-74, at 269.

radically different ways, and so they may disagree with one another about the significance and substitutability of certain opportunities. Thus, the “metric problem” argument has indiscriminating force against global as well as domestic equality of opportunity. But this implication is highly counter-intuitive and it casts doubt on the claim that the metric problem constitutes a decisive reason for rejecting global equality of opportunity.

Against this a nationalist theorist could argue that a nation-state is characterized by a common public culture which includes a set of shared cultural understandings regarding the meanings of the goods being distributed.³⁵ With these understandings it is possible to determine what metrics are appropriate for making opportunity comparisons within a given *national* community and therefore the metric problem will not arise. This reply, however, is unpersuasive. First, even if we concede for the sake of argument that the metric problem does not arise within a single national community, it will still arise within states that are *multi-national* in character because members with different nationality may still disagree about the appropriate metrics. Therefore, the acceptance of this argument still requires us to repudiate not just global but domestic equality of opportunity at least for culturally heterogeneous countries.

³⁵ This is, according to Miller, one reason why nation-state is a privileged context for distributive justice. See *Principles of Social Justice*, pp. 18-19.

A more fundamental question is why we should identity the boundaries of these shared understandings with *national* boundaries. Suppose the judgment about a person's opportunities really require some shared cultural understandings, it is still unclear why nation-wide cultural conventions should take priority over other transnational (e.g. religion) or sub-national cultural understandings (e.g. ethnic group) as a basis for assessing people's opportunity sets. Important as it is, nationality is only one dimension of our personal identity and only one basis for solidarity.

A further problem with the "metric problem" argument is that it rests on the problematic assumption that we *must* rely on some shared cultural understandings to specify the appropriate metric (or metrics) for equality of opportunity to work. Miller argues that the metric problem lies in the fact that we can no longer rely on a shared cultural understanding to tell us which metric or metrics it is appropriate to use when attempting to draw cross-national comparisons of opportunity.³⁶ But this assumption is not beyond challenge. To see this point, we can take a closer look at the examples given by Miller to illustrate how we can make opportunity comparisons. To make such comparisons, some types of opportunity have to be singled out as important and morally relevant, and we have to decide whether two goods are substitutable to each other (as metrics can be finer-grained or broader-grained). Miller asks us to consider

³⁶ Miller, *National Responsibility and Global Justice*, pp. 65-6.

the following cases:

Village A has a football pitch but no tennis court, and village B has a tennis court but no football pitch.

Village A has a school but no church, and village B has a church but no school.

Miller concludes that there is significant inequality of opportunity between members of the two villages in case (2) but *not* in case (1). The reason is that “access to sport facilities” is a better metric than the finer-grained metrics of “access to football pitch” or “access to tennis court”; and “access to schools” is a better metric than the broader-grained metric of “access to enlightenment”.³⁷ In these cases, our shared *cultural* understandings tell us that football pitch and tennis court are mutually substitutable (as sport facilities) whereas education and religious instructions are not substitutes for each other. However, even though we may agree with his conclusion, we do not have to accept Miller’s culture-oriented approach of making opportunity comparisons. First of all, there are reasons for doubting the appropriateness of relying on national cultural beliefs to find metrics for opportunity comparisons: (1) these “shared cultural understandings” are not always as morally innocuous as they appear to be because they may simply reflect the existing power relationship of the community. It is perhaps well recognized that cultural beliefs are frequently

³⁷ Ibid., pp. 64-5.

constructed by the powerful to further their interests and therefore it cannot be assumed that the process of cultural formation will always involve inputs from all sections of the community;³⁸ (2) such cultural understandings may be formed under the condition of ignorance about alternative views and therefore we need some further arguments for why these understandings are not objectionable in the first place.

Besides, Miller has not considered the following two alternative approaches to making opportunity comparisons which make no reference to national culture. First, we can adopt a subjective individualist approach which suggests that, when making opportunity comparisons, we should ask whether an informed individual would prefer one set of opportunities to another. As such, this approach appeals to the informed preferences of individuals rather than the shared understandings of communities in making opportunity comparisons. Second, we can adopt an objective approach to make cross-national opportunity comparisons which holds that it is possible to single out some types of opportunity which can be regarded as important by a reasonably wide range of cultures. These opportunities should be ones that could be valuable for people affirming a wide range of conceptions of good life. Some candidates include, access to health care, education, jobs with comparable income, technology, freedom from discrimination, and so on. According to the objective approach, it is possible to

³⁸ Caney, "Cosmopolitan Justice and Cultural Diversity," *Global Society* 14 (2000): 527-51, esp. 544.

tell whether two goods are mutually substitutable by appealing to the natures of these goods rather than how it is understood in a particular *national* culture. For instance, one can argue that poorer opportunity for education cannot be compensated by having better access to church on the ground that education and religious instructions are valuable in different ways and they tend to have different impacts on people's life. This objective approach does not have to be employed in a top-down manner in which some specific types of opportunities are singled out by some external authority and then imposed on some unwilling population. In fact, this approach is compatible with a process of identifying the appropriate metrics in which people are widely consulted. My claim here is not that these alternative approaches should be adopted, but without rejecting these two alternatives, one cannot simply assert that we must appeal to national cultural understandings about the importance and substitutability of certain goods to identify the appropriate metrics for opportunity comparisons.

3.3.2 *Transnational Comparisons of Opportunities*

The metric problem argument suffers from a further problem of exaggerating the difficulties in making transnational comparisons of people's opportunities. To understand this point, we can consider a three-fold method proposed by Simon

Caney:³⁹ first, we can judge opportunities of people in different countries by considering the criteria included in the Human Development Indicators (HDI) prepared by the United Nations Development Program. These criteria include: people's access to primary, secondary, and tertiary education; their literacy rates; their access to medical care; their opportunity to gain jobs with comparable purchasing parity; their personal security level; and their access to technology. In addition, we can conduct transnational surveys enquiring whether persons would prefer the opportunities enjoyed by members of other countries. These surveys should provide further evidence with regard to whether some people are enjoying superior opportunities. Lastly, one can compare whether there are discriminatory legal rules or practices that would give rise to unequal opportunities. Caney's proposal combines objective comparisons, subjective evaluation with comparative social studies and it provides us with a possible way of making cross-national comparisons of people's opportunities.

Nonetheless, his proposal may face three distinct objections. First, it may be objected that this method is rather imprecise. In reply, a global egalitarian could admit that interpersonal opportunity comparisons cannot be perfectly precise but we can only discuss the question with the degree of precision that is appropriate to the subject

³⁹ Caney, "Justice, Borders, and the Cosmopolitan Ideal," p. 268.

matter.⁴⁰ Second, it may be objected that if we use the components of the HDI as the metrics for assessing people's opportunity, we can only identify the most egregious forms of inequality as one person is enjoying inferior opportunities than another in all relevant dimensions; and we still cannot make comparative judgments in cases where some people have superior opportunity than others according to one metric while at the same time have inferior opportunity according to another.⁴¹ To this one could reply that equality of opportunity does not require us to make judgments about the *overall* opportunity of a person. If we use on a metric that has several important components that we have reason to believe are significant as well as morally relevant, we can make judgments about how well people do in *each* of these components and try to equalize their opportunities regarding each of them. For example, if A has better access to education than B when B has better access to health care than A, we can promote equality of opportunity between them by equalizing their opportunities with regard to *each* of these dimensions. The point is that we can do so without judging that A enjoys superior *overall* opportunity than B or vice versa.⁴² Third, and finally, if

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Miller, *National Responsibility and Global Justice*, pp. 66-7.

⁴² A further question arises when we cannot equalize all components and have to assign priority. But this is not the sort of question that can be satisfactorily answered by political theorists. Instead, we may ask what is most practical given the circumstances or to appeal to people's actual preferences.

what we really care about is *radical* inequality, we may be troubled by the opportunity set enjoyed by those living in the least developed countries not because they have worse opportunities than some outsiders but simply because they have intolerably inadequate opportunities.⁴³ However, this argument is inconclusive because even if we affirm the positive thesis that we should be troubled by some people's absolute deprivation (and this is a thesis that a global egalitarian would not deny), it simply does not follow that we should also affirm the negative thesis that it does not matter morally whether people have unequal opportunities.⁴⁴

To conclude this section, I have argued that the metric problem argument does not count against the ideal of global equality because: (1) it does not give us any decisive reason to reject global equality of opportunity as a fundamental principle; (2) it wrongly assumes that the metric problem arises only in the global but not the domestic realm; (3) it fails to show that we have to rely on nation-wide cultural understanding to make opportunity comparisons; and (4) it exaggerates the difficulties of making cross-national comparisons of opportunity.

⁴³ Miller, *National Responsibility and Global Justice*, p. 67.

⁴⁴ For a similar point, see Paula Casal, "Why Sufficiency Is Not Enough," *Ethics* 117 (2007): 296-326.

3.4 NATIONAL RESPONSIBILITY AND THE “DYNAMIC PROBLEM”

Having examined the metric problem, I wish to turn to another nationalist argument against global egalitarianism—the dynamic problem, according to which transnational redistribution to offset inequality is inconsistent with holding nations responsible for their decisions that influence the levels of resources and opportunities available to its members.⁴⁵ There is a statist version of the dynamic problem which maintains that we should hold states responsible for the actions that people undertake collectively as an independent political community. Nonetheless, I shall focus on a nationalist version of the dynamic problem which takes nation to be the basic unit of political self-determination. There are three reasons for doing so. First of all, it is Miller’s view that judgments about national responsibility are more basic than judgments about *state* responsibility because when states are held responsible for outcomes they produce, they are often being judged as agents of the people they serve. In other words, for Miller, nations are communities that do things together and the state is the political agent that should be seen as embodying the national will.⁴⁶ Another reason is

⁴⁵ Miller, *National Responsibility and Global Justice*, p. 56.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 111-12.

that, although it is the state that has the formal structure for carrying out collective decisions, Miller argues that there are strong moral reasons for making the bounds of nationality and bounds of state coincide, and each nation has a good claim (albeit not an unconditional one) to have a state of its own.⁴⁷ Finally, national responsibility applies not only to the formal political actions of the state but also to the cultural values and social practices of its members which also have significant distributive consequences. Therefore, it is at least possible to talk about national responsibility in cases where the nation does not in fact have its own state.⁴⁸

Why is the fact that people belong to different self-determining national communities count against a problem for the defenders of global egalitarianism? To answer this question, Miller asks us to consider a pair of two-country parables, each involving two societies, which start out from the baseline of equality but pursue different domestic policies:

We can imagine two societies starting out from an equal resources base, one of them—*Affluenza*—decides to use up its resources endowment rapidly to sustain a high level of consumption, whereas the other—*Ecologia*—chooses to conserve resources by adopting a policy of sustainable development; similarly, we can contrast *Procreatia*, which encourages large families and whose population therefore grows rapidly, with *Condominium*, which adopts a strictly enforced

⁴⁷ Miller, *On Nationality*, pp. 81-9. To be sure, this claim to statehood can be very problematic when, for example, two peoples have been living together in the same territory for a long time.

⁴⁸ Miller, "A Response," *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy* 11 (2008): 553-67, esp. 559.

family planning policy and therefore maintains a stable populations size. The outcome is that with time people living in *Ecologia* will have more resources than those in *Affluenza*, and that people living in *Condominium* will have more resources than those in *Procreantia*.⁴⁹

Now it may be intuitive to think that, other things being equal, material inequalities between these societies are morally unproblematic and thus no trans-societal egalitarian redistribution is required by justice.⁵⁰

According to Miller, a global egalitarian could only respond to his two-country parables in one of the following ways: (1) it can be argued that there is no breach of equality in the relevant sense as long as the final inequalities can be traced to collective preferences and decisions of the different communities in question; (2) justice requires wholesale redistribution to preserve equal access to advantage over time; (3) we should deny nations rights of self-determination in all those areas of policy that have an impact on levels of advantage enjoyed by its members; and (4) we might require nations to provide free access to anyone who wants to join. But each of these responses is problematic because they are either self-defeating (1), incompatible

⁴⁹ Miller, *National Responsibility and Global Justice*, pp. 68-9, and "Justice and Global Inequality," pp. 193-5. See also his "Collective Responsibility and International Inequality in *The Law of Peoples*," in Rex Martin and David A. Reidy eds., *Rawls's Law of Peoples: A Realistic Utopia?* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), pp. 191-205. Rawls has used similar examples to undermine the idea of global distributive justice in *The Law of Peoples* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), pp. 117-18.

⁵⁰ To be sure, Miller only objects to *supra-sufficientarian* redistribution in this situation. Presumably Miller would have to allow some transfer of resources when, for example, people of the worse off society also suffer from basic needs deprivation.

with national responsibility (2), or detrimental to national self-determination (3 and 4).⁵¹

Before we discuss how a global egalitarian might respond to the dynamic problem, it may be instructive to spell out the unstated assumptions that account for much of the intuitive plausibility of these two-country parables. The first of these assumptions is that a society's relative wealth or poverty is determined *solely* by its domestic policies and cultural characters. In Miller's two-country parables, inequalities between societies can be traced back to the collective preferences and decisions of their members—one society favors conservation of resources whereas the other prefers a high level of consumption; one society decides to control population growth whereas the other prefers having large families. But as it stands this assumption rarely obtains in the real world. It is highly unlikely, if ever, that a society's relative wealth or poverty will depend solely on its domestic policies and cultural practices. Other factors such as a natural resource-endowment, position in the global economic order, whether it is facing a hostile international environment also play some role in determining a society's wealth. Besides, it should be noted that the same set of domestic factors would have very different impacts on a society's

⁵¹ *National Responsibility and Global Justice*, pp. 68-75.

economic development if the international economic order had been different.⁵²

Although it is very difficult, if not impossible, to determine the extent to which these factors may contribute to the level of economic development, the assumption that the relative wealth or poverty of a society depends exclusively on the collective preferences and decisions of its members is plainly untenable.⁵³ Therefore, it is unclear why people should be required to bear the entire responsibility for the relative wealth or poverty of their society. In light of these observations, transnational redistribution in the above situation becomes less objectionable than it may first seem. Of course, a nationalist can respond to this critique by saying that people can be held responsible for the economic condition of their society only *to the extent that* it is a result of their collective decisions and cultural practices. This point leads us to another assumption.

The second assumption which accounts for the intuitive appeal of the dynamic problem is that individuals can be held responsible for the collective decisions of their

⁵² These points have been forcefully made by Thomas Pogge, *World Poverty and Human Rights: Cosmopolitan Responsibilities and Reforms* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2002), pp. 139-44. See also, Charles Beitz, "Social and Cosmopolitan Liberalism," *International Affairs* 75 (1999): 515-29, at 524-5.

Miller himself recognizes that this assumption is *not*, in general, a realistic assumption because there are many other variables which determine a society's relative wealth or poverty. See *National Responsibility and Global Justice*, p. 69.

⁵³ For this point, see Christian Barry and Laura Valentini, "Egalitarian Challenges to Global Egalitarianism: A Critique," *Review of International Studies* 35 (2009): 485-512, at 501.

respective nation, and this responsibility extends to what their national forebears have done. To see this, imagine a society that is ruled by a notorious dictator who governs the society according to his personal will and shows no respect for the basic human rights of his people. It is perhaps clear that the individual members living in these societies cannot be reasonably held responsible for the disastrous consequences of his rule. Although one may still object to transnational redistribution in this case, the reason cannot be that the worse off should be held responsible for the collective actions of their own nations. (Perhaps the best reason against redistribution in this case is that it would not actually improve the conditions of the worse off but a global egalitarian can surely endorse this view because this reason against redistribution do not entail that the demand for equality does not arise in the first place, but simply that redistribution may be self-defeating or ineffectual given the circumstances.)

Miller has summarized the idea of *national* responsibility as the following:

“by virtue of identifying with compatriots, sharing their values, and receiving the benefits that national communities provide, we also involved in collective responsibility for the things that nations do. This extends to include things that our ancestors have done—national responsibility includes responsibility for the national past.”⁵⁴

National responsibility applies not only to the actions concerted through proper political channels *but also* to actions of individuals or groups that reflect certain

⁵⁴ Miller, *National Responsibility and Global Justice*, p. 265.

elements of the national culture.⁵⁵ To defend his thesis, Miller needs to justify the following three positions:⁵⁶

The idea of collective responsibility is defensible.

The idea of collective responsibility applies to nations as groups of contemporaneous people.

The idea of collective responsibility applies to nations as extended in historical time, so members can legitimately be held responsible for what their national forebears did.

The idea of national responsibility undermines global egalitarianism in two ways.

First, it is intuitive to think that justice would not call for any egalitarian redistribution when inequalities of advantage can be traced back to the choices or preferences for which the individuals can be held responsible because that would be unfair to those who are required to be the net contributor.⁵⁷ Second, respecting other people's status as an agent that can determine their own destinies and take responsibility for their own life would require us to let them enjoy the benefits as well as bear the costs of their decisions and preferences for which they can be legitimately held responsible. To insist that we should offset the outcomes for which others can be held responsible is

⁵⁵ Ibid., pp. 126-7.

⁵⁶ Ibid., pp. 113-14.

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 265.

to ignore this agency perspective.⁵⁸ My challenge to the dynamic problem will focus on (2) and (3) as I do not intend to undermine the notion of collective responsibility in general.⁵⁹ My aim in this section is to challenge the dynamic problem argument by showing that the idea of national responsibility, as Miller understands it, is indefensible.

3.3.1 *The Like-Minded Group Model*

To defend the idea of national responsibility, Miller puts forward two models of collective responsibility—the *like-minded group* model and the *cooperative practice* model. It is, however, important to point out that Miller does *not* argue that collective responsibility applies to every nation: first, attributions of national responsibility are inappropriate for nations that are subject to external or to autocratic rule because it is usually difficult to identify acts undertaken by individuals or by the state as “genuinely national acts”; second, national responsibility does not apply to communities where cultural division runs deep so that talk of a single nation is out of place.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ Ibid., pp. 6-8.

⁵⁹ In fact, I am going to argue in Chapter 6 that individuals do have some collective responsibilities for promoting global justice.

⁶⁰ Miller, *National Responsibility and Global Justice*, p. 133.

Let me begin by considering the like-minded group model according to which collective responsibility applies to groups whose members share some aims and attitudes in common, and recognize their like-mindedness.⁶¹ To take on obvious example, a rioting mob is a like-minded group:

“Consider a mob rampaging through a neighbourhood, terrifying the residents, destroying property, and looting shops. Different participants in the mob act in different ways: some actively attack persons or property; others shout abuse or issue threats; yet others urge the activists and contribute generally to the atmosphere of excitement and fear. There is good reason to hold each participant responsible for the riot because they took part in the general attitude that motivated the rioting acts, and each made some causal contribution to the final outcome.”⁶²

It is perhaps intuitive to think that each individual who participated in the riot bears some responsibility for what they have done collectively as a mob. But to what extent can the like-minded group model be applied to nations? Miller argues that nations are like-minded groups because people belonging to a same nation share a common identity and a public culture, and individual members are collectively responsible for the actions of their nation that can be shown to be genuine embodiments of the shared beliefs and values that constitute the national culture.⁶³

⁶¹ This does not, however, imply the absence of individual dissent but dissent must not be too common.

⁶² *Ibid.*, pp. 114-17.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 127.

What, then, makes individual members responsible for what the group have done according to the like-minded group model? Surely it would be absurd to claim that, for the like-minded group model, a person is implicated in collective responsibility simply merely in virtue of *her membership in the group which is like-minded* because what make a like-minded group special are the shared aims and attitudes of its members. Therefore, as far as the like-minded group model is concerned, those who share the collective responsibility must actually share the common aims and attitudes of the group that contribute to the outcome in question. That is to say it is the like-mindedness of the members which justifies their sharing the responsibility for the decisions and preferences of the group.

However, the like-minded group model is not a plausible model of collective responsibility even if it applies to nations, for two reasons. First, the like-minded group model cannot explain why individual dissenters should be brought within the scope of collective responsibility when they do not share the aims or attitudes that give rise to the collective actions. This problem is particularly salient in the context of a nation because of the internal diversity of values and attitudes within any national community. Miller argues that individual dissenters should nonetheless share the collective responsibility as long as they subscribe to the community's values in general, reinforce them in their daily activities, and support the community in material

terms.⁶⁴ To this one can make two replies. To begin with, the last reason that Miller mentions has nothing to do with like-mindedness, and it is rather unclear why simply supporting the community in material terms is sufficient to justify their sharing of collective responsibility. For instance, a foreigner who happens to reside in that community will also contribute to it in material terms through her daily activities. As for the first reason, it is doubtful that subscribing to the communal values in general is enough to bring a person within the scope of national responsibility. Given the complexity and permeability of national culture, it is entirely possible that a person may subscribe to the culture of her nation in general without sharing the specific values or attitudes that contribute to a certain outcome. But subscribing to the national cultural in general does not entail sharing all the elements that make up of that culture, nor does it entail sharing the specific aims and attitudes that allegedly give rise to a particular outcome.

Another reason why the like-minded group model is not a plausible model of collective responsibility is that it ultimately collapses into some sort of causal responsibility model. When we ask why individual members of a like-minded group are involved in the collective responsibility for some outcomes, the answer cannot

⁶⁴ Ibid., pp. 120-1.

simply be that these individuals share the collective aims and attitudes with others, but that their sharing of these aims and attitudes has *contributed causally* to the outcome in question. To see this point we can consider an example that Miller has himself cited to support his claim: in the post-bellum American South, whites were collectively responsible for acts of violence against blacks even though most of them were not involved in perpetrating them because these acts are results of a widely shared culture of racial inequality and hostility towards the black population.⁶⁵ However, in this case what actually accounts for collective responsibility is the fact that these individual collectively create and sustain an environment under which racially motivated violence is more likely to take place by sharing the prevailing racist sentiments and attitudes.⁶⁶ On this interpretation, like-mindedness as such is not a sufficient condition for holding an individual responsible for a collective act because a person's sharing the common ethos and attitudes could make no difference to the outcome. Imagine that, many years from now, the descendents of these white Americans share the same racist sentiments and attitudes as their post-bellum ancestors used to. So do they thereby share the collective responsibility for the acts of

⁶⁵ Joel Feinberg, "Collective Responsibility," in *Doing and Deserving* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), pp. 247-8. Quoted in Miller, *National Responsibility and Global Justice*, p. 118.

⁶⁶ I borrowed this point from Larry May who argues that a group of individuals can be held collectively responsible for a certain outcome when they contribute to an environment under which the outcome in question is more likely to occur. See *Sharing Responsibility* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), pp. 46-7.

violence that occurred? Clearly they do not. The reason is that, despite the like-mindedness between these individuals and their white ancestors, their commitment to these shared ethos and attitudes does not contribute in any way to the acts of violence in question. (Of course, if the racially motivated violence continues to occur due to culture of racial hostility these individuals help to maintain, they would become collectively responsible for these acts of racism.) In short, what really matters to sharing collective responsibility is not like-mindedness as such but whether the member has made causal contribution to the final outcome.

So what does this imply for national responsibility? We may infer from the above discussion that people cannot be held responsible for what their national forebears have done simply because they share the cultural and traditional values of the community; and to defend the idea of national responsibility, the nationalists must turn to some other models of collective responsibility.

So far I have argued that one cannot rely on the like-minded group model to account for national responsibility. But there is another model of collective responsibility that may apply to nations and I shall now turn to this alternative model.

3.3.2 The Cooperative Practice Model

If the like-minded group model does not work, one can nonetheless turn to the *cooperative practice* model to account for national responsibility. According to this model, those who participate in and benefit from a cooperative practice should also share the collective responsibility for the group's actions. To illustrate this model of collective responsibility, Miller uses the following example:

There is an employee-controlled firm whose manufacturing process has unwanted environmental effects. Members of the firm disagree about whether to maintain the existing process but when the matter is discussed, the majority decide in favor of the status quo.

He argues that the employees, including the dissenting minority, are collectively responsible for the resulting environmental damage because they are beneficiaries of a common practice in which participants are treated fairly. Although it may not be right to hold the minority *morally* responsible for what their firm has done, it is reasonable to hold them, along with others, liable for the damage they have caused.⁶⁷ Moreover, nations should be regarded as cooperative practices to which this model of collective responsibility should apply because: (1) nations are communities whose members see themselves as having obligations of mutual aid that are more extensive than the aid they owe to human beings generally; and (2) each member makes certain sacrifices in order to support a national culture from whose continued existence each is presumed

⁶⁷ Miller, *National Responsibility and Global Justice*, p. 119.

to benefit: through the protection of cultural features that lend their nation distinct character—national language, landscape, cultural tradition, and so forth, which is valued positively by the nation’s members.⁶⁸ Therefore, if the cooperative practice model is plausible and can apply to nations, individual members can be legitimately held responsible for the collective actions concerted through proper political channels of their nation *and* the acts that are genuine embodiments of the national culture.

There are, nonetheless, some reasons for doubting that the cooperative practice model, even if it is a plausible model of collective responsibility, can actually account for *national* responsibility. First of all, contrary to what Miller argues, it does not follow from the fact that fellow nationals owe each other some special obligations of mutual aid that nations are cooperative practices.⁶⁹ Consider, for example, a circle of friends: one may suppose that friends do owe each other some obligations of mutual aid that are more extensive than their obligations to strangers; but it does not follow that any circle of friends is a cooperative practice to which collective responsibility applies. Surely a group of friends can form a cooperative venture to achieve some shared aims and projects to which the cooperative practice model apply but this is not

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 131.

⁶⁹ For the sake of argument, let us assume here that some special obligations do exist among members of a national community. I am skeptical about this point but I do not have to argue against it in order to show that nations are not cooperative practices to which the cooperative practice model of collective responsibility applies.

essential to friendship and, more important, collective responsibility is *not* justified by the special obligations of friendship. Therefore, one cannot claim that nations are cooperative practices simply because some special obligations exist among fellow nationals.

Besides, the requirement of substantive fairness severely limits the applicability of the cooperative practice model to nations. The worry is that since many nations are *not* cooperative practices of the required sort—for example, some nations lack the democratic political institutions for their members to participate in the collective decision-making process—the cooperative practice model cannot be invoked to justify national responsibility in many cases. In response, it could be argued that although the cooperative practice model of collective responsibility does not apply to all nations unconditionally, *as an ideal* it can still account for the source of national responsibility because nations are supposed to be cooperative practices which treat their members fairly.

But using the cooperative practice model to account for national responsibility will lead to a more fundamental problem—that is, this model cannot explain why individual members should share the responsibility for what their national forebears have done. To see this point, consider the example of the employee-controlled firm

again: suppose a number of new employees have just come to join the company. These new employees *who have not taken any part in the past decisions* have no influence whatsoever on the past decisions of their firm which created the environment damage. It may, however, be thought that the new employees may be expected to pay the cost of cleaning up the environment if they have voluntarily joined their firm with full knowledge of what it has been doing. But this condition does not apply to nations because in most cases people do not choose to belong to a nation: they are simply born into it and their ability to leave is rather limited.

In response to this concern of involuntariness, it may be argued that people can be collectively responsible for outcomes even when they have not consented to join a particular group. A family is perhaps a good example. But it is not clear to me that the cooperative practice model applies to the family although there is no denying that the family is typically a mutually advantageous group and members do identify themselves with one another. Perhaps we often feel that we ought to share the burdens and benefits of our actions with our family members but it is unclear to me that this sentiment is justified by the notion that the family is some sort of cooperative enterprise. If collective responsibility could ever be justified in the case of a family, I

think it would be justified by *mutual identification*, but this has nothing to do with the cooperative practice model.

Another example of an involuntary group is, however, available: imagine that three pedestrians happen to be on a scene of an accident and they are the only ones who are able to rescue the victim. Also, each of them is unable to perform the rescue without the help of the other two. Now it seems clear that these pedestrians are collectively responsible for rescuing the victim (or they could be reasonably subject to moral condemnation if they did not attempt the rescue).⁷⁰ From this example Miller infers that people who participate in cooperative practices are collectively responsible for the results their collective action (or inaction) whether they have entered the group voluntarily or not.⁷¹

However, the example does not support his claim. To be sure, I am only arguing that voluntary participation is a necessary condition for sharing the collective responsibility which *arises from cooperative practices* but not that it is necessary for *all types of* collective responsibility. There is a significant moral difference between the pedestrian example and the case of a nation. In the pedestrian example, voluntary

⁷⁰ Virginia Held, "Can a Random Collection of Individuals be Morally Responsible?" *Journal of Philosophy* 68 (1970): 471-81, at 479, quoted in Miller, *National Responsibility and Global Justice*, pp. 122-3.

⁷¹ Miller, *National Responsibility and Global Justice*, p. 123.

entry is unimportant because their responsibility of rescue is not grounded in the fact that they have participated in some cooperative practice with one another. Instead, their responsibility for rescue derives from their independent duty as an individual to do whatever they can to prevent grave harm (within the limits of other relevant moral considerations) and in this particular case that means to cooperate with the other two pedestrians in attempting the rescue. Notice that this duty is independent of the actual existence of their cooperation. Suppose they never form a team to perform the rescue, each of them will still be responsible for the death of the victim as separate individuals because they fail to do what it takes to prevent grave harm in an emergency situation. But there is no such an independent duty for joining a collective practice in general or a nation in particular (if it can be properly considered a cooperative practice in the first place). Therefore, the fact that sometimes a random collection of individuals can be collectively responsible for something provides no support for national responsibility as understood by Miller.

So far I have argued that neither the like-minded group model nor the cooperative practice model can justify national responsibility. In what follows, I am going to discuss the idea that people are somehow responsible for their national past.

3.3.3 Responsibility for the “National Past”

For the idea of national responsibility to work, it must be shown that individuals can be held responsible for what their national forebears have done in the past. The reason is that nation is by definition a community that is extended in history in the sense that it stretches back and forward across the generations, and is not one that the present generation can renounce.⁷² But how can a person today share the responsibility for what his or her national forebears did? The argument is that it is unfair to enjoy the benefits of the assets that one inherits from one's predecessors without at the same time acknowledging the burdens associated with these assets.⁷³ Similarly, the present generation of a nation inherits assets such as territory, various institutions, and physical and cultural capital from their national forebears, and they should therefore accept the burdens associated with these inherited national assets.

The most obvious problem with the idea of national responsibility is that it is inconsistent with our deeply held conviction that it is unfair to penalize people for decisions and conducts in which they take no part. For example, the present generation of *Affluenza* and *Procreantia*, who suffer the adverse consequences of the imprudent domestic policies and cultural practices of their respective society, do not take part in making these decisions themselves. And these people are simply born into

⁷² Miller, *On Nationality*, pp. 23-4.

⁷³ This intuition is reflected in the legal practices of individual inheritance and the moral rationale for such practices. See Miller, *National Responsibility and Global Justice*, pp. 149-50.

nations when their life prospects have already been partially (or largely) determined by the actions of their national forebears. So if we accept that these persons can be reasonably asked to bear the consequences following from collective decisions and preferences of their national forebears, as a matter of consistency we must also accept that the children of the indolent alcoholic or the spendthrift who does not save should be held responsible for bad parental choices. But no one would seriously think that it is fair to ask the children to bear the consequences of bad parental choices. But then why should we think it is fair to hold the present generation responsible for the choices and decisions of their national forebears?⁷⁴ In fact, the case for inherited responsibility from parents is even stronger than the case for inherited responsibility from national forebears: people would also identify themselves with their parents, inherit from their parents assets of various kinds (after all, we owe our very existence, as well as our genes, to our parents), and benefit from these assets. But since we find it morally repugnant to allow children to suffer the adverse consequences of bad parental choices, we have strong reason for rejecting the claim that individuals should be held responsible for the conducts and decision of their national forebears.

⁷⁴ Beitz, "Social and Cosmopolitan Liberalism," pp. 526-7. For a similar critique, see Cecile Fabre, "Global Egalitarianism: An Indefensible Theory of Justice?" in Bell and De-Shalit eds., *Forms of Justice*, pp. 315-30.

Therefore, if we reject egalitarianism at the global level because of inherited responsibility, we should also reject egalitarianism at the national level. The reason is that the intuition supporting the idea of inherited responsibility has the same force in both cases. But this implication is highly troubling, and we should reconsider that intuition. Two replies can be made to my challenge. The first is that responsibility for redressing the wrongs committed by one's predecessors undermines the defensibility of the egalitarian ideal only in the case of national inheritance. However, I am somewhat skeptical about this possibility because the core idea behind inherited responsibility in the case of national inheritance, *if sound*, applies equally well to individual inheritance. Another possibility is to argue that egalitarianism is objectionable even within a national community. However, this possibility is not available to Miller who supports some substantive principles of equality within the context of a national community.⁷⁵

There is nonetheless another possible argument for inherited national responsibility, that is, the present generation can be held responsible for redressing the past injustices committed by their national forebears. This is of course not to say that the present generation is *morally* responsible for the historic injustices committed by

⁷⁵ See, for example, Miller, "National Self-determination," pp. 172-4; and "Justice and Global Inequality," p. 190.

their national forebears but that they are under a moral obligation to rectify the situation by making reparations, compensating the victims (or their descendents), making apology, and so forth.⁷⁶ But note that the arguments for inherited responsibility for the historical injustices committed by one's national forebears simply do not apply to cases that do not involve past wrongdoings. As such, a would-be global egalitarian does not have to reject collective responsibility arising from historic wrongdoings.

It should not be hard to see that people's responsibility for the historic injustices committed by their national forebears is a form of *remedial* responsibility for a particular state of affairs—some individuals are unjustly disadvantaged because of the wrongful acts of one's national forebears.⁷⁷ Fairly obviously, such responsibility cannot arise from causal contribution on the part of the present generation who has never committed the wrongdoings. And if my arguments thus far are correct, it is also doubtful that such responsibility can be justified by like-mindedness or participation

⁷⁶ Miller, *National Responsibility and Global Justice*, pp. 151-9.

⁷⁷ This responsibility can, of course, be outweighed by other moral considerations. Also, what is required to put the situation right will vary from case to case. They may, for example, be required to undo the harm, compensate the victims (or their descendents), return the objects unjustly acquired, set the historical records straight, make apology, and so forth. For the concept of remedial responsibility, see Miller, *National Responsibility and Global Justice*, pp. 81-2.

in cooperative practices. Nor can it be based on any kind of moral responsibility of the present generation.

An alternative justification is, therefore, needed: it may be thought that the present generation of the nation should be required to redress the injustice to the extent they have themselves benefited from the historical injustice that calls for remedy. Two arguments can be supplied to justify this demand. First, these benefits gained from injustice can be treated as kind of “unjust enrichment” which the recipients have no right to retain.⁷⁸ A second, and related, argument is that whenever some agents benefit from injustice while others suffer from it, a distortion in a fair scheme of distribution is created and placing the burdens associated with promoting justice (or redressing injustice) on the agents who have benefited unjustly would help to correct this distortion by cancelling out both unjust gains and losses.⁷⁹

But the same arguments cannot be extended to support inherited national responsibility *in general* because there is no reason to suppose that those who are born into a relatively poor nation are also the beneficiaries of historical injustices committed by their national forebears. In fact, benefits from injustice do not fall

⁷⁸ For a discussion of the concept of unjust enrichment in English law, see Lord Goff and Gareth Jones, *The Law of Restitution*, 7th edition (London: Sweet & Maxwell, 2007), pp. 16-52.

⁷⁹ For this second argument, see Daniel Butt, *Rectifying International Injustice: Principles of Compensation and Restitutions between Nations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 120-2.

exclusively on the descendents of the wrongdoers because the criterion for assigning responsibilities is the receipt of unjust benefits but not national identity. For example, a non-national may also benefit from certain historical injustices simply in virtue of the fact that she lives in that nation and enjoys the resources there. Therefore, recognizing responsibility for historical injustices would not commit one to the claim that people can be held responsible for the imprudent decisions and preferences of their national forebears that diminish the availability of resources and opportunity in their own society.

3.3.4 The Problem of Perverse Incentive

Another reason that Miller has put forward against a transnational redistributive scheme is that it will undermine the responsibility a nation has for its own territory and other collective assets because such a scheme leaves very little incentive for states and their citizens to adopt responsible policies such as conserving resources for the future and keeping the population at a sustainable level. “Why be an ant,” asks Miller, “if the grasshoppers are guaranteed equal access to your store of winter provision?”⁸⁰ However, this objection does not show that we should reject global egalitarianism as a matter of fundamental principle. Nor does it show that there is nothing morally

⁸⁰ Miller, *National Responsibility and Global Justice*, pp. 70-2.

objectionable about people having radically different life prospects simply in virtue of their nationality. All it entails is that the appropriate response to relative deprivation at the global level should be informed by instrumental considerations associated with the well-being of the individuals in question. For example, if we think that resources should not be transferred to a society whose government has adopted irresponsible domestic policies, the most plausible reasons will be to induce the government to change its policies or that transfer of resources in this case will remove a disincentive for other governments in similar circumstances to act responsibly. But this does not imply that the concern for equality is out of place beyond the context of a national community.⁸¹

3.3.5 National Self-determination

The dynamic problem also gives rise to the concern that the pursuit of global equality is incompatible with national self-determination. The thought is that, if we do not want to have a wholesale redistribution to preserve equal access to advantage over time, we may have to deny nations rights of self-determination in all those areas of policy that have an impact on levels of advantage enjoyed by its members (because international inequality will be translated into global inequality); or to require nations

⁸¹ For a similar point, see Beitz, "Social and Cosmopolitan Liberalism," pp. 527-8.

to provide free access to anyone who wants to join (so individuals would have equal access to the resources or opportunities available in other nations).⁸² But both of these options are incompatible with national self-determination. Therefore, the commitment to global egalitarianism is incompatible with national self-determination. To address this concern, let me consider these two egalitarian proposals in turn.

Consider first the claim that preserving global equality over time without constant transnational redistributions may require significant restrictions of the freedom of national communities to pursue different domestic policies. The first thing I have to say about this claim is that transnational redistribution is not always objectionable because, as noted earlier, individuals cannot be held responsible for the relative wealth or poverty of their nation, and therefore a would-be global egalitarian does not need to reject the right to national self-determination. To this we may add that a global egalitarian could at least argue that what justice requires in the global context is that there should be a set of global institutions which avoid the creation of excessive global inequalities and national communities are allowed to exercise self-determination within the limits provided by these institutions.

⁸² Miller, *National Responsibility and Global Justice*, pp. 72-5.

Another egalitarian response to the dynamic problem which is thought to be incompatible with national self-determination is that nations should be required to provide free access to anyone who wants to join so that people who are born into the societies with relatively low level of per capita levels of resources and the like would have the choice of moving into better-endowed societies. Miller dismisses this response on the ground that decisions about admission to citizenship are inseparable from decisions about the kind of society one wants to build and thus it would severely undermine national self-determination.⁸³ Admittedly, increased human mobility across political borders would likely to enhance human development worldwide but we have no reason to think that promoting global equality requires totally unrestricted freedom of movement across borders.⁸⁴ The point is that we do not have to believe that granting people unlimited right of free movement is the most appropriate way to pursue the global egalitarian ideal. If we reject this proposal, the most plausible reason would not be that there is an irresolvable conflict between global equality and national self-determination but simply that granting people unlimited right of free

⁸³ Ibid., pp. 73-4.

⁸⁴ For a discussion of the evidence against this claim, see United Nations Development Program (UNDP), *Human Development Report 2009—Overcoming Barriers: Human Mobility and Development* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009); see also, Dani Rodrik, “Feasible Globalizations,” in Michael M. Weinstein ed., *Globalization: What’s New* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), pp. 196-213. Rodrik suggests that there can be a temporary work visa scheme that would allow skilled and unskilled workers from poor nations to work in the rich countries for 3 to 5 years, to be replaced by a new wave of inflows upon the return to their home countries.

movement across national borders would not be the most appropriate means to promote global equality.

To conclude this section, the dynamic “problem”—the fact that people belong to different self-determining national communities that make collective decisions affecting the future levels of resources or opportunities—poses a real threat to the ideal of global egalitarianism only if individuals can be held responsible for the relative wealth or poverty of their own nation, but in this section I have argued that it is *not* the case. The point is that neither the like-minded group model nor the cooperative practice modal can successfully account for national responsibility. In addition, even though there is reason for accepting remedial responsibility for historical injustices committed by one’s national forebears, it does not follow that the idea of inherited national responsibility is defensible.

3.5 CONCLUSION

To conclude, this chapter has critically examined three different objections to global egalitarianism that draw on the normative significance of the nation—namely, the anti-universalist argument, the metric problem argument, and the dynamic problem

argument. Against the anti-universalist argument, it has argued that, first, the holding of conflicting conceptions of justice by people with different worldviews does not show that the liberal egalitarian principles of justice can be reasonably rejected by some people; and, second, Miller cannot consistently adhere to the “reasonable rejection” argument and his own minimalist conception of global justice. Against the metric problem argument, this chapter has argued that, first, it does not show that we should reject global equality of opportunity as a fundamental principle; second, it mistakenly assumes that the metric problem arises only at the global level; third, it fails to show that one has to rely on national cultural understanding to make opportunity comparison; and, finally, it exaggerates the difficulties of making transnational comparisons of opportunity. In addition, this chapter has also found the dynamic problem argument unpersuasive. It has argued that, contrary to what Miller has believed, neither the like-minded group model nor the cooperative practice model can successfully account for national responsibility.

CHAPTER 4

GLOBAL EQUALITY AS A RELATIONAL IDEAL

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapters we have considered, and rejected, three distinct types of arguments against the ideal of global equality—what I call the *Argument from Coercion*, the *Argument from Reciprocity*, and the *Nationalist Arguments*. This chapter and the next are intended to provide some positive arguments for an *egalitarian* account of global distributive justice. My approach is to first argue that an attractive ideal of relational equality applies at the global level in this chapter, and then in the next chapter I shall identify a set of principles of global distributive justice that are

grounded in this ideal.¹ I shall not discuss the luck egalitarian arguments against global inequalities because it is my aim to provide an alternative set of arguments for global equality that are distinct from luck egalitarianism. But it should be noted that I am neither endorsing nor rejecting such a position.

It has been argued that the proper goal for egalitarianism is to promote standing in relations of equality within a domestic society. This view has recently been defended by Elizabeth Anderson and Samuel Scheffler.² But they limit their discussions to the context of a given political community: Anderson acknowledges that her argument may have implications for global justice but refrains from addressing them;³ similarly, Scheffler focuses only on the relationship which fellow citizens bear to one another.⁴ Focusing on the problem of global justice, Gillian Brock maintains that Anderson's version of relational egalitarianism can be extended to the global sphere.⁵ I agree with Brock that radical inequality in holdings can be

¹ Here I use the term distributive justice in a broad sense. It involves not only the distribution of burdens and benefits but also the fundamental terms of social and economic cooperation.

² See Anderson, "What Is the Point of Equality?" *Ethics* 109 (1999): 287-337; and Scheffler, "What is Egalitarianism?" *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 31 (2003): 5-39 and "Choice, Circumstances, and the Value of Equality," *Politics, Philosophy & Economics* 4 (2005): 5-28. See also Martin O'Neill, "What Should Egalitarians Believe?" *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 36 (2008): 119-56; and Richard Normans, "The Social Basis of Equality," *Ratio* 10 (1997): 238-52.

³ Anderson, "What is the Point of Equality?" p. 321, n. 78.

⁴ Scheffler, "Choice, Circumstances, and the Value of Equality," pp. 18-19.

⁵ *Global Justice: A Cosmopolitan Account* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 298-9, 304-11,

problematic when it translates into objectionable power inequalities and that transnational domination is to be avoided.⁶ Nonetheless, I cannot see how the principles of global justice she defends are consistent with these egalitarian demands. For one thing, her position remains outwardly sufficientarian for she only adopts a need-based minimum floor principle which requires persons to be adequately positioned to meet their basic needs.⁷ For another, she explicitly rejects the idea that we should aim at equal opportunities at the global level and argues that we should aim at *decent* opportunities for all persons consisting of being able to meet one's needs, enjoying basic liberties, and having social and political arrangements in place that can protect and secure these important goods.⁸

My aim in this chapter is to specify what equality as a relational ideal might mean in the *global* context. It is organized as follows: in the next section I shall examine the type of relations that we stand in to distant strangers in the global context. I shall then turn to discuss the ways in which people can relate to one another as

318-19.

⁶ Ibid., pp. 306, 312-14.

⁷ For Brock, these basic needs include (1) a certain level of physical and psychological health; (2) security; (3) understanding of choice; (4) certain amount of autonomy; and (5) decent social relations with at least some others. See Ibid., pp.47, 63-9.

⁸ Ibid., pp. 58-63, 300-1, 326-8.

equals in the global context; in the final section, I shall try to respond to a number of possible objections to my account of global equality.

4.2 THE GLOBAL CONTEXT FROM A RELATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

Before we discuss whether the ideal of relational equality has global validity, we must have some ideas about the type of relations that people stand to one another in the global context.⁹ This is necessary because (1) one cannot properly understand how people can relate to one another as equals without considering the forms of their interdependence or interactions; and (2) if people only stand in trivial relations to one another in the global context, and there is no realistic chance for deepening such relations, it may be pointless to talk about how these relations ought to be organized to reflect the value of equality.

4.2.1 The Bases of Human Relationship

⁹ To see this distinction, consider the case of marriage: the relation between spouses can involve very different patterns of interactions and distributions of rights and duties. For instance, terms of marriage may be patriarchal in the sense that a wife is expected to be submissive, to take up all household duties, and have little chance of divorcing her husband; but it is also possible for the relation to embody the value of mutual respect, a more equal distribution of duties, and effective consent. Although we are considering one *type* or form of human relationship (marriage), the *specific characters* of this relationship can vary significantly.

The term “relationship” (or relation) can be used in a variety of contexts such as natural sciences, statistics or social science to refer to the connection between specific figures, states of affairs or social phenomena. For example, climate scientists may explore the “relation” between the rise in average temperature and extreme weather conditions; students of public health may study the “relation” between the level of socio-economic inequality and people’s life expectancy. However, here I am only interested in *human* relationships—that is, the relationships between human agents. In what follows I shall identify four conditions under which two or more persons can be said to stand in some sort of relationship to each other.

1. *Common attributes or situations*: first of all, human relationships can be grounded in shared attributes or experiences. People who have common physical features—the blue-eyed people, the blonds, the brunettes, and so on—are related to each other in virtue of sharing these common attributes. Nonetheless, these relations are rather trivial because they are based on personal attributes that lack moral significance.¹⁰ Alternatively, shared personal situations may also constitute some sort of relationship between individuals. Two persons are related to each other in this

¹⁰ Not surprisingly, these “relationships” would not give rise to any reason for partiality. See Niko Kolodny, “Which Relationships Justify Partiality? General Considerations and Problem Cases,” in Brian Feltham and John Cottingham eds., *Partiality and Impartiality: Morality, Special Relationships, and the Wider World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 169-193, esp. 185.

sense when each of them has been to a situation or experience of the same kind, involving the same thing.¹¹ For instance, shared personal experiences of engaging with a particular culture may underlie the relation among those who belong to the same nation.

2. *Interaction*: individuals stand in a relationship to one another when there is a temporally extended pattern of interactions between them. These relationships may be interpersonal ones based on immediate face-to-face encounters with mutual familiarity or attachment. Examples of these interpersonal relations include friendship, the relations between husbands and wives, parents and children, brothers and sisters, and many other forms of interpersonal relationships. The individuals involved very often, if not always, live within each other's immediate circle of social acquaintance. However, human relations based on interactions may also take place among a large number of individuals and agents without the possibility of face-to-face encounter when there is some form of coordination of activities between them, whether they acknowledge it or not. It is hard to deny that the activities of distant others could affect how we choose to act and also the circumstances under which we conduct our own activities. As argued by Onora O'Neill, we make implicit and explicit

¹¹ Kolodny, "Which Relationships Justify Partiality?" pp. 184-5.

assumptions about specific others with whom we do not directly interact as a basis for most of our own activities. As such, we commit ourselves to the assumption that there are other agents who are beyond our scope of immediate concern whose activities affect our circumstances and our activities affect theirs.¹²

3. *Interdependence for shared ends*: a set of individuals stand in a relation to one another whenever they are mutually dependent for the achievement or satisfaction of some common or shared purpose, goal or fundamental interest, whether or not they acknowledge their interdependence. The goals or purposes being pursued can be genuinely shared or but they also include self-regarding ones which can only be achieved through the cooperation of others.¹³ In some cases, interdependence is ad hoc and temporary. For example, a group of friends decide to go camping together and perform different tasks—some build the tents, some cook, and others clean up, etc. In other cases, however, interdependence can be long-lasting. For example, citizens and residents of the same state are mutually dependent for the provision of some

¹² More specifically, O'Neill argues we make three kinds of assumptions: that their activities affect our circumstances and our activities affect theirs; these others are independent sources of agency; they have specific and finite capacities, dispositions, and vulnerabilities. See *Towards Justice and Virtue: A Constructive Account of Practical Reasoning* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), chap. 4. See also Young, *Responsibility for Justice*, pp. 159-60.

¹³ Elizabeth Cripps, "Collectivities without Intention," *Journal of Social Philosophy* 42 (2011): 1-20.

collective goods such as personal security and protection against external attacks.¹⁴

4. *Shared institutions*: joint participation (active or passive) in some shared institutions is one of the bases of human relationships. For example, individuals may join a church in their neighborhood and thereby stand in some relation to other church goers. Institutions define a particular pattern of interactions among its participants—institutions coordinate the actions of various agents, shape their expectations and modify their behavior. As such, apart from forming the basis for particular human relations, institutions also play a considerable role in determining the specific characters of such relations. Institutions differ in size, voluntariness, aims, pervasiveness, and impacts on individual well-being. It may be thought that relations grounded in shared institutions are ultimately reducible to either interaction or interdependence. For one thing, we care about institutions because they enable various agents to interact with one another; for another, those who participate in a particular institution are often mutually dependent for the achievement of some shared goals or interests (as defined by the perceived aims of that institution). These bases of human relationships are, however, conceptually distinct. For example, people may be subject to a same institution with minimal interactions with each other. Consider a

¹⁴ Andrea Sangiovanni, "Global Justice, Reciprocity, and the State," *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 35 (2007): 3-39.

case in which an individual lives in a foreign country while retaining a citizenship of her original state. She and the other citizens would not be mutually dependent in the ways that fellow citizens and residents typically do. Besides, it is entirely possible for some people to interact with one another and also be mutually dependent for some common ends without forming any institutions because their interactions and collective project are on ad hoc basis.

These four bases of human relationship are not mutually exclusive and in practice it is possible that a relation is grounded in more than one way mentioned above. Consider the relationship among fellow citizens: these individuals jointly participate in a set of social and political institutions and they are mutually dependent for the satisfaction of some of each other's fundamental interests such as personal security. Also, they have significant interactions with at least some other citizens in their everyday life. Consider, for another example, the relationship among members of a criminal gang. The members are mutually dependent for the achievement of some shared goals (which may be morally repugnant) and these goals can be achieved only when they interact with one another in particularly ways.

Another point to note is that relationships can exist beyond individuals' immediate circles of social acquaintance or the range of persons with whom they

subjectively identify. To be sure, one may object that it is meaningless to talk about people's relations in the global context because beyond the borders of states people do not form a "group" in any substantial sense and people hardly identify themselves with those outside their own society in any significant way. However, mutual identification or familiarity is not a necessary condition for human relations. Consider, for example, an upper class snob who vehemently refuses to identify himself with the working class people of his society; his inward feeling, however strong it may be, will not make the relation that exists between them disappear. Of course, some human relations, such as friendship or nationality, do require at least some degree of mutual familiarity or identification but it is not the case for all types of relations.

4.2.2 Human Relations in the Global Context

Now let us consider the type of relation people stand to one another in the global context. Few would dispute that shared human needs and capacities give rise to some sort of relation among persons *qua persons*—all persons are related to each other in virtue of their personhood in the sense that all persons are members of a community of humanity; and that such a relation justifies some moral duties that everyone owes to everyone else.¹⁵ It must be conceded that this is only a weak sense of being

¹⁵ In Christine Korsgaard's Kantian formulation, all persons are fellow citizens of the Kingdom of

“related” to others. Nonetheless, as I shall demonstrate below, this is not the only way in which people relate to one another in the global context.

Shared Institutions with Pervasive Impacts

There has been much debate about whether a *global* basic structure exists. It has been argued that persons around the world are now living under a single basic structure that determines the distribution of burdens and benefits of transnational cooperation. On this view, the relation that we stand to others in the global sphere—living under a shared basic structure—is of the kind that gives rise to claims of distributive justice.¹⁶

It may, however, be objected that the current global order does not constitute a basic structure in the relevant sense and that the relation we bear with foreigners does not give rise to any duty beyond securing certain minimum needs. According to Rawls, the basic structure of society is “the way in which the major social institutions distribute fundamental rights and duties and determine the advantages from social

Ends. See *The Sources of Normativity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 127.

¹⁶ This “global basic structure” is the global analogue of the basic structure of a domestic society. See, for example, Allen Buchanan, “Rawls’ Law of Peoples: Rules for a Vanished Westphalian World,” *Ethics* 110 (2000): 697-721. For a more recent defense of the claim that there is a global basic structure, see Andreas Follesdal, “The Distributive Justice of a Global Basic Structure: A Category Mistake?” *Politics, Philosophy & Economics* 10 (2011): 46-65. Compare Charles Beitz, *Political Theory and International Relations* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1979), pp. 143-53; and Darrel Moellendorf, *Cosmopolitan Justice* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2002).

cooperation.”¹⁷ There are four distinct ways in which the basic structure of society can be defined: a basic structure may be said to comprise (1) the institutions that determine and regulate the fundamental terms of social cooperation; (2) the institutions that have profound and pervasive impacts upon persons’ life chances; (3) the institutions that subject persons to coercion;¹⁸ and (4) the institutions that form a unified overarching authority capable of imposing duties and assigning rights to maintain fair background conditions for interactions among different agents.¹⁹ It seems clear that, according to criteria (3) and (4), the current global order does not constitute a basic structure in the relevant sense; and reasonable persons may disagree about whether the current global order constitutes a single basic structure according to (1).²⁰ But I think we should adopt the definition of the basic structure which identifies the basic structure with a set of institutions that have profound and pervasive impacts upon persons’ life chance. The reason is that at least part of the justification for taking the basic structure as the primary subject of justice is that it has a “profound and

¹⁷ *A Theory of Justice*, revised edition (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1999), p. 6.

¹⁸ Arash Abizadeh, “Cooperation, Pervasive Impact, and Cooperation: On the Scope (not Site) of Distributive Justice,” *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 35 (2007): 318-58, esp. 319.

¹⁹ For this definition of the basic structure, Saladin Meckled-Garcia, “On the Very Idea of Cosmopolitan Justice: Constructivism and International Agency,” *The Journal of Political Philosophy* 16 (2008): 245-71, esp. 261-3.

²⁰ For example, there may be disagreements with respect to whether a system of social cooperation that is global in scope exists, or about the feasibility of establishing a just system of global cooperation.

pervasive influence on the persons who live under its institutions”²¹ and it affects “men’s initial chances in life.”²² In addition, the basic structure “as a social and economic scheme is not only an arrangement that satisfies given desires and aspirations but also an arrangement that arouse further desires and aspirations in the future.”²³

Once we adopt this definition of the basic structure, it seems plausible to say that a global basic structure does exist. I am, however, *not* claiming that the issue is settled here. In fact, even if one concedes that a basic structure of a global scope does not exist, one can still argue that our relation to one another in the global context is a morally significant one because each of us is being pervasively impacted by a complex web of global institutions. Also, it can be argued that contemporary global interdependence and transnational interactions are sufficiently complex and intense to generate a demand for establishing a basic structure global in scope in order to maintain background justice.²⁴

²¹ Rawls, *Justice as Fairness: A Restatement*, ed. Erin Kelly (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), p. 55.

²² Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, p. 7. Rawls’ view is that the basic structure is liable to creating particularly entrenched inequality among persons who are subject to it—that is, the inequality of starting places in society—because it inevitable favors some social positions over others.

²³ Rawls, *Justice as Fairness*, p. 56.

²⁴ For a discussion of this issue, see Miriam Ronzoni, “The Global Order: A Case of Background

Unlike those authors who adopt a purely institutional approach, I do not hold that obligations of justice apply *exclusively* to those who share an institutional scheme.²⁵ In fact, as I shall argue below, being subject to shared institutions is but one way in which persons from different societies are related to one another in the global context. However, I share their empirical claim that the current global order consists of a complex set of transnational institutions which enable various agents from different jurisdictions to interact with pervasive and profound impacts on one another. These institutions are made up of two elements: first, clusters of connected norms, principles, and rules; second, clusters of norms organized into stable and on-going social practices. Those practices may or may not be connected with a formal international institution.²⁶ Together they establish the broadest parameters within which various actors interact with one another in the global realm. Here I shall focus on the institutions that regulate the global economy and the system of state sovereignty.

The Global Trading System: in 2008 alone, the volume of global exports in goods

Justice?" *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 37 (2009): 229-56.

²⁵ Compare Thomas Pogge, *World Poverty and Human Rights: Cosmopolitan Responsibilities and Reforms* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2002), pp. 64-7, 170-2; Darrel Moellendorf, *Cosmopolitan Justice* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2002), pp. 30-40, and *Global Inequality Matters* (London: Palgrave, 2009), pp. 12-13, 44-5.

²⁶ Andrew Hurrell, "Global Inequality and International Institutions," *Metaphilosophy* 32 (2001): 34-57, esp. 38.

and commercial services reached \$15,717 billion and \$3,780 billion respectively.²⁷

The World Trade Organization (WTO) provides the legal and institutional foundation for the global trading system. Membership in the WTO is predicated in accepting all of its agreements that are practically irreversible once reached. Also, members cannot trade with each other except in accordance of the standard set by WTO agreements. Because of the difficulty of negotiating bilateral trade pacts with current and potential trading partners and the globally dominant position of the WTO, membership is the only credible option for almost every country. Therefore, the 30 WTO agreements, consisting of 30,000 pages of rules, now govern virtually the whole of global trade in goods, services and intellectual property.²⁸ WTO rules affects profoundly the conditions under which the goods and services produced in one society can have access to the market of another; the prices of exports and thus what get produced; and what goods and services are available and at what cost.

Global Financial Institutions: the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank provide much needed loans to countries in debt crisis and therefore enjoy

²⁷ WTO, *International Trade Statistics 2009* (Geneva: World Trade Organization, 2009), pp. 7, 121.

²⁸ In fact, given the prominence of WTO trade norms, it would be very costly for any individual state to adopt standards different from that of the WTO in its trading policies. See David Singh Grewal, *Network Power: The Social Dynamics of Globalization* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), chap. 8.

considerable bargaining power in their dealings with borrowing governments.²⁹

Conditional lending affects the individuals living in debtor countries in intimate ways because it often addresses government expenditures and thus determines whether roads, schools, healthcare, or debt repayment take priority. Once a country approaches the IMF or the Bank, it opens up a number of opportunities for the institutions and their most powerful members to wield influence through penalties, conditionality, and advice. In one way or another, the IMF and the Bank are reinforcing some standards for economic policies and development strategies (commonly referred to as the Washington Consensus) and they have integrated a large number of countries into the global economy by requiring governments to open up to global trade, investment, and capital.³⁰

The System of State Sovereignty: one often neglected element of the current global order is the institution of state sovereignty. States are domestic institutions. However, the present institution of state sovereignty is constituted by a web of rules

²⁹ As of April 2010, 56 developing countries around the world—whose populations account for more than one billion people—are participating in economic programs supported by the IMF. See *The IMF Annual Report: Supporting a Balanced Global Recovery*, at <www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/ar/2010/eng/pdf/ar10_eng.pdf>. In 2011, the International Development Association (IDA) within the World Bank provides finances development programs in 79 developing countries whose populations account for 2.5 billion people. See <www.worldbank.org/ida/ida-factsheet.pdf>.

³⁰ This is not to say that they have been successful in these roles. See Ngaire Woods, *The Globalizers: The IMF, the World Bank and Their Borrowers* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006), pp. 2-4, 70-2.

and practices that define the legal powers and immunities of the state in the global sphere. For example, the current international rules recognize that a sovereign state has unilateral control over its own borders; international rules also allow the government of sovereign states to enter into treaties, or acquire international debts which later governments must honor.³¹ These norms regarding state sovereignty have significant impacts on individuals no matter where they live in the globe because all are subject to one state or another.

Interdependence and Interactions beyond Borders

In addition to being pervasively impacted by a complex set of global institutions, our relations to distant strangers in the global context also involve various forms of global interdependence and transnational interactions that affect the vast number of individuals living in different societies. Again, the point is that, even if one concedes that the current global order does not (and will not) constitute a single basic structure incorporating all societies, transnational interactions are sufficiently complex and intense to trigger an obligation to establish the relevant institutions to regulate such interactions in order to avoid morally problematic outcomes.³²

³¹ Follesdal, "The Distributive Justice of a Global Basic Structure," pp. 56-7.

³² Ronzoni, "The Global Order."

It has been argued that global economic interdependence (as illustrated by the growth in international trade and investment) is a necessary and sufficient condition for claims of distributive justice to arise.³³ But to understand the moral significance of people's relations to one another in the global context, one has to look beyond the economic realm and consider other arenas of global interdependence. In what follows I shall focus on just three examples: (1) globalization of economic production; (2) the relocation of heavily polluting industries; and (3) global environmental interdependence.

Globalization of Production: the globalization of economic production refers to the proliferation and stretching of corporate activities and business network across the globe with increasing ability of firms to locate part of their production overseas while remaining direct control over the activities of foreign subsidiaries. The principal agent of this process is transnational corporation (TNC).³⁴ In 2007, there are 79,000 TNC parent firms in the world and an additional 790,000 foreign affiliate firms. Together, these firms make up 11% of world GDP and account for a third of total world exports

³³ Beitz, *Political Theory and International Relations*, pp. 143-53. Note, however, that Beitz later abandons this view and contends that all persons should be included in the global original position simply in virtue of their moral personality, see his "Cosmopolitan Ideas and National Sentiments," *Journal of Philosophy* 80 (1983): 591-600.

³⁴ Note that states often enter into bilateral and multilateral treaties aiming at protecting the foreign investment of their firms. See Eric Cavallero, "Coercion, Inequality and the International Property Regime," *The Journal of Political Philosophy* 18 (2010): 16-31.

in goods and services. Flows of foreign direct investment (FDI) have increased from US\$ 9.2 billion in 1970 to 1.8 trillion in 2007.³⁵ The globalization of economic production leads to a global division of labor which captures a form of organization which reaches around the globe where work is not confined to particular societies. In turn, the type of job one does in the global economy has a great influence upon how long one will live, how much one consumes and what kind of health one can enjoy.³⁶ Moreover, the ability of TNCs to transfer resources abroad in response to changing national and international conditions affects the domestic policies of states as they seek to make themselves more competitive in attracting foreign investment.

Relocation of Polluting Industries: in recent decades, the share of pollution-intensive (or “dirty”) industries is rising in developing countries and it is falling at the same time in the developed world. These industries include but are not limited to toxic chemical production (e.g. pesticide, benzedine-based dyes), hazardous waste treatment facilities, and raw material extraction. It is widely acknowledged that there is growing amount of FDI in pollution-intensive industries in developing

³⁵ United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), *World Investment Report 2008: Transnational Corporations and Export Competitiveness* (New York: United Nations, 2008).

³⁶ Robert O’Brien and Marc Williams, *Global Political Economy: Evolution and Dynamics*, 2nd ed. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), pp. 256-63. See also Gary Gereffi, “The Global Economy: Organization, Governance, and Development,” in Neil Smelser and Richard Swedberg eds, *Handbook of Economic Sociology*, 2nd ed. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005), pp. 160-82.

countries relative to developed countries. Also, TNCs often take advantage of lax environmental regulations, whereas similar firms in developed countries follow stricter standards. Finally, foreign investment in pollution-intensive industries in developing countries may contribute to the problem of regulatory freeze—the fear that some countries have of rising the environmental standards above the status quo.³⁷ These trends represent a shift of environmental risks from the rich to the poor countries. The decision to locate these pollution-intensive industries is usually made outside their host countries and the final products of these industries are often for export. The environmental costs such as diminished health, lower agricultural productivity, and contaminated food chain or ground water associated with these industries fall on the poor men and women living in the host countries.

Now let us consider interdependence as a basis of human relations in the global context. I argued earlier that two or more persons stand in a relationship to each other when they are mutually dependent for the achievement or satisfaction of their shared ends or fundamental interests. It has frequently been pointed out that the intensification of transnational trade, communication, and travel has given rise to

³⁷ Jennifer Clapp, “What the Pollution Havens Debate Overlooks,” *Global Environmental Politics* 2 (2002): 11-19. See also Patrick Hossay, *Unsustainable: A Primer for Global Environmental and Social Justice* (London: Zed Books, 2006), pp. 33-4.

significant social and economic interdependence at the global level. But global interdependence extends far beyond the economic realm.³⁸ It also involves, for example, interdependence with respect to environmental issues such as the conservation of the global commons (ocean and atmospheric), species, living resources and habitat. In this sense, individuals worldwide are mutually dependent for the protection or satisfaction of their fundamental interests in environment security (i.e. the interest in living in a safe, healthy environment with adequate supply of natural resources).³⁹

Global Environmental Interdependence: human activities and increasing economic globalization exacerbates a wide range of environmental problems such as anthropogenic climate change, ozone layer depletion, marine pollution, diminishing bio-diversity, and the overexploitation of natural resources (e.g. overfishing, deforestation, desertification etc.). However, neither the causes nor the impacts of these global environmental problems are confined to any single society. People's daily

³⁸ Other examples include the maintenance of international peace and security, disease eradication, preventing the emergence of resistance and new diseases, non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. See Scott Barrett, *Why Cooperate? The Incentive to Supply Global Public Goods* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

³⁹ There are transnational institutions that aim at regulating global environmental interdependence. These institutions include a body of international law, conventions, multilateral treaties and international organizations. The best-known examples are the UN Environment Program, the UN Framework on Climate Change, and the World Wide Fund for Nature. For a discussion of these global environmental institutions, see Elizabeth R. DeSombre, *Global Environmental Institutions* (New York: Routledge, 2006).

actions can impose externalities on one another and on the environment on which we all depend. For example, greenhouse gas emissions from human activities contributes to climate-related impacts including increase in average global temperatures, rises in sea levels and an increase in the frequency and intensity of extreme weather conditions, all of which can have catastrophic impacts on many people's lives, livelihood, and health. But people living in poor societies are particularly vulnerable to these impacts. Deforestation, which causes loss in biodiversity and exacerbates climate change, in many developing countries is in part caused by commercial logging for exports to affluent societies.⁴⁰ Therefore, the mitigation or at least the management of these environmental problems requires the collective action of a vast number of individuals (sometimes through their state or other institutions).

In sum, our relations to distant strangers in the global context involve living under a set of shared institutions with profound and pervasive impacts on each other's life prospects, and interactions sufficiently complex and intense to produce morally problematic outcomes. Of course, people may not identify with those outside their particular society in any substantial sense as they do with their fellow compatriots or those within their circle of social acquaintance, but this does not mean that our

⁴⁰ For these examples, see Lorraine Elliot, *The Global Politics of the Environment*, 2nd ed. (New York: New York University Press, 2004), chaps. 2-3.

relation to one another in the global context is insignificant.

Before we move on, it may be worth asking whether the relations people stand to one another in the global context is the kind of relation that can give rise to claims of distributive justice. I think the answer to this question is a positive one. First, as suggested above, the ways in which this relation is structured have profound and pervasive impacts on its participants' life chances and they effect a distribution of benefits and burdens that would not otherwise exist. Second, the ways in which this relation is constructed are subject to collective control. This means the fundamental terms of global interdependence and interactions are alterable. Third, the successful regulation of this relation requires as an instrumental condition a set of institutions that would maintain the necessary background conditions for different agents to interact with each other. These conditions, taken together, imply that our relation to one another in the global context is subject to assessment according to principles of distributive justice.

It has been argued that for a relation to trigger any duty of distributive justice, it must satisfy the following two conditions: (1) engagement in the relation is largely involuntary; and (2) it is comprehensively regulated by institutional norms.⁴¹ But

⁴¹ Moellendorf, *Global Inequality Matters*, pp. 45-6.

neither of these conditions, I shall argue, is necessary for concerns of distributive justice to arise. Let us begin with the first of these conditions. Although it is true that involvement in transnational institutions and global interdependence is largely involuntary because there are no realistic alternatives, it remains unclear why involuntariness is a necessary condition for distributive justice to apply. The reason is that there are certain relations to which concerns of distributive justice apply even when they are entered into voluntarily. For instance, citizens can make claims of distributive justice on each other *even when* a significant number of these individuals are in fact immigrants who have voluntarily chosen to reside in their current country. It would be unjust for the host country to offer less favorable terms of citizens to potential immigrants and the voluntary acceptance of these terms by the immigrants does not excuse the state for offering them in the first place because by so doing it fails to show equal respect to these new immigrants.⁴² Another question is whether concerns of distributive justice arise only when a relation is comprehensively regulated by institutional norms. It should be noted that in some cases the dominant agents have a clear interest in ensuring that the relation they stand to the weak and the

⁴² A domestic analogy may help to illustrate this point: consider a case in which a company offers less attractive terms of employment to female job applicants, for example, they are offered a lower salary than that of their male counterparts for doing the same job, or have to take up tasks that are too unpleasant for their male colleagues. I assume most people will find such a sexist practice morally repulsive even under the condition that the female applicants willingly accept the offer to join that company. What can be inferred from this intuition is perhaps that the voluntary nature of this employer-employee relationship does not exempt it from moral scrutiny.

poor is not regulated because in that way they would be subject to less constraints and scrutiny. Thus, the relevant institutions that aim to regulate a particular relation are in fact a demand of justice, not a precondition for concerns of justice to arise.⁴³

4.3 GLOBAL EQUALITY AS A RELATIONAL IDEAL

Now we need an account of what it is for people to relate to one another as equals in the global context. For Anderson, two persons stand in a relation of equality to each other when “each accepts the obligation to justify their actions by principles acceptable to the other, and in which they take mutual consultation, reciprocation, and recognition for granted.”⁴⁴ Scheffler, on the other hand, regards the relation of equality as a relation that is “in certain crucial respects unstructured by differences of rank, power, or status.”⁴⁵

⁴³ Abizadeh, “Cooperation, Pervasive Impact, and Cooperation,” p. 339.

⁴⁴ “What is the Point of Equality?” p. 313.

⁴⁵ “Choice, Circumstances, and the Value of Equality,” p. 17. Compare these with Rawls’ comment on relational equality: “Equality is present at the highest level in that citizens recognize and view one another as equals. Their being what they are—citizens—includes their being related as equals; and their being related as equals is part both of what they are and of what they are recognized as being by others. Their social bond is their political commitment to preserve the conditions their equal relation requires.” (*Justice as Fairness*, p. 132)

In what follows I shall sketch an account of relational equality that applies in the global context. In so doing I shall discuss three different aspects of a relation of equality: namely, (1) supporting the self-respect of each participant, (2) avoiding domination of some by others, and (3) embodying fair terms of cooperation for common endeavors. Each of these aspects represents a way in which people can be related to one another *as equals*. I shall also explain why this ideal of relational equality applies in the global context. I hope in the end my account of global relational equality will show that such equality has instrumental as well as non-instrumental values and we should therefore ensure that our relations to one another in the global context are properly structured to respect each other's equal status. It is also important to note that my claim is *not* that every morally acceptable relation is constructed on the basis of equality. One obvious example is the relation between parents and children. But I shall not pursue this question further because there is no reason for thinking that our relation to distant strangers in the global context is one of these relations.

4.3.1 Relations of Equality and Self-Respect

The first aspect of equality as a relational ideal is the maintenance of *self-respect*. People can stand a relation of equality to one another only when their relation is

organized in a way that is supportive to the self-respect of its participants. This is because persons who regard themselves and one another as equals would not agree to a relation that tends to undermine the self-respect of any of its participants. However, one cannot determine whether being in a relation undermines people's self-respect simply by looking at these people's self-esteem in a subjective sense. For example, someone may suffer from the problem of low self-esteem as a result of being overly sensitive about her own abilities or achievement as compared with those of others.⁴⁶ Instead, the conception of self-respect that is at work here is not morally neutral but distinctively egalitarian. It maintains that a person can have a secure sense of self-respect only when she can reasonably view herself as an efficacious and undominated agent who enjoys an equal standing with others.⁴⁷ In fact, without this kind of self-conception, a person cannot be reasonably expected to develop a favorable attitude towards herself except as a result of systematic manipulation.

Although the badness of losing self-respect can be partly explained by the experiential evils associated with it, the importance of preserving self-respect is not

⁴⁶ Consider the case of an aristocrat who firmly believes in aristocracy and as a result he would hold himself in low esteem if he fails to achieve high office in the government. But we would not think living with others as equal citizen in a democratic society where position of political authority is not distributed according to class or family background is undermining his sense of self-respect *in the relevant sense*.

⁴⁷ For this concept of self-respect that constitutes the basis for social equality, see Martin O'Neil, "What Should Egalitarians Believe?" p. 128.

merely a psychological issue.⁴⁸ There are cases in which we would hesitate to claim that someone is self-respecting even when she does not have any negative feelings towards herself and such hesitation suggests that self-respect is not merely about one's subjective feelings. Consider an extremely deferential servant who honestly believes that his rights, his life project, and his interests are of less importance than those of his master. Although he may be a perfectly happy servant who is not subject to any abuse by his master, we would still think that the relation between servant and master is not consistent with preserving the latter's self-respect because it is unreasonable to expect anyone in that position to maintain a proper sense of self-respect.

There are different ways in which being in a particular relation can be detrimental to its participants' self-respect: (1) when the relation sanctions a pattern of interactions that encourages excessive deference for some and a sense of superiority for others; (2) it publicly deprives certain rights of some participants which are taken for granted by others; (3) it gives rise to a distribution of material goods that conveys a sense of inferiority to the worse off⁴⁹; and (4) some participants are subject to the

⁴⁸ For a distinction between the moral and psychological concepts of self-respect, see Stephen J. Massey, "Is Self-Respect a Moral or a Psychological Concept?" *Ethics* 93 (1983): 246-61.

⁴⁹ T. M. Scanlon, "The Diversity of Objections to Inequality," in *The Difficulty of Tolerance: Essays in Political Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 202-18, esp. 204-5, 212-14. See also Rawls, *Justice as Fairness*, p. 131.

arbitrary power of others. Note that the normative significance of self-respect is not confined to the bounds of a single society because it is possible at least in theory that our relations to distant others in the global sphere possess some of the above features and are therefore inconsistent with the maintenance of self-respect. The point here is that if our transnational relations trigger any of these four mechanisms, they should be reformed so that they are structured in ways that reflect the equal status of each person.

4.3.2 *Global Non-domination and Relation of Equality*

The second aspect of relational equality is *non-domination*. For any relation to be a relation of equality, it must be non-dominating in nature. Two persons are standing in a relation of equality with each other only if neither of them has the ability to exercise dominating power over the other. Before turning to the connection between non-domination and equality, let us take a look at the concept of domination.

According to Philip Pettit, someone dominates another to the extent that (i) he has the capacity to interfere (ii) on an arbitrary basis (iii) in certain choices that the other is in a position to make.⁵⁰ Each of these points needs elaboration. First, the

⁵⁰ Pettit, *Republicanism: A Theory of Freedom and Government* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. 52-3.

dominant agent must have some measure of control over what dominated agent does and thereby worsen the latter's choice situation. But this aspect of domination can co-exist with the absence of actual interference. For example, a dominated agent may be crafty enough to avoid interference by behaving in a way that pleases the dominant agent but it remains true that the dominant agent keeps an eye on how the dominated agent is disposed to choose and is ready to interfere if the latter does not choose in a way he wants.⁵¹ Second, interference is dominating only if it is *arbitrary*. That means the interference is subject solely to the discretion or judgment of the dominant agent and without reference to the relevant interests or the ideas of the dominated. Third, domination may only be present in certain domains or aspects of life and does not extend to others.⁵² A final point to note is that relations of domination can also exist between collective agents. Nonetheless, domination over a group will always constitute domination over the individual people who belong to that group by restricting what these individuals can collectively do.⁵³

Non-domination, however, could simply mean the absence of domination

⁵¹ Pettit, *Republicanism*, pp. 63-5. See also "Republican Freedom: Three Axioms, Four Theorems," in Cecile Laborde and John Maynor eds., *Republicanism and Political Theory* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2008), pp. 102-30, esp. 111-12.

⁵² Pettit, *Republicanism*, pp. 56-8.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 52.

between agents. Imagine that two persons are living in different islands separated by an impenetrable sea and as a result neither of them is dominating the other. But this is *not* the kind of non-domination that interests us here. This section is about relations that are non-dominating in nature. These relations are organized in a way that no party enjoys arbitrary and unchecked power over others. It should also be noted that non-domination is not only a virtue of interpersonal relationships but can also be expressed by a set of institutional rules or practices. One can dominate another by virtue of one's personal resources but also by virtue of one's position in a specific institution. Therefore, to understand the idea of non-domination it is important to consider not only the actions of particular agents but also the institutions that define the background conditions for differently situated persons to interact with one another by shaping their mutual expectation and the possibility of their interactions. For instance, we must consider whether our shared institutions positively sanction or fail to prevent interpersonal domination or place some participants in a position of being under systemic threat of domination by others.⁵⁴ In fact, dominant agents often exercise domineering influence through shaping the shared institutional rules and

⁵⁴ For this distinction between "agent-relative" and "systemic" domination, see Cecile Laborde, "Republicanism and Global Justice: A Sketch," *European Journal of Political Theory* 9 (2010): 48-69, esp. pp. 57-8. See also Iris Young, *Responsibility for Justice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 45-52.

conventions to their own favor at the expense of the weaker parties who have no choice but to abide by these rules.

While non-domination has been regarded as a theory of freedom, it is also an *egalitarian* ideal. First of all, domination is at odd with equality as a relational ideal because it prevents people from viewing themselves and each other as *equal agents*.

“The powerless are not going to be able to look the powerful in the eye, conscious as each will be—and conscious as each will be of others consciousness—of this asymmetry. Both will share an awareness that the powerless can do nothing except by the leave of mercy of the powerful and not on equal terms.”⁵⁵

The dominated agent cannot enjoy the psychological status of an equal. Rather, they are in a position where fear and deference will be normal order of the day, not the frankness that goes with intersubjective equality. Because the dominated agent is in a position where he is vulnerable to the arbitrary interference from the dominant agents, it is often in his pressing interest to exercise a strategy of deference and anticipation.⁵⁶

Nonetheless, the badness of standing in a relation of dominance cannot simply be reduced to its impacts on people’s attitudes. Another reason why domination is incompatible with a relation of equality is that it constitutes a form of power

⁵⁵ Pettit, *Republicanism*, pp. 60-1.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 87-90

inequality that cannot be justified to the disadvantaged parties. A relation characterized by domination is essentially a relation between superiors and inferiors in which the dominate agents are able to determine without reciprocation the conditions for others' actions.⁵⁷ Furthermore, a relation of dominance always implies that some agents are relatively powerless in face of others. Therefore, reducing power inequality among agents is an effective means for promoting the overall level of non-domination.⁵⁸ Extra resources given to the disadvantaged persons will improve the overall level of non-domination because that will improve the relative position of the disadvantaged persons and thus their enjoyment of non-domination without thereby worsening the level of non-domination enjoyed by the advantaged. By contrast, giving extra resources to the advantaged persons will always lower the overall level of non-domination for it will further worsen the relative position of the disadvantaged and thus worsen their level of non-domination without correspondent increase in the level of non-domination of the advantaged. Therefore, promoting non-domination for each requires further equalizing it.

⁵⁷ For this characterization of domination, see Iris Marion Young, *Justice and the Politics of Difference* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990), p. 38.

⁵⁸ Pettit, *Republicanism*, pp. 113-17; "Republican Freedom," pp.108-9; "Determinacy of Republican Policy: A Reply to McMahan," *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 34 (2006): 275-83, esp. 281; and "Joining the Dots," in Geoffrey Brennan, Robert Goodin, Frank Jackson and Michael Smith eds., *Common Minds: Themes from the Philosophy of Philip Pettit* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007), pp. 215-344, at 312, n.47.

What needs to be shown now is that non-domination is an ideal that should guide our relations to distant others *in the global context*. First of all, from a moral point of view, relations of domination are objectionable whether or not they obtain between compatriots. It is true that non-domination is closely related to the ideal of equal citizenship but not all reasons for rejecting relations of domination are bounded to the context of a single political community. For example, being subject to domination always undermines the ability of the dominated agent to pursue her rational plan of life in a way that cannot be justified to her. The fact that she is vulnerable to arbitrary power over which she has no control is morally bad whether the source of her domination comes from within or beyond her own society. Therefore, it would be unreasonable to claim that relations of domination are permissible when they take place across political boundaries. In fact, it is sometimes argued that being subject to arbitrary power of a foreign origin constitutes a greater moral evil. This is not to say that I am myself committed to this line of reasoning. But it has been said that being subject to a tyranny of one's own nation is preferable to being governed by "some cautious, just, gentle, well-meaning administrator from outside."⁵⁹ Thus, we may actually have more, not less, reason for rejecting transnational domination. Second, as

⁵⁹ See Isaiah Berlin, "Two Concepts of Liberty," in his *Liberty: Incorporating "Four Essays on Liberty"*, ed. Henry Hardy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 166-217, esp. 203-4.

an empirical matter, domination can and does take place beyond the context of the state. As we have discussed in the previous chapter, people around the world are now living under a wide range of transnational institutions that have profound impacts on their life-chances and welfare wherever they live without the possibility of opting out; in addition, the pattern of transnational interactions is sufficiently intense and complex to expose people living in poorer societies to the influence of alien forces which neither they nor their governments can control.⁶⁰ Many governments of developing countries and local elites of these societies are in fact working with foreign governments or other transnational agents to maintain the relations of domination between these agents and their own peoples, and they receive benefits from doing so. At an institutional level, affluent countries and corporations often use their greater influence over the operations and decision-making of international organizations to shape the global rules and institutions to their own favor. These rules and institutions greatly restrict the choice of national economic policies of many developing states and in turn have profound impacts of the lives of many people living in these states.

Now it may be objected that global non-domination is not an *egalitarian* ideal

⁶⁰ For a similar point, see Laborde, "Republicanism and Global Justice," pp. 58-9.

because, at the global level, we should adopt a more restricted account of domination which focuses on relations of domination that are *capability-denying*—the forms of domination that significantly threaten or deny the basic capabilities of the dominated agents.⁶¹ Here I must concede that domination would be most objectionable from a moral point of view if it threatens people's ability to meet their basic needs and that domination in the global sphere is often like this. But it is implausible to claim that the justification for global non-domination lies ultimately in the avoidance of absolute deprivation.

To begin with, if any form of domination *by definition* infringes our basic interest in maintaining control or personal autonomy and thereby denies our agency as human beings, then the alleged distinction between capability-denying and non-capability-denying domination will simply be unsustainable. Alternatively, it may be thought that domination is capability-denying only when it becomes sufficiently intensive and pervasive. While this move can save the distinction between capability-denying and non-capability-denying domination, it is rather unclear how

⁶¹ Laborde, "Republicanism and Global Justice," pp. 54-6. However, Lea Ypi argues that if we object to capacity-denying domination, we should also object to the power inequality between states in the international arena, which underlines such capacity-denying domination, and this in turn constitutes a form of *instrumental* egalitarianism. See *Global Justice and Avant-Garde Political Agency* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 112-29. Note that my position is that power inequality matters even when it does not result in absolute deprivation of the subordinate agents.

this line can be drawn in a non-arbitrary way. In addition, one still needs to provide a further argument for why less intense and pervasive domination, which is objectionable when it takes place within the domestic context, is acceptable in the global realm.

If the above two accounts of capacity-denying domination are not satisfactory, one may try to argue that domination is capability-denying when it tends to threaten people's basic needs for subsistence. On this understanding, transnational domination is not a concern for justice as long as it does not pose any threat to people's basic subsistence. However, it is highly counter-intuitive to claim that relations of domination in the global context are morally permissible when they do not deprive people of their basic needs. To see this point, imagine a case where A dominates B in a way that reduces B's standing of living to a point just above the level of subsistence. Assume further that these two persons are living in separate political communities. It is hard to see why this relation of domination would be morally permissible merely because A and B belong to separate political communities.

In response, it may be argued that, at the global level, our legitimate concern is only with a core set of basic human interests, whereas at the domestic level we need to consider a set of more expansive and substantive relevant interests. The reason is

perhaps is that the content of *basic* capabilities, such as the capabilities to avoid starvation and premature death, can be specified independently of particular local and cultural contexts. Beyond these fundamental interests, however, the full content of the more specific capabilities that should be respected can only be defined through “democratic engagements with people’s actual views and ideals about what constitutes their well-being *in their society*.”⁶² In short, global non-domination requires only that powerful states or transnational agents respect the basic needs of people living in a foreign country. However, this understanding of global non-domination seems to me unduly narrow and it ignores many important interests that non-dominating interference should track. For example, individuals do have an interest in being able to participate in transnational cooperation with others on terms that are fair, to receive fair value for their contributions to the production process, to disentangle themselves from oppressive social relations, and to expand their economic and social opportunities. We have reason to value these interests and to respect them in our relations to one another. The point is that the dominant agent would fail to respect others’ status as equal agents even when she refrains from undermining their basic capabilities.

⁶² Ibid., p. 56.

Besides, the fact that there are cross-cultural disagreements about what counts as relevant interests that non-dominating interference should track does not entail that we should adopt the minimalist approach. For example, in determining whether transnational interactions constitute domination or not, we might require that non-dominating interference should be one that can be justified to the agents who are liable to being disadvantaged by such interference. And something may be unjustifiable even if it leaves people above the threshold. Furthermore, even if we assume that the full content of the relevant interests to non-domination can be identified only through democratic deliberation, these democratic processes need not be confined to the level of a single political community. Why, one may ask, shouldn't there be some sort of consultation with the local community to determine what kinds of interests the powerful foreign agents ought to respect? Arguably, those vulnerable to arbitrary interference should be allowed the chance to voice their views regarding what counts as the relevant interests that non-dominating interference must track whether such interferences originate outside their own community or not (though this might be open to abuse if we treat their views as authoritative).

4.3.3 Fair Terms of Cooperation in Collective Endeavors

Having discussed the issue of domination, let us turn to another aspect of treating

people as equals in their relations—people stand in a relation of equality to one another only when their collective endeavors, if any, express fair terms of cooperation.

That is to say the parties to a putatively egalitarian relation should be committed to making fair cooperation among equal participants the basis for their mutual reliance.⁶³

The demand for fair terms of cooperation applies to any relation that satisfies the following conditions: (1) there is a regular, on-going pattern of interactions or coordination of activities and behavior; (2) these interactions could, at least in principle, become a scheme of fair cooperation; (3) their interactions give rise to certain benefits and burdens; and (4) the terms of their interactions are subject to collective control. Perhaps it would not be controversial to claim that this demand for fair terms of cooperation applies to our relation to distant others in the global context. One only has to consider the example of global economic integration and how it affects the fundamental interests of individuals around the world.

Now the question is under what conditions a scheme of interaction can be properly regarded as fair cooperation. I shall argue that the following conditions must

⁶³ Gillian Brock also argues that global justice requires fair terms of cooperation in collective endeavors at the global level. However, as the following discussion will show, we differ in our understandings of what counts as fair cooperation. For Brock, fair terms of cooperation are those institutional arrangements that enable all persons to secure their basic needs and liberties. Also, fair cooperation as a demand of justice follows directly from a Rawlsian-style normative thought experiment. See Brock, *Global Justice*, pp. 48-54, 220-39.

be met for people to be treated as *equal* participants in their collective endeavors and practices: negatively, the terms of their interactions must be free from exploitation (and there should be appropriate institutional arrangements to prevent people from being exploited by more powerful agents), and, positively, each participant in the cooperative scheme is to have fair access to the benefits resulted from their cooperation.

A. The problem of exploitation

In the most general sense of the term, exploitation simply means “to use” or “to take advantage of” something, some situation, or someone. Exploitation in this general sense is not *always* morally objectionable. For example, a player may exploit the carelessness of her opponent to win a game of chess; and a lawyer may exploit the weakness of her adversary to win a just verdict.⁶⁴ However, here I am interested in a more restricted and morally pejorative sense of the term and I shall therefore limit my attention to the cases of *wrongful* exploitation in which advantage taking is morally objectionable. Also, I am more interested in exploitation as a practice that takes place on a more or less regularized and systemic basis than as a case of individual

⁶⁴ For this two examples, see Alan Wood, “Exploitation,” *Social Philosophy and Policy* 12 (1995): 136-58, esp. 138.

wrongdoing.

Here I cannot hope to come up with anything close to a comprehensive review of the literature on exploitation but it may still be useful to look at the following accounts of exploitation. The concept of exploitation has been traditionally associated with Marx. For Marxists, exploitation essentially means the coercive appropriation of the surplus values of labor by the capitalists. For example, the non-producers exploit the producers when they take advantage of their vastly superior social power to establish an extremely unequal distribution of economic advantages which cannot be justified in terms of their deservingness.⁶⁵ Alternatively, one may argue that exploitation exists in a society when a group of persons receive less under the present regime than they would have gotten with an initial equal distribution of alienable means of production.⁶⁶ There are also a number of non-Marxist accounts of exploitation. First of all, some authors claim that exploitation occurs when one party to a transaction pays a nonstandard price—that is above or below the price that would be generated by a competitive market—for the object of that transaction.⁶⁷ Another

⁶⁵ Richard Arneson, “What’s Wrong with Exploitation?” *Ethics* 91 (1981): 202-27.

⁶⁶ John Roemer, *Free to Lose: An Introduction to Marxist Economic Philosophy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988), p. 134. See also “Should Marxists Be Interested in Exploitation?” *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 14 (1985): 30-65.

⁶⁷ Alan Wertheimer, *Exploitation* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996). For a similar account, see David Miller, “Exploitation in the Market,” in Andrew Reeve ed., *Modern Theories of*

account maintains that exploitation means taking advantage of another's weakness or vulnerability to advance one's own interests or projects in ways that fail to show proper respect for the exploited person.⁶⁸ A third account holds that exploitation involves playing for unusual advantage in transactions with vulnerable others.⁶⁹

In this section I adopt an account of exploitation that appeals to *unfairness*: a person (A) exploits another (B) when A takes advantage of B (or a characteristic of B or B's situation) and benefits unfairly by doing so.⁷⁰ I shall maintain further that terms of interaction among different agents are exploitative when they sanction or create the background conditions that encourage exploitative interactions. The idea is that a person (or a group of persons acting together) is able to exploit some others in their relation not because she is able to take advantage of some extraordinary or unexpected situations but because the background institutions which define people's position in relation to one another allow some to benefit unfairly from the vulnerability of others. Sometimes exploitation can coexist with domination. The

Exploitation (London: Sage, 1987), pp. 149-65.

⁶⁸ Wood, "Exploitation," p. 144-50.

⁶⁹ Robert E. Goodin, "Exploiting a Situation and Exploiting a Person," in Andrew Reeve ed., *Modern Theories of Exploitation* (London: Sage, 1987), pp. 166-200.

⁷⁰ Joel Feinberg, *Harmless Wrongdoing: The Moral Limits of the Criminal Law* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 178.

reason is that, in reality, the dominant agent often has strong incentive to extract benefits from her interference with the dominated agent and thus also exploits the latter. But exploitation and domination are conceptually distinct: a person can take unfair advantage of another without arbitrarily interfering with her choices. For example, a sweatshop owner may in some sense expand the choices of a poor unemployed female migrant by offering her an exploitative contract. Domination, on the other hand, may exist without exploitative interactions, for the dominant agent could refrain from interacting with the dominated but still have the ability to interfere at will.

To elaborate the concept of exploitation, let us consider the following key elements of exploitation. (1) *Benefits for the exploiter*: the first element of the concept of exploitation is the benefits to the supposed exploiter. The exploiter must receive some advantages from her interaction with the exploited party. It follows that A cannot exploit B if A fails to gain from her interactions with B although it remains possible that A still mistreats B in some way. Therefore, unlike domination, exploitation requires actual interactions to take place between the supposed exploiter and the exploited party. Also, it is possible to distinguish exploitation from other forms of wrongful gains such as robbery because the exploiter does not have to use

coercion as a means to secure the compliance of the exploited party.

(2) *Effects on the exploited party*: second, whether exploitation would impose harm on the exploited party depends on the benchmark against which we measure the loss or gain of a party from a particular interaction. If one adopts the benchmark of no interaction—the level of well-being each party is expected to enjoy if the interaction never takes place—then the exploited party may actually gain from the unfair interaction in the sense that she is better off than she would be in the situation where no such interaction takes place. Therefore, some cases of exploitation are indeed “mutually advantageous” in the sense that the exploited gains something from the transaction in absolute term. Nonetheless, if one adopts the benchmark of fairness—the level of well-being each party is expected to enjoy if the terms of their transaction are fair—then the exploited party will always be harmed by exploitation because she is made worse off by the interaction as she receives less than what she would have if the terms of the interaction had been fair.⁷¹

(3) *Unfairness*: finally, exploitation involves advantage-taking that is *unfair*. It has been thought that we can determine the fairness of a particular transaction by

⁷¹ David Miller, “Justice and Global Inequality,” in Andrew Hurrell and Ngaire Woods eds., *Inequality, Globalization, and World Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 204-9.

appealing to the standard of an ideal market. On this view, a transaction is unfair to the extent that one party receives less than what she could expect in a situation of a competitive market.⁷² However, it is questionable that standard market price can be used as benchmark for assessing the fairness of a particular interaction. To see this point one only has to consider the cases in which we consider some practices grossly exploitative despite the fact that the transaction takes place at a market equilibrium price. For instance, the practice of child labor is exploitative both to the children themselves and to their families even though the children involved are getting paid according to the market value of their labor. Moreover, there is no reason to assume that the background conditions under which market transactions take place are always fair. For instance, some market may simply reflect the underlying vulnerabilities of some parties because people come to the market with varying resources and they are unequally vulnerable to one another. But sometimes these vulnerabilities cannot be traced back to the deservingness of the parties.⁷³

Instead of appealing to the standard of the market, there are other ways to determine whether particular interactions are fair. There are at least two ways in

⁷² See, for example, Wertheimer, *Exploitation*, and Miller, "Exploitation in the Market."

⁷³ Debra Satz, *Why Some Things Should Not Be for Sale: the Moral Limits of Markets* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 97.

which one can benefit unfairly from one's interaction with another in the global context. First, interactions are unfair to the extent that some people take advantage of others by deriving benefits from their bargaining weakness due to desperate neediness without using the benefits to relieve the destitution that underlies the weakness.⁷⁴ The reason why such interactions are unfair is that people have a prior duty to relieve desperate neediness of others. Therefore, an interaction would be unfair to the needy if, instead of relieving the others' destitution, the stronger parties try to extract benefits from their interaction with the poor.

Second, terms of interactions can be unfair when one party deliberately takes advantage of the injustice done to others. It does not matter whether one is responsible for causing such injustice. For example, the low wages of many developing countries are in fact partly a result of their government's suppression of the workers' right to unionize. To the extent that foreign investors take advantage of such injustice to maximize their profits, they are exploiting these workers.⁷⁵

At first glance, the ideal of non-exploitation does not appear to be an *egalitarian* ideal because it does not require an equal distribution of benefits and burdens arising

⁷⁴ Richard W. Miller, "Global Power and Economic Justice," in Charles R. Beitz and Robert E. Goodin eds., *Global Basic Rights* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 156-80, esp. 160-1.

⁷⁵ Sample, *Exploitation*, pp. 57, 162-4.

from people's interactions. I must concede that the bare fact that some parties benefit more than others from their interaction does not necessarily imply that the interaction is exploitative. However, non-exploitation does express distinctively egalitarian concerns. First, exploitation is incompatible with people's standing as equals in their interactions with others because some parties to that interaction are unfairly disadvantaged for the benefit of others. The reason is that in these exploitative relations, the benefits or privilege of some is gained or sustained through the hardships or restrictions endured by others.⁷⁶ Although it is sometimes the case that the exploited party gains in absolute terms from the interaction, she receives less than she could for no good reason other than her relative vulnerability. Therefore, genuinely egalitarian relations should be free from exploitation. Second, it should also be noted that exploitative interactions are morally objectionable even if it does not push the exploited party below the threshold of minimally decent life. Third, the source of exploitative transaction almost always lies in the power inequality between the parties which enables exploiter to interact with the exploited party on terms that are more favorable to him. This also suggests that the exploited is vulnerable to him either in absolute terms or in the sense that he has little bargaining power relative to

⁷⁶ A similar idea appears in Garrett Cullity, "Equality and Globalization," in in Keith Horton and Haig Patapan eds. *Globalization and Equality* (London: Routledge, 2004), p. 8. But Cullity regards this as an element of domination whereas I think it should be considered an element of exploitation.

that of the potential exploiter in determining the terms of their interaction.⁷⁷ Finally, the distributive consequences of preventing or minimizing the opportunities for exploitative interactions will tend to produce a more equal distribution of benefits among the related parties because the many material inequalities are sustained through exploitative relations.

B. Fair chance to benefit from cooperation

Thus far we have considered one dimension of fair cooperation in collective endeavors. A second dimension of being treated as an equal participant in a scheme of fair cooperation is that each individual participant should have a fair chance to attain the advantages arising from their cooperation. This means that participants should not face morally irrelevant obstacles in attaining the advantages in question and thus be able to enter into cooperative arrangements with others on a footing of equality. Therefore, in order to determine whether those actual or potential participants in a scheme of cooperation have a fair chance to benefit, we need to consider the background conditions against which their interactions take place. Three points of clarification are in order here. First, having a fair chance to benefit from a scheme of cooperation is compatible with requiring the participants to do their part in the

⁷⁷ David Miller, "Justice and Global Inequality," p. 205.

cooperation in order to claim the benefits that flow from such cooperation. Second, what participants should have a fair chance to attain are the advantages arising from the scheme of cooperation, not advantages of any kind. Third, what we should be considering here is a participant's chance to attain certain advantages *if she so chooses*. This means that the idea of a fair chance to benefit from cooperation only aims at granting people the chance to attain certain goods which they remain free not to seize.⁷⁸

Now let us consider the conditions under which participants in a scheme of cooperation can be said to have a fair chance to benefits from their cooperation with others. A participant cannot enjoy a fair chance to benefit from a scheme of interaction when she faces morally irrelevant obstacles in trying to attain the advantages at stake. We can distinguish between two principal forms of morally irrelevant obstacles which compromise people's fair chance to benefit from cooperation.

First, procedural unfairness in determining the terms of cooperation could undermine the chance of some participants to benefit from that cooperation when their

⁷⁸ For this point, see Simon Caney, "Cosmopolitan Justice and Equalizing Opportunities," *Metaphilosophy* 32 (2001): 113-34, at 130.

interests are not duly represented. Some parties may use their vastly superior bargaining power to structure the terms of their future interactions in their own favor, and, as a result, they capture an unjustifiably large share of the benefits arising from their interactions. The unfairness of their actions lies in the fact that the resulting distribution of burdens and benefits cannot be justified to the disadvantaged parties except by appealing to the stronger parties' ability to manipulate the process of institutional design. But their stronger bargaining power does not bear any moral relevance regarding who should get what from that cooperation. Consider how the present world's trading system favors the relatively affluent individuals in the developed countries over those living in poorer societies. One pernicious example is tariff escalation. Developed countries typically apply low tariffs to raw commodities but rapidly rising rates to intermediate and final products. These tariffs effectively transfer revenue from producers in poor countries to agricultural processors and retailers in rich countries. Worse still, tariff escalation confines many developing countries to the export of unprocessed raw material, locking them into a volatile, low value-added raw commodity market.⁷⁹

⁷⁹ United Nations Development Project, *Human Development Report 2005—International Cooperation at a Crossroads: Aid, Trade and Security in an Unequal World* (New York: UNDP, 2005), pp. 126-7.

Second, whether potential participants can enter into cooperative arrangements with others on roughly equal terms could also affect their ability to attain the advantages arising from their cooperation. This is because one's ability to benefit from a cooperative scheme depends on something more than how the rules are defined. Individuals come to cooperate with others with widely varying resources and opportunities to develop their own capacities; and this fact determines their position within the scheme of cooperation from the start and what they can reasonably expect from their cooperation. Therefore, substantive inequalities in their starting places could also undermine people's chances to benefit from cooperation.

To conclude, I have in this section tried to argue that our relation to distant others in the global context should be conducted on the basis of equality as a relational ideal. My point has been that *if* and when we are enmeshed in the kinds of international relationships that currently exist then standing in a relation of equality to one another in the global context has both instrumental *and* non-instrumental values. A relation of equality, as opposed to a relation characterized by domination or exploitation, has non-instrumental values because it reflects our most fundamental moral equality with each other. It has instrumental value because it is consistent with preserving self-respect, enhances freedom from domination, and maintains fair terms of

cooperation among its participants.⁸⁰

4.4 OBJECTIONS AND REPLIES

The attempt to apply the ideal of equality to the relation between individuals belonging to separate political communities invites a number of objections. In what follows I shall discuss four possible objections to my position: (1) the relational approach to global equality gives the wealthy and powerful an incentive to disassociate themselves from the disadvantaged; (2) the relational ideal of equality does not apply globally because *comparisons of social status* are meaningless beyond the state; (3) the relational ideal of equality derives its moral force from the value of being an *equal citizen* in a democratic society; and (4) what we should be striving for in the global context is relational equality among *states*, not individuals.

4.4.1 The Problem of Inclusion and the “Rich Persons Club”

Let me begin with the objection that the relational approach to global equality

⁸⁰ To be sure, I am not arguing that if these relationships do not exist then we should create them.

generates malign incentives. If egalitarian obligations of justice exist only between persons who stand in the relevant sort of relation to each other, the wealthy and powerful can then permissibly lighten their obligations of justice by disassociating themselves from the disadvantaged persons or by eschewing interaction with them.⁸¹

Consider a case in which the relatively affluent persons decide to disassociate themselves from the disadvantaged persons in poorer societies (say, by disinvestment and cutting off trades with poorer societies) and to avoid any future interaction. By retreating to a “rich persons club” the affluent persons are now free from the egalitarian obligations that they previously owed to the disadvantaged. The problem, it may be argued, is that the relational approach treats equality as a “club good”, which is shared only among the parties to certain relations but not those who are excluded from such relations.⁸²

A first response to this objection is that, given the current level of global interdependence, it would be either practically impossible or economically extremely costly for the affluent persons to end their relation with the foreign poor. The

⁸¹ Simon Caney, “Global Poverty and Human Rights: The Case for Positive Duties,” in Thomas Pogge ed., *Freedom from Poverty as a Human Right: Who Owes What to the Very Poor?* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 275-302, esp. 284-6. This argument is originally intended to be a critique of the wholly institutional account of human rights, but I think his point can also be applied to the relational approach to global equality.

⁸² See, for example, Robert Goodin, “Clubbish Justice,” *Politics, Philosophy & Economics* 7 (2008): 233-7.

relatively affluent persons would have to pay the price for their disengagement, such as losing lucrative investment opportunities, cheap imported goods and raw materials, and so on. (But we may expect that the costs for the poor would be much greater which involve prolonged unemployment, economic stagnation, decreased chance of getting out of poverty and even starvation.) In other words, our relation to distant others in the global context is involuntary in the sense that exit is not a realistic option and how this relation is organized has profound impacts from which none of us can escape. However, the critic may still object that the relational approach generates malign incentives because it implies that the wealthy and powerful could permissibly minimize their obligations to the disadvantaged if it were possible to end the relations.⁸³ Thus, we need some other arguments to defend the relational approach from this objection.

To answer this objection, it may be worth stressing that disassociation is not always morally troubling, and it is indeed possible that someone can justifiably reduce what she owes to others by ending their relations unilaterally or refusing to participate in a certain relation with others. There are at least three kinds of these cases.

1. *Unfair treatment*: those who are treated unfairly in their relations to others can

⁸³ Caney, "Global Poverty and Human Rights," p. 285.

choose to disassociate themselves from the other participants. In fact, staying in these relations would be unreasonably demanding to those who are treated unfairly. For example, it would not be disrespectful to leave a friend who simply refuses to reciprocate one's affection and care.

2. *Unethical relationships*: a person can legitimately end her relation with others when the relation in question is morally objectionable. For example, one can legitimately leave a racist organization and renounce any obligations that she formally owes to the other members.

3. *Relationships that harm non-participants*: a person can dissociate herself from an on-going relationship that is not inherently unethical when it imposes unjustifiable harm on outsiders. For instance, a partner of a business venture may decide to leave the company when she discovers that her company is putting the health of others at risk by polluting the environment. In this case, she is not treated unfairly by her partners, and the kind of relationship in which she is involved—business partnership—is not inherently unethical.

Now it seems quite obvious that the rich persons who want to retreat to the “rich persons club” cannot appeal to any of the above conditions to justify their

disassociation, for their action is primarily, if not entirely, motivated by the desire to avoid the obligation to construct their relations to the disadvantaged in ways that respect each other's equal status.

Besides, disassociation would not be morally troubling when some conditions are met. For example: (1) *Humanitarian obligations*: it is important to note that secession of the affluent persons does not imply that they owe nothing to the poor, for they still have duties to help the poor simply in virtue of the extreme neediness of the latter. (2) *Due care*: the affluent persons have a moral obligation to take reasonable steps to ensure their activities do not cause harm to others. This condition implies that the affluent persons should take reasonable steps to ensure that the disassociation process does not cause harm to the disadvantaged persons. For example, instead of seceding from their current state overnight, they may devise a several-year plan that would enable a gradual transition and minimize the disruption of their secession. Also, it implies that after their secession, the affluent persons should take reasonable steps to ensure that their activities do not cause harm to outsiders. (3) *Compensation*: one final condition is that, before the disassociation takes place, the affluent persons should compensate others for past abuses or the harmful effects of their activities. It would certainly be unacceptable if the affluent persons have exploited the poor to

become rich and then seek to disassociate from them without paying proper compensations. When these conditions are satisfied, the retreat to the “rich persons club” would not be as morally problematic as it may first seem.

To sum up, I have argued that disassociation is not always morally troubling, and relational egalitarians can (and should) impose some reasonable restrictions on disassociation to make sure that it is morally acceptable. As such, relational egalitarians can respond to the worry about the “rich persons club” without giving up the relational approach.

4.4.2 Comparisons of Standing are Meaningful Only within a Single Society

The second objection maintains that equality as an ideal for human relations can only apply to a group of persons among whom comparisons of standing and status are possible and meaningful. On this view it is misguided to talk about relation of equality outside the context of a domestic society because no meaningful comparisons of status can be made among individuals living in separate societies. There is no consensus on where people stand in a system of social classes in relation to those living in other communities because the ways in which social ranking can be expressed within a particular community, such as titles, special form of address,

conventional modes of displaying deference, are simply lacking at the global level.⁸⁴

I must first concede that the evils of unequal social relations are most salient when people are made vividly aware of their inferior status in relation to others through everyday encounters. However, this objection rests on the mistaken assumption that standing in a relation of equality is merely about having a comparable social standing or status or about avoiding belittlement in one's social life. If one defines equal status merely as a matter of relative social prestige, then the idea cannot be meaningfully extended to the global sphere. However, standing in a relation of equality is also about how standing in a particular relation to others affects each other's range of options, opportunities to develop their capacities, resources, and vulnerabilities. The value of standing in a relation of equality, as discussed in the previous section, cannot be fully explained by the absence of snobbery or deference usually associated with status inequality. (Similarly, the badness of unequal social relations is certainly not confined to its social divisiveness.) For instance, one can quite plausibly claim that two persons enjoy equal standing in their relation to each other when their pattern of interactions embodies fair terms of cooperation freely

⁸⁴ For these ways of expressing social ranking, see David Miller, "Complex Equality," in David Miller and Michael Walzer eds., *Pluralism, Justice, and Equality* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 197-225, at 207.

arrived at, or when they sincerely regard themselves and each other as an efficacious and undominated agents. These egalitarian considerations cannot simply be reduced to a matter of one's social prestige or status.

4.4.3 Bounded Citizenship and Equality

Another possible objection to my account is that any relation of equality must be *politically* bounded because it can only be grounded in the ideal of equal citizenship. It may be argued that standing in a relation of equality to others is valuable because it is part of the broader ideal of *equal citizenship* in a democratic society. This claim gains further support from a widely shared view that unequal social relations, such as those characterized by a pattern of deference and snobbery, are objectionable because they are incompatible with people's most basic standing as equal citizens in their society. However, if what underpins the ideal of a relation of equality is the concept of equal citizenship, then it makes little sense to extend this ideal to the global context where a world state is absent. The reason is that, as noted by David Miller, "all our experience of citizenship has so far been of bounded citizenship within the walls of the city-state, later citizenship within the cultural limits of the nation state."⁸⁵ Hence,

⁸⁵ Miller, "Bounded Citizenship," in *Citizenship and National Identity* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000), pp. 81-96, at 88.

the relational concept of equality is simply out of place in the global context where people are subject to separate political communities.

In response to this challenge, one could try to defend the idea of cosmopolitan citizenship and argue that it should also be conducted on the basis of equality.⁸⁶ I shall pursue a different strategy and assume for the sake of argument that we cannot even speak of “citizenship” beyond the context of a sovereign state. But even then a relational egalitarian can have two replies to the stated objection. First, this objection misconceives the proper relation between equality as a relational ideal and the demand for equal citizenship. It is not the case that being related to one another as equals is valuable and commends our respect *simply and only* because it is a demand of equal citizenship. Instead, we have reason to value our equal citizenship because it is essential for people to relate to one another as equals when they are members of a same political community. In other words, the importance of equal citizenship—characterized by equal political rights and freedoms, equal rights and freedom within civil society, and equal right to a threshold of economic

⁸⁶ For a discussion of this issue, see James Bohman, “Republican Cosmopolitanism,” *The Journal of Political Philosophy* 12 (2004): 336-52, and Stuart White, “Republicanism, Patriotism and Global Justice,” in Daniel Bell and Avner De-Shalit eds., *Forms of Justice: Critical Perspectives on David Miller’s Philosophy* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003). It should be noted, however, that whether or not the concept of citizenship can be extended to the global context does not affect the points I am making here.

welfare⁸⁷—stems at least partly from our commitment to the relational ideal of equality in the specific context of a political community, not the other way around. Second, to argue that the ideal of equality applies to a particular relation (such as the relation among co-members of a political community) is *not* to claim that such an ideal is somehow confined to that relation. Thus, there is nothing wrong with holding that the relation among citizens should be constructed on the basis of equality while at the same time maintaining that the ideal of equality should also apply to other human relations beyond the context of a single political community.

4.4.4 *International, Not Global, Equality*

The fourth possible objection to my account of global equality is that what matters from an egalitarian point of view at the global level is the relation among *states*. This objection does not seek to challenge the idea that equality is a value beyond the domestic context but it maintains that, at the global level, it should apply to the relation among states, not individuals living in different societies. This version of international egalitarianism could demand effective sovereignty for all states alike, more equitable terms for international cooperation, and the equalizing of influence of

⁸⁷ For this characterization of equal citizenship, see T. H. Marshall, “Citizenship and Social Class,” in *Class, Citizenship and Social Development: Essays by T. H. Marshall* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1997), p. 100.

member states in various international organizations.⁸⁸

This objection draws much of its support from the fact that sovereign states are still the major actors in global politics and it is very likely that the current system of modern states will continue to exist in the foreseeable future. Consequently, what we should be looking for is the international arrangements that ought to exist to regulate the relations among states as they are.⁸⁹ In addition, it is often thought that most, if not all, problems of global injustice actually result either from problematic power relations between states (or between states and other transnational actors) or from the failures of the domestic institutions of some states to defend the legitimate interests of their people vis-à-vis other transnational agents. For example, in WTO trade negotiations, the affluent states are often able to set the trade rules to their own favor which the poor states have no option but to accept; transnational corporations may be able to exploit the workers or to violate their fundamental labor rights due to the

⁸⁸ Alternatively, it can be argued that the proper subjects of such relations are not states but nations or peoples. For example, Rawls argues for “equality among peoples” in *Law of Peoples* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999), pp. 113-15. However, I shall only deal with the statist version of this objection because it occurs to me that both the “people” and the statist versions suffer from the same problems.

⁸⁹ Pettit, “A Republican Law of Peoples,” *European Journal of Political Theory* 9 (2010): 70-94, esp. 70-2. See also Daniel Drezner, *All Politics is Global: Explaining International Regulatory Regimes* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007). Drawing on a number of empirical cases, Drezner contends that the governments of powerful states are still key players in writing global regulations and their preferences determine whether there can be effective global governance in a particular policy arena.

weakness of the domestic institutions of the host country. The appropriate remedy to these injustices, therefore, seems to lie in empowering the poorer countries to defend the legitimate interests of their people and press for more equitable terms of transnational interactions.

However, this objection is not without problems. First of all, it is unclear that a would-be global egalitarian must choose between equality among states as opposed to equality among individuals. As discussed in the second section, existing transnational interactions includes not only the interactions between states or state agencies but also interactions among individuals and non-state actors. Therefore, if bringing about relational equality among states in the global context is sufficient for securing a relation of equality among individuals living in different states, then a would-be global egalitarian does not have to choose between the international or global equality. If, on the other hand, bringing about a relation of equality among states is not sufficient for securing a relation of equality among individuals living in different states, then one needs an argument for why relational equality among individuals or other non-state agents is unimportant in the global context, given that they are subject to a range of shared institutions, display a complex pattern of interactions, and are mutually dependent for the protection of certain fundamental interests.

Second, it may worth bearing in mind that collective entities such as states and private corporations are themselves constituted by groups of individuals. There is no denying that states (or governments) are still the key players in global politics but a closer look at how they operate in the international arena may reveal that private interests can sometimes dominate a state's policies and positions in its negotiation with other governments. This is because government officials can choose to answer only to a highly selected group of individuals in their constituency. Also, it should be noted that non-state actors may sometimes participate in international forums and affect the background rules of transnational interactions in some specific areas. For instance, private-corporate actors may play an important role in negotiations over the details of regulations due to their expertise, resources and interests in specific policy areas.⁹⁰

Even more importantly, what makes the relation among states important from an egalitarian point of view is that it affects the background conditions under which individuals living in different societies can relate to one another as equals. The terms of international cooperation have tremendous impacts on the well-being of those

⁹⁰ Walter Mattli and Ngaire Woods, "In Whose Benefit? Explaining Regulatory Change in Global Politics," in Mattli and Woods eds., *The Politics of Global Regulation* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009), pp. 1-43, esp. 32-6.

individuals living within these states and how they are related to one another. For example, it is morally desirable to strengthen the bargaining power of poorer countries in the international forums precisely because this helps them to defend the rightful interests of their people. This would also bring about more favorable background conditions for those individuals living in the affluent and the poorer countries to relate to one another as equals. That is why we do not normally consider it morally desirable to give equal status to those states whose government is dominated by narrow local interests and is oppressive towards its own people.

4.5 CONCLUSION

In this chapter I have sought to argue that equality as an ideal for human relations should apply in the global context where our relation to distant strangers are structured by a complex set of institutions, interactions and interdependence. More specifically, I argue that equality is a relevant ideal that should govern our relation to distant strangers in the global context because living in a global community of equals is good both intrinsically and instrumentally: it is consistent with our status as equal moral agents and it supports our self-respect, protects freedom from domination, and

promotes fair terms of transnational cooperation. In addition, I have also tried to defend my account of global equality from a number of possible objections. In the next chapter I shall discuss whether the account of global relational equality I defend in this chapter generates any egalitarian distributive commitment as opposed to a more minimal commitment to meeting people's basic needs.

CHAPTER 5

A RELATIONAL ACCOUNT OF EGALITARIAN GLOBAL DISTRIBUTIVE JUSTICE

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The last chapter outlined and defended the ideal of equality that applies to our relations to one another in the global context. In short, relational equality requires that people's relations to one another are structured in ways that are (1) supportive to each other's sense of self-respect, (2) non-dominating, and (3) reflect fair terms of cooperation (which in turn requires (a) absence of exploitation and (b) fair access to the benefits of common endeavor). This ideal has distributive implications. My aim in this chapter is to bring these implications to light by considering what basis for assignments of benefits and burdens a global community of equals would recognize.¹

¹ For a discussion of the distributive implications of the commitment to relations of equality *within the*

In order to do this, this chapter will identify a set of principles of global distributive justice which must be respected for people to stand in a relation of equality to one another in the global context and see if any of these principles can generate any egalitarian distributive commitments, as opposed to the more minimal commitment of meeting people's basic needs—that is, at least some of these principles will place constraints on the permissible range of socio-economic inequalities among individuals living in different countries. I shall argue that, from the point of view of relational egalitarianism, global socio-economic inequality is objectionable to the extent that it undermines people's ability to stand in a relation of equality to one another in the global context. However, I shall not discuss the luck egalitarian arguments against global inequalities because it is my aim to provide an alternative set of arguments for global equality that are distinct from luck egalitarianism. But it should be noted that I am neither endorsing nor rejecting such a position.

Relational egalitarianism is concerned fundamentally with the relation that individuals stand to each other, but it is not indifferent to distributions of goods among individuals. There are three reasons for this.² First, some patterns of

domestic context, see Samuel Scheffler, "Choice, Circumstances, and the Value of Equality," *Politics, Philosophy & Economics* 4 (2005): 5-28, p. 20, and "What is Egalitarianism?" *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 31 (2003): 5-39, pp. 22-3.

² Anderson briefly mentions these reasons in her article; see "What is the Point of Equality?" *Ethics* 109 (1999): 287-337, at 313-14.

distribution are constitutive of people's relations to each another. Consider, for example, the relation among equal citizens in a given political community. Equal political liberties are important to this relation not because they help to further the goal of promoting equal citizenship but because they are part of what it means for citizenship to be equal.

Second, certain distributions of goods are instrumental in bringing about a community of equals while other distributive patterns may work in the opposite direction. For example, significant distributive inequalities in social and economic advantages can all too easily generate inequalities of power and status that are incompatible with a relation of equality.³ It may be objected that the connection between equality as a relational ideal and distributive egalitarianism is merely contingent. However, to say that their connection to each other is contingent upon some facts (for example, the fact that reducing socio-economic inequalities among individuals helps to bring about egalitarian human relations) is not to say that such a connection is non-existent or weak. On the contrary, it seems quite unrealistic to expect that the goal of securing relationships of equality can be achieved without reducing significant inequalities among individuals.

Last but not least, certain distributive patterns of goods may follow from the

³ Scheffler, "What is Egalitarianism?" p. 23; see also Anderson, "What is the Point of Equality?" pp. 317-18.

particular relations that people stand to one another because the terms of such relations have distributive consequences. For example, many inequalities in opportunities, prestige and wealth among individuals in fact result from and are justified by unequal social relations such as exploitation, class or racial discrimination.⁴ Also, it seems reasonable to suppose that promoting relations of equality would help to bring about a more equal distribution of social and economic advantages because such relations tend to improve the relative position of the disadvantaged persons. The disadvantaged persons would have access to the opportunities and resources from which they have been excluded while the advantaged may stand to lose the privileges they previously held. For a relational egalitarian, a particular distribution of goods can be objectionable because it is brought about by relations that are morally objectionable in themselves, and those who are privileged by such relations cannot be said to deserve their current holdings.

Although the egalitarian ideal of human relations does provide a justification for reducing global socio-economic inequalities, it is doubtful that this ideal can be achieved *simply* by transfers of resources from the haves to the have-nots. It is because relational problems may stem not only from inequality of wealth or income

⁴ Iris M. Young, *Justice and the Politics of Difference* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990).

but also from the institutional structure that define one's position in relation to others. Other remedies that do not involve leveling may also be required, such as improving the bargaining situation of the economically vulnerable societies in international negotiations, enhancing human mobility across borders, public spending to enhance the assets of the poor and to extend their market opportunity, and other pro-poor economic policies.⁵ These measures are nonetheless *redistributive* in the sense that they do not only improve the relative positions of the worse off but also seek to eliminate the privileges formerly enjoyed by the better off (for example, their superior bargaining power, competitive advantage in the global market, better opportunities for self-advancement, and so on).⁶ Which measures are most suitable will then depend on our specific goals: for example, whether we want to eliminate exploitative transactions, domination, or promote equality of opportunity.

5.2 BASIC NEEDS AND RELATIONS OF EQUALITY

⁵ United Nations Development Program (UNDP), *Human Development Report 2005—International Cooperation at a Crossroads: Aid, Trade and Security in an Unequal World* (New York: UNDP, 2005), pp. 37-8.

⁶ An *equalizing* policy measure or action is one that reduces distributive inequalities among individuals by leveling up—that is, by making the disadvantaged persons better off than the status quo at least in some aspect, or by leveling down—by making the advantaged persons worse off than the status quo, or both. Thus, a policy can equalize if it simply improves the conditions of the poor but leaves intact the advantages enjoyed by the better off. But a *redistributive* measure is one that tends to make the disadvantaged persons better off *and* the advantaged persons worse off than the status quo. Note that removing the unjustified privileges previously enjoyed by the advantaged persons always makes these persons worse off than the status quo. For this distinction, see G. A. Cohen, *Why Not Socialism?* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008), p. 20.

The first principle that must be respected for individuals to relate to one another as equals in the global context is the principle of basic needs, defined as the following:

The basic needs principle: each person, irrespective of the society to which she belongs, is to have an equal right to the fulfillment of her basic needs without having to subject herself to unequal social relations.

By basic needs I mean the needs a person is presumed to have in order to lead a reasonably healthy and active life of more or less normal length. These include effective access to the means of sustaining one's biological existence—"unpolluted air, unpolluted water, adequate food, adequate clothing, adequate shelter, and minimal preventive public health care."⁷ This principle has been defended by a number of theorists and I do not wish to restate their arguments here.⁸ Instead, my concern in this section is whether there is any egalitarian reason for the acceptance of this principle.

My arguments should be distinguished from the weakly egalitarian argument that inequality is objectionable when some suffer from severe deprivation whereas others

⁷ For this account of basic subsistence rights, see Henry Shue, *Basic Rights: Subsistence, Affluence, and U.S. Foreign Policy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980), p. 23. For an alternative account of basic human needs, see Anderson, "What is the Point of Equality?" pp. 317-18; see also Gillian Brock, *Global Justice: A Cosmopolitan Account* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 70-2.

⁸ See, for example, Shue, *Basic Rights*; Onora O'Neil, *Faces of Hunger: An Essay on Poverty, Justice and Development* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1986); John Rawls, *The Law of Peoples* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), pp. 37, 65; and Charles Jones, *Global Justice: Defending Cosmopolitanism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

enjoy superfluous resources because these sufferings can be avoided “without creating hardships of comparable severity” on the part of the better-off.⁹ A relational egalitarian would support the basic needs principle because being able to function as a human being is a precondition of enjoying an equal standing in one’s relations to others.¹⁰ Absolute deprivation—lacking effective access to the means to fulfill one’s basic needs—inevitably impairs the ability of the poor to stand in a relation of equality with others: first, the poor may have to depend on others for the provision of resources they need desperately; second, the poor often, if not always, lack the ability or resources to contest the terms of interactions they share with others; finally, the poor may also lack the resources to disentangle themselves from oppressive relations. Being badly off in absolute terms is bad in itself, but this state of poverty is bad in a further and separate way (which troubles relational egalitarians) because being badly off makes a person vulnerable to being treated as inferior. For example, their neediness can be taken advantage of by others, gives rise to a kind of dependency that allows others to exercise unacceptable control over their lives, or leads to humiliation. Therefore, this constitutes a kind of “double jeopardy.” Admittedly, being subject to

⁹ T. M. Scanlon, “The Diversity of Objections to Inequality,” in his *The Difficulty of Tolerance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 203-4. For an application of this point to the global context, see Charles Beitz, “Does Global Inequality Matter?” in Thomas W. Pogge ed., *Global Justice* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), pp. 106-22, at 110-14.

¹⁰ Anderson, “What is the Point of Equality?” pp. 317-18; see also Scheffler, “What is Egalitarianism?” pp. 22-3.

unequal social relations such as relations of domination or exploitation would certainly make a person's life goes worse, but what matters from an egalitarian perspective is that these relations fail to respect the weaker parties' status as equal moral agents and so the badness of these relations cannot be reduced to the fact that they push some people below a certain threshold of well-being.¹¹

All these considerations seem to apply in the global context as well as domestic ones. To see this, consider the following examples: first, transnational pharmaceutical firms often decide to conduct in developing countries clinical trials that cannot, for ethical reasons, be conducted in developed countries. Exploitation often occur in these clinical trials because (1) in these trials, effective treatment available in the sponsoring country is not provided to the control group in the developing country; and (2) although the pharmaceutical forms can make huge profits from the results, they have no plan for providing making the new products available or to enhance the health care provision in the communities where the research was conducted. As such, these transnational pharmaceutical firms take advantage of the potential subjects' desperate neediness and benefit from it by conducting clinical trials which would not be

¹¹ To illustrate: imagine a case in which a group people living in an isolated world are facing starvation. Let us assume further that there is no realistic chance of interacting with the outside world. Surely the situation is morally bad because these people are badly off in absolute terms. But they are not vulnerable to unequal social relations such as those characterized by domination or exploitation.

permissible in developed countries due to ethical reasons. For instance, in 2000 a private U.S. pharmaceutical company, Discovery Labs, conducted a double blinded, randomized placebo-controlled trial for a new drug called Surfaxin in Bolivia. The new drug is developed for curing respiratory distress syndrome (RDS)—a common and potentially fatal disease in premature infants that is caused by insufficient surfactant in the lungs. There are other drugs that are known to be effective in curing RDS but they are generally unavailable in developing countries due to high prices. Instead of doing an active-controlled trial (in which the infants in the control group would be given the other drugs), Discovery Labs decided to conduct a placebo-controlled trial in which the infants are either given air suffused with Surfaxin or air without any drug. The parental consent was required for the participation in this study and the parents were willing to participate because it improves survival by providing treatments that were not generally available in Bolivia prior to the study. The Bolivian hospitals were selected because they could not routinely provide treatment for RDS yet were of sufficient quality to support and run the more elaborate intensive care unit. However, the target market for Surfaxin was the U.S. and Europe, and the company had no plans for marketing the drug in Latin America.¹² The drug company clearly took advantage of the desperate need of the

¹² For the details of this case, see Jennifer S. Hawkins and Ezekiel J. Emanuel eds., *Exploitation and Developing Countries: The Ethics of Clinical Research* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008), pp. 58-62.

parents in Bolivia whose infants suffered from RDS to conduct a clinical trial that would not have been permitted by the authority if it had been attempted in a developed country.

Second, the affluent countries, corporations, and individuals can often take advantage of the desperate neediness of the foreign poor to shape global rules and institutions in their own favor through their superior bargaining power and expertise. This creates a vicious spiral: such rules enable the rich to capture a disproportionate share of global economic growth which makes it more difficult for the poor to escape from poverty and this in turn gives them greater influence to tilt these rules even further for their own benefit.¹³ For example, the WTO rules of the TRIP agreement exacerbate global inequalities in access to life-saving medicines by assigning a monopolistic pricing power to a few transnational pharmaceutical firms. This could have catastrophic impacts on societies facing the HIV/AIDS pandemic but the global poor who are most affected have very limited bargaining power to dispute such arrangements.¹⁴

¹³ Thomas W. Pogge, "Why Inequality Matters," in David Held and Ayse Kaya eds., *Global Inequality: Patterns and Explanations* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007), pp. 132-47, esp. 138.

¹⁴ Ryao Chung, "Domination and Destitution in an Unjust World: the HIV/AIDS Pandemic in Sub-Saharan Africa," in Daniel Weinstock ed., *Global Justice, Global Institutions* (Calgary, Canada: University of Calgary Press, 2005), pp. 311-34. See also Paul Farmer, *Pathologies of Power: Health, Human Rights, and the New War on the Poor* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2005).

This principle may seem too minimal and so that my view is therefore indistinguishable from the sufficiency view. However, the basic needs principle proposed above demands that people are entitled to the means that satisfy their basic needs *without having to submit themselves to any unequal social relations*. This means that the principle of basic needs endorsed by relational egalitarians would condemn as unjust any institutional arrangement that places an individual in the position where the only alternative to acute poverty is to submit herself to exploitative, dominating or otherwise oppressive social relations.

For example, many job seekers in less developed countries prefer working in sweatshops to acute poverty in the rural area. The principle of basic needs, as formulated above, would not be satisfied even though they are able to meet their basic needs because the only alternative to absolute deprivation is to work under exploitative terms. The rationale for adding such a proviso to the principle of basic needs is perhaps obvious: if part of the reason why basic needs deprivation is objectionable is that it undermines a person's ability to stand as an equal in her relations to others, we should care not just about whether her basic needs are met but also whether she is forced by her poverty to subordinate herself to others in order to subsist.

5.3 GLOBAL INEQUALITY AND SELF-RESPECT

Before turning to the other principles of global justice that may follow from the commitment to relational equality, let us explore the connection between self-respect and socio-economic inequality at the global level. The previous chapter argued that it is part of the ideal of being related to one another as equals that people should be able to maintain their sense of self-respect. But it remains unclear whether the preservation of self-respect places limits on the permissible degree of global socio-economic inequality.

It has been suggested that, within a given society, gross socio-economic inequality is objectionable in part because it tends to weaken self-respect, and particularly the self-respect of the worse-off.¹⁵ But does this dynamic operate at the *global* level where the degree of material inequalities is even more dramatic? Charles Beitz contends that global inequality weakens the self-respect of the worse off and he gives three arguments in support of this claim: (1) the global poor often live in

¹⁵ Scanlon, "The Diversity of Objections to Inequality," pp.50-1; see also Martin O'Neill, "What Should Egalitarians Believe?" p.123.

societies where there are conspicuous local extremes of wealth; (2) the levels of poverty found in many third-world cities are inconsistent with a sense of oneself as an active agent, capable of taking effective command of the conduct of one's life; (3) with the expansion and increased penetration of the global media, it is implausible to hold that people are either unaware of or indifferent to the standards of living found in other societies.¹⁶

The first thing to note about these arguments is that neither (1) nor (2) is about how global inequality may weaken the sense of self-respect of the worse-off. Beitz's first argument claims that the global poor may have a weakened sense of self-respect due to conspicuous local extremes of wealth but what this implies is simply that we have reason to object to the degree of material inequalities found *within* some poor societies. His second argument shows that absolute poverty weakens the sense of self-respect on the part of the poor by having a debilitating effect on autonomy but it says little about inequality beyond a minimal threshold of sufficiency.

Only the last argument, then, is concerned with the possible consequence of gross inequality of people's living standards across societies. It may be thought that globalization contributes to the sharpening of the perception of inequality by

¹⁶ Beitz, "Does Global Inequality Matter?" pp. 114-16.

heightening mutual awareness of the differences in income and wealth across societies and showing a fundamental human similarity between them. It is possible that such awareness of massive inequality would make the poor feel more deprived by changing the reference point upward.¹⁷ Moreover, judging from the fact that a vast number of people living in the developing world are trying to migrate to affluent countries either legally or illegally, it is quite possible that many people are aware of disparity of living standards between the developing and the developed worlds.

I believe these points have some truth but I also want to add a note of caution here. Although there is some indirect evidence suggesting that gross material inequality within a given society can compromise the self-respect of the worse off, whether global inequality in socio-economic terms produces similar effects has not been demonstrated empirically.¹⁸ Therefore, one must be careful not to exaggerate the impacts of global inequality on the preservation of self-respect: penetration of the global media is rather selective and mainly concentrates in the developed world. So

¹⁷ This point is also raised by Branko Milanovic and Robert Wade respectively. See Milanovic, *Worlds Apart: Measuring International and Global Inequality* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005), p. 155; and Wade, "Should We Worry about Income Inequality?" in David Held and Ayse Kaya eds. *Global Inequality: Patterns and Explanations* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007), pp. 118-19.

¹⁸ See Richard G. Wilkinson, *The Impact of Inequality: How to Make Sick Societies Healthier* (London: Routledge, 2005), esp. pp. 93-100, 155-60. Summarizing a large amount of empirical findings, he suggests in more unequal societies the worse off (those with lower socio-economic status) tend to have a less secured sense of self-respect because they experience and show a higher level of social anxiety as a result of having their sense of self-worth challenged as part of their everyday experience.

many of the world's poor (particularly the worse off among them) who are unaffected by increasing global information flow are not exposed to the opulent life-style found in affluent societies.

Although for the moment it remains uncertain whether the consideration of self-respect calls for inequality-reduction at the global level, it does not follow that we should accept Rawls' claim that the world is divided into a plurality of "noncomparing groups" the inequality among which is irrelevant from the standpoint of justice.¹⁹ First, nothing in my discussion prevents people from insisting that *if* global inequality compromises self-respect, it should be reduced. This is important because people's perception of global inequality may change overtime as globalization proceeds. To this point we may add that there is little reason for thinking that people living in poorer societies *ought* to be indifferent to the disparity between their own living standards and the living standards of those who live in the affluent world. Suppose some poor people do feel ashamed of their relative poverty as a result of their perception of the affluent life-style common in other societies.

Finally, there are other objections to excessive global inequality that do not depend on the fact that the worse off are likely to feel ashamed or indignant because

¹⁹ Rawls, *The Law of Peoples* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), pp. 470-1.

of their relative poverty. For instance, the consideration of preventing transnational domination may place significant constraints on the permissible degree of global socio-economic inequality. I shall consider some of these objections in the sections that follow.

To conclude, although we cannot be certain that preservation of self-respect calls for greater global equality, this is not the only consideration against excessive global inequalities. In the next three sections, I shall discuss other principles of global distributive justice that may follow from the commitment to equality as a relational ideal at the global level.

5.4 EQUALIZING OPPORTUNITIES GLOBALLY

In the previous chapter I argued that, for people to stand in a relation of equality to one another, they must have fair access to the benefits arising from their shared institutions and practices. This ideal of fair access is a condition that must be met for people to be treated as *equal participants* in the institution or practice that affects their fundamental interests and it implies that individuals should be free from morally arbitrary obstacles in attaining the benefits created and regulated by the institution in

question. This requirement, I shall argue, generates a demand for equality of opportunity which states that A and B would enjoy an *equal* chance to attain certain specific goods when none of them faces morally arbitrary obstacles to the attainment of such goods. Therefore, in addition to securing the basic needs of all persons without imposing objectionable forms of human relationships, we should adopt the following principle:

*The principle of global equality of opportunity: when engaged in economic cooperation one has a duty to ensure that the other participants can have a roughly equal chance to attain the benefits of their cooperation, if they so choose.*²⁰

This section aims to show that this conception of equality of opportunity is in fact grounded in the ideal of fair access to the benefits of shared institutions and practices as applied to the global economic context. Two preliminary points may be in order here. First, the idea of equality of opportunity that I am going to defend in this section is distinct from the formal requirement of “career opens to talent” because it is also sensitive to background conditions under which individuals can develop their talents.²¹ A second point to note is that equality of opportunity is a procedural, rather than an outcome-related concept, while outcomes can serve as a useful indicator:

²⁰ For this “competitive” conception of global equality of opportunity, see Sylvie Loriaux, “Global Equality of Opportunity: A Proposal,” *Journal of International Relations and Development* 11 (2008): 1-28.

²¹ In Rawls’ terminology, the idea of equality of opportunity that I am going to defend is a form of “fair equality of opportunity”. See Rawls, *Justice as Fairness*, p. 44.

when a certain group of individuals fare disproportionately worse than others under the existing institutions and practices, we may reasonably suspect that they have worse opportunities.²²

In the rest of this section, I shall argue that the demand for fair access to the benefits of shared institutions, when applied to the global economic context, gives rise to a principle of global equality of opportunity. Next, I shall defend global equality of opportunity from a number of critics.

5.4.1 Fair Access to the Benefits of Global Economic Integration

Let us now turn to the case of global economic cooperation. The question is this: to the extent that individuals in different societies are participants in a global economic order, what is required for them to have fair access to the benefits of global economic integration? I shall present a three-fold answer to this question: (1) I shall identify the benefits that are produced and regulated by the global economic order to which individuals should have fair access; (2) I shall discuss what counts as morally arbitrary factors that should not affect one's chances to attain the benefits of global

²² Caney, "Cosmopolitan Justice and Equalizing Opportunities," p.124.

economic integration; and (3) I shall consider whether this conception of fair access can be rightly regarded as demanding some form of global equality of opportunity.

Global economic integration has brought about many valuable economic opportunities—most importantly the opportunities of attaining positions of social and economic advantages, and the chance to take part in meaningful productive activities. These are the benefits which each participant in the global economic order has reason to want and their existence depends on the coordination of the activities of a large number of individuals from around the world. Our task here is to identify the conditions under which individuals from different societies can have fair access to these benefits. To do this, we must decide what counts as morally arbitrary obstacles that participants in the global economic order should be free from in attaining the benefits of global economic integration.

One possible answer is that an obstacle is morally arbitrary because when it stems from a person's circumstances for which she cannot be held responsible.²³ According to this conception of moral arbitrariness, place of birth or nationality should not affect people's ability to attain the benefits of global economic cooperation

²³ Here I shall bracket the questions about immigration and citizenship, for example, on what basis a political community may justifiably accept or exclude potential immigrants, and whether immigrants have fair access to citizenship. These questions are beyond the scope of this dissertation. Instead, I shall assume that citizenship of the political community is reasonably inclusive and no groups are permanently denied the chance of becoming citizens.

because these properties are not chosen. In our present context, however, whether a particular factor should be considered morally arbitrary—and thus should not affect a person’s ability to attain the benefits in question—does not depend on whether this factor is something for which the person can be reasonably held responsible. For example, it is reasonable to think that positions of authority requiring expertise should be assigned to those with the appropriate skills and talents (and can thus perform the required tasks well) despite that they cannot be responsible for their natural talents.

Therefore, we need to consider an alternative conception of moral arbitrariness which suggests that a certain fact about a person’s situation is morally arbitrary if it does not track any morally relevant properties of that person.²⁴ But how do we decide what is a morally relevant property and what is not in a particular relational context? To answer this question, one may appeal to the reasons one has to value the institution or practice that distributes the benefits under discussion: a property is morally arbitrary if it bears no relevance to the reasons why the institution or practice is valued. To address this question, let us consider some possible reasons for valuing global economic integration: (1) it enables vast numbers of people from across the

²⁴ For this notion of moral arbitrariness, see Caney, “Cosmopolitanism and Justice,” in Thomas Christiano and John Christman eds. *Contemporary Debates in Political Philosophy* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2009), pp. 396-7.

world to cooperate with one another or to adjust their activities for mutual advantage without the need for a central planning authority; (2) it creates valuable economic opportunities by (a) allowing agents from different societies to coordinate with one another and take advantage of the complementarities of the distribution of natural talents in a system of voluntary exchange²⁵, and (b) providing incentives for better performance of productive tasks by rewarding hard work, skills, entrepreneurship and innovation (3) it can enhance the freedom of the agents by enhancing their freedom to engage in transactions with others, to decide where to work, what to produce, and what to consume.²⁶ These are the reasons which can presumably shared by all participants in the global economic order. That is, of course, not to say that the present process of economic globalization is actually reflecting these ideals, let alone implying that transnational economic integration is always a force for good. The point here is that the global economic order, when properly structured and regulated, *could* become a system of fair cooperation among equal participants from different societies.

Given the reasons we have for valuing global economic integration, it is reasonable to hold that a person's talents and industriousness are morally relevant

²⁵ Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, p. 87.

²⁶ For this point as applied to domestic economic orders, see Debra Satz, *Why Some Things Should Not Be for Sale: the Moral Limits of Markets* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 21-6.

properties with respect to her chance to benefit of the global economic order. It is because global economic cooperation is desirable partly because it allows a more beneficial use of the distribution of individuals' talents and provides incentive for better performance of productive tasks. By contrast, it is much more problematic to suggest that one's place of residence should be treated as a morally relevant characteristic because people living in different societies can in principle develop and use their talents in a way that is beneficial to themselves and other participants in the global economic order.²⁷

In order to identify the specific obstacles that global equality of opportunity should aim to remove, we can consider the ways in which one's opportunities to benefit from the global economic order may be restricted by her place of residence. First, individuals may have a worse chance to benefit from global economic interactions because of procedural unfairness in the shaping of global rules and institutions. The affluent countries, corporations, or individuals can shape the rules of the global economic order in their own favor through their superior bargaining powers and expertise.²⁸

²⁷ Loriaux, "Global Equality of Opportunity," pp. 18-22.

²⁸ Ibid., pp. 12-15.

Second, a person may have a worse chance to benefit from global economic integration because she lives in a society lacking the capacity to provide her with the resources necessary to acquire and develop talents that would enable her to succeed in market competition. To address this kind of obstacle requires substantial investment in human development including education, healthcare, governance structure, infrastructures, and so on.²⁹ This is not a formal or negative conception of equal opportunity but something that resembles fair equality of opportunity in the domestic context, which states that “those who have the same level of talent and ability and the same willingness to use these gifts should have the same prospects of success regardless of social class of origin.”³⁰

This account of fair access to the benefits of global economic interactions amounts to a form of equality of opportunity according to which two persons enjoy an equal opportunity to attain certain goods when they are free from certain morally arbitrary obstacles in attaining such goods.³¹ This conception of equality of opportunity, when applied to the global economic context, maintains that all equally talented and motivated persons who participate in the global economic order should

²⁹ Ibid., pp. 15-16.

³⁰ Rawls, *Justice as Fairness: A Restatement* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), p. 44. See also Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, revised edition (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1999), pp. 72-3.

³¹ For a similar account of equal opportunity, see Peter Westen, “The Concept of Equal Opportunity,” *Ethics* 95 (1985): 837-50.

have a roughly equal chance to enjoy the benefits of global economic interactions, irrespective of the society to which they belong.³² Therefore, in order to ensure that the participants of the global economic order can have fair access to the benefits of global economic integration, we should endorse the principle of global equality of opportunity stated earlier in this section.

My argument for global equality of opportunity can therefore be summarized as follows: standing in a relation of equality involves a commitment to fair terms of cooperation in collective endeavors, which means that individuals should have fair access to the benefits of their shared institutions and practices. This idea of fair access, when applied to the global economic context, requires that people should enjoy equality of opportunity to benefit from the global economic order if they so choose without the hindrance of morally arbitrary obstacles—in our case, their place of residence.

5.4.2 Possible Objections to Global Equality of Opportunity

Since the idea of fair equality of opportunity is a controversial principle even in the domestic context, one should not expect that it would be any less controversial in the

³² Loriaux, “Global Equality of Opportunity.”

global context. So it is important for me to defend the conception of global equality of opportunity I have just outlined from a number of objections that may be raised against it.

The first possible objection to global equality of opportunity is that what we should aim at in the global context is securing a *decent*, instead of equal, set of opportunity for all. As Gillian Brock puts it,

“the decent, not the equal, set of opportunities is surely the primary goal, because consider how we could easily equalize downwards, so that everyone has the same opportunities, yet these are hopelessly inadequate...if faced with the option of equal but poor life options, or a situation in which, though there is some inequality of access, everyone has access to developing a range of skills sufficient for earning a living... we should sure choose the second situation.”³³

The question that remains to be answered is what standard we should adopt to determine the level of this decent opportunity. Whether the ideal of *decent* opportunities is attractive depends to a large extent on how the threshold is set. Suppose the threshold for decent opportunity is minimal, then it would allow people to fare much worse than others in capturing the benefits of global economic integration for no reason other than that of their place of birth. On the other hand, if the threshold is rather high, then allowing for unequal opportunities is much less troubling, but this will make Brock’s position much less distinguishable from that of

³³ Brock, *Global Justice*, p. 62, see also p. 301.

global equality of opportunity.³⁴ More important, this ideal of decent opportunity has counter-intuitive consequences because it may sanction unjustifiable inequality of opportunities among individuals. Consider, for example, the income differential between men and women: jobs categorized as “women’s work” tend to be more poorly paid than those categorized as men’s even where the skills required to carry out the former are greater.³⁵ This seems to me that such inequalities of opportunity are objectionable even if women enjoy a decent set of opportunities. Moreover, it does not follow from the rejection equalizing downward that we should reject the idea of equality of opportunity all together because one cannot eliminate inequality in opportunity by leveling down. Equalizing opportunities in the global context involves removing, rather than imposing, certain morally arbitrary barriers that prevent some people from attaining the goods at stake. A final point: the argument for decent opportunity does not in itself tell us why one’s nationality or civic identity, which in most cases is determined by one’s place of birth, should serve as an appropriate basis of assigning economic advantages in the global context.

The second objection, related to the first, is that the institutional reforms that are

³⁴ For this point against the sufficiency view in general, see Caney, “Cosmopolitanism and Justice,” pp. 400-01.

³⁵ For this example, see Anne Philips, *Which Equalities Matter?* (Cambridge: Polity, 1999), p. 64.

required to bring about global equality of opportunity, such as ensuring that global economic rules reflects the interests of the poor, and reducing inequalities in the background conditions of education and training in different societies, in practice, converge with the more modest view of securing decent opportunity. So, according to this objection, it is more appropriate to characterize my account as supporting decent opportunity for all than having the higher pretensions of offering a more robust ideal of achieving global equality of opportunity.³⁶ It should be conceded that, given the current level of global poverty, any sensible proposal for equalizing opportunities across societies would have to address the problem of severe poverty that is enduring in the developing world. However, the point is not that both positions would recommend the same things in practice but the reasons why they are concerned with enhancing people's opportunities. If our goal is merely to achieve a decent set of opportunity for all, as Brock claims, then we would be quite indifferent to the remaining inequality of opportunity when everyone reaches a certain threshold. If we adopt a principle of equality of opportunity because of the concern for fair access to the goods of global economic integration, then we are bound to care about unequal opportunities even after reaching the point where no one suffer from inadequate opportunities.

³⁶ Brock, *Global Justice*, p. 63.

A third challenge to global equality of opportunity is that it is unjustifiably exclusive. It may be argued that contemporary global economic integration is less pervasive than my arguments has assumed: the bulk of economic activities still take place on a national or regional scale; direct foreign investment (FDI) continues to be mainly in the advanced industrial countries and not in less developed ones; and trade continues to involve mainly Europe, Japan, North America (and perhaps China and India).³⁷ So if the right to equality of opportunity is grounded in one's participation in the global economy, it would have to leave out a large number of individuals, often the most vulnerable, who are involuntarily excluded from the global economic process.

To this I have three replies. First, economic globalization is more intense and pervasive than these critics suppose so this worry is out of place in our actual world. As noted in the last chapter, there is much evidence for holding that individuals everywhere in the world are inescapably enmeshed in the global economic order in the sense that their fundamental interests are profoundly affected by how it is organized. Second, non-participants in the global economic order, if any, are not excluded from the scope of our moral concern. We do owe some moral duties to these

³⁷ For this empirical conjecture, see Paul Hirst and Grahame Thompson, *Globalization in Question* (Cambridge: Polity, 1999).

non-participants, such as the duty to provide assistance in cases of extreme neediness; the duty to take reasonable steps to ensure our activities do not cause harm to these individuals; and finally the duty to compensate them for any harmful effects of our activities. Third, my claim is not that people should enjoy equality of opportunity because they have engaged in cooperation and produced some goods together, and, in fact, the putative beneficiaries of equality of opportunity are those who have not yet participated in the economic system.³⁸ The point of equality of opportunity is to enable persons to participate in the economic system on roughly equal terms so that one would not be disadvantaged by morally arbitrary factors when one enters in the market. Therefore, one's right to equality of opportunity cannot depend on any prior engagement in the productive activities.

My approach in this section has been to start with the idea of relational equality which requires that people should be treated as equal participants in the institutions and practices to which they are subject. This in turn requires that they have fair access to the goods governed by such institutions and practices. The question is whether this commitment to fair access to the goods of shared institutions and practices entails any egalitarian principle of distributive justice. I argue that it does because it generates a commitment to the principles of global equality of opportunity. If my arguments are

³⁸ Caney, "Cosmopolitan Justice and Equalizing Opportunities," pp. 133-4.

sound, then the commitment to the relational conception of equality would give us reason to adopt a principle which gives people a roughly equal chance to benefit from the global economic order if they so choose regardless of their nationality or civic identity.

5.5 PREVENTING EXPLOITATION AS A SOURCE OF GLOBAL INEQUALITY

Having considered three relational arguments, I turn in this section to *non-exploitation* as an important aspect of the ideal of global relational equality. In short, exploitation involves one person's taking advantage of another person (or that person's situation or attribute) and benefiting unfairly from their interaction. At first glance, the ideal of non-exploitation seems to require us to adopt a principle of justice against exploitative interactions in the global realm. Consider first the following principle:

The principle of non-exploitation: each person, irrespective of the society to which she belongs, is to have a right not to be exploited by other agents and the global institutional order should as far as possible be designed to uphold this right. (Strict prohibition)

This principle seems to be a direct embodiment of the ideal of non-exploitation as it

states that if an interaction is exploitative it should not be permitted. Also, the principle implies that any inequality in social and economic advantages arising from exploitative interactions is unjust as it involves a violation of at least some people's right.

Nonetheless, there is a worry that strict prohibition may undermine the interests of the disadvantaged persons because under such prohibition they may be even worse off overall if they are not exploited. The point is that exploitative interactions can sometimes make the exploited party better off overall than the situation of no interaction. This is because the potential exploiters may simply decide to walk away from their interactions with these persons. For example, it has often been claimed that higher wages and better labor standards will lead to less investment and thus few jobs available which would be a worse outcome for the job seekers in poorer societies than exploitation.³⁹ Further, the worse off can have no moral complaint against the better off because the latter have no prior obligation to interact with them in the first place.

Faced with these concerns, we could make a distinction between harmful and mutually advantageous exploitation. No doubt the global institutional order should

³⁹ For this point, see Ian Maitland, "The Great Non-Debate over International Sweatshops," in Tom L. Beauchamp, Norma E. Bowie, and Denis G. Arnold eds., *Ethical Theory and Business*, 8th edn. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2009), pp. 597-607. Maitland also argues that it is ethically acceptable to pay market wage rates in developing countries even if the wages pay less than living wages or subsistence or the local minimum wage as long as it is freely accepted by the workers. (p. 607)

seek to prevent *harmful* exploitation—that is, the exploitative interactions that tend to render the exploited party worse off *overall* than she would be in absence of the interaction. But it is not so obvious that *mutually advantageous* transnational exploitation—in which the exploited party is made better off *overall* by the interaction in question—should also be prohibited. Therefore, it may be thought that although exploitation is a *prima facie* wrong, it is in some situations permissible *all-things-considered* and therefore we are not justified in interfering with exploitation in these cases. Now we may consider a revised principle of non-exploitation:

The principle of non-exploitation: exploitative interactions are morally acceptable if and only if they are (a) to the advantage of the exploited party and (b) voluntarily agreed at. (Partial permission)

This principle condemns exploitative interactions only when they tend to make the exploited party worse off overall than they would be in the absence of such interactions. It may appear that the interests of the exploited party are better served because they are free to accept exploitative offers that nonetheless improve their conditions (as compared with the baseline of no interaction). The idea here is that although exploitation always constitutes some harm to the exploited party in the sense that they are treated unfairly by others, being exploited may still be a better option for them than *no interaction* at all and so it is perfectly rational for them to choose to

accept exploitative offers.

Nonetheless, the principle of partial permission is not without its own problems. The first, and the most obvious, problem is that this principle is inconsistent with the relational ideal of equality because it states explicitly that exploitation is permissible insofar as it also benefits the exploited party. As I argued in the previous chapter, however, the exploited party is not treated as an equal participation in her interaction with the exploiter.⁴⁰ Therefore, it is doubtful that the principle of partial permission is compatible with the commitment to promoting relations of equality in the global context.⁴¹ But this supposed conflict between protecting people from exploitation and improving the situation of the worse off may be just used to criticize the ideal of non-exploitation. Let me call this the argument for permissible exploitation.

Central to the argument for permissible exploitation is the assumption that the benefits a potential exploiter can expect from a fair transaction are *often* insufficient to motivate them to interact with others; therefore, prohibition of exploitation will

⁴⁰ For example, exploitation represents a relation within which some gain at the expense of the others by taking unfair advantage of the latter; exploitation can always be traced back to the power inequality between the exploiter and the exploited party; and exploitative interactions tend to reinforce or worsen the existing inequalities of advantages between the parties to those interactions.

⁴¹ Maybe we should permit mutually advantageous exploitation to take place under unjust or non-ideal conditions, but this should not become a principle in a just world. For this point, see Alan Wertheimer, "Exploitation in Clinical Research," in Jennifer S. Hawkins and Ezekiel J. Emanuel eds., *Exploitation and Developing Countries: The Ethics of Clinical Research* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008), pp. 63-104, esp. 84. See also Robert Mayer, "What's Wrong with Exploitation?" *Journal of Applied Philosophy* 24 (2007): 137-48.

reduce future interactions and that would make the already vulnerable persons even worse off.⁴² Two points undermine this assumption. One is empirical and the other is normative.

Let us start with the empirical point first. It is true that investments will be less profitable for the former exploiters if they are not allowed to take unfair advantage of the people living in underdeveloped countries, but there is no reason to think that they would *drastically* reduce their investments. For example, if one looks at the profit margins of most brand-name retailers in the apparel industry and the incomes of their management as compared with the income of those further down in the line of production, it will be hard to insist that there is no room for these corporations to change their exploitative practice. Admittedly, many firms and individuals involved in exploitative practices operate in a highly competitive environment and none of them can, by itself, offer fair terms of interactions to the poor without the risk of losing its competitiveness. However, a principle of non-exploitation that seeks to impose similar constraints on all economic actors globally may actually reduce the burdens of non-exploitation for the potential exploiters.⁴³ To this we may add that *the basic*

⁴² The point here is not that these potential exploiters will stop interacting with the poor but that they are less likely to agree to fair interactions in the future.

⁴³ Iris M. Young, *Responsibility for Justice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 130-1. To be sure, these firms and individuals always have the choice to exit the competition rather than exploit

needs principle proposed earlier in this chapter will protect the fundamental interests of the global poor, and so to the extent that this principle is respected prohibiting exploitative interactions will not lead to basic needs deprivation.

In addition to the empirical point, it may also be argued that the above assumption is morally problematic. It should be noted that the potential exploiters are at least partly responsible for background situation which makes the acceptance of mutually advantageous exploitative offers a rational option for the disadvantaged persons. Interfering with mutually advantageous exploitation will undermine the interests of the exploited party only because the exploiters prefer non-interaction to fair cooperation. But this preference is itself morally problematic. Instead of offering fair terms of cooperation, the potential exploiters use their greater ability to walk away from the deal as a threat to advance their own interests even further at the expense of the disadvantaged persons. This is particularly objectionable when the advantaged party can also benefit from fair interactions. Finally, the adoption of this principle may create an incentive for the potential exploiters to propose exploitative terms of interactions to others: instead of proposing fair terms of cooperation, they can now *morally permissibly* extract benefits from the vulnerability of others by interacting with them on terms that make them just better off than the situation of no

others, but this choice does not seem to improve the conditions of the disadvantaged persons.

interaction.

To address this concern, let us consider yet another principle of non-exploitation:

The principle of non-exploitation: (a) the global institutional order should be designed to minimize the occurrence of transnational exploitation; and (b) inequality of social and economic advantages arising from exploitative interactions are to be arranged to reduce the probability of future exploitation.

This principle has two parts. The first part states that global rules and institutions should be designed to prevent exploitative interactions from taking place whether they benefit the exploited party or not so that it is different from the principle of partial permission discussed above. The reason is that the commitment to promoting relations of equality in the global context entails a rejection of transnational exploitation. Any transnational institutional arrangement that sanctions or even encourages exploitative interactions to take place across borders would be incompatible with the ideal of a global community of equals. The second part states that the socio-economic inequalities arising from exploitative interactions are unjust unless they work to reduce to probability of future exploitation. This implies that those who have benefited unfairly from exploitative interactions are under a special obligation to support the measures that would improve the situations of the disadvantaged persons worldwide to reduce their vulnerability to exploitative offers. Unfair benefits, as noted

in last chapter, are essential to any exploitative interaction and they almost always work to exacerbate the existing socio-economic inequalities between the exploiters and the exploited parties. Therefore, those who have benefited from exploitative interactions are under an obligation to use such benefits to reduce others' vulnerability to exploitative proposals. These persons include not only those who have engaged in exploitative interactions with others such as investors or corporate management but also those who have received benefits as the result of such interactions. For example, many ordinary consumers in the developed world do not themselves exploit foreign workers but they still benefit from such practices because they can now buy cheaper imported goods produced by others under exploitative conditions.

Many international labor activists have suggested that greater economic integration is to be blamed for the increase in transnational exploitation. But a number of empirical studies have shown that multinational production can be either good or bad for labor rights depending on how the production process is organized. Subcontracting production relationships, in which transnational corporations (TNCs) rely on subcontractor firms to assemble and produce goods, will have negative impacts on worker's rights and working conditions. These production relationships are largely driven by cost considerations and produce downward pressure for lower labor costs. As such, firms have material incentives to reduce demands for wages and

better working conditions by restricting labor rights; and governments can meet the demands of firms for lower production costs by not providing, or not enforcing these rights. As a result, developing countries which are very integrated into the global economy in terms of production for export, but whose production are mostly operated by local subcontractors for TNCs, are likely to have worse labor standards.⁴⁴ By contrast, directly owned multinational production, or foreign direct investment (FDI), is likely to generate pressures for the protection of labor rights and better working conditions, provided that the MNCs bring best practices to their foreign affiliates, and so exploitative practices can be reduced in the host country.⁴⁵

5.6 EQUAL FREEDOM FROM DOMINATION

I have argued in last chapter that global non-domination, understood as a situation in which each person is adequately and equally protected from domination by foreign agents, forms part of the ideal of a relation of equality in the global context. It follows that a relational egalitarian has good reasons to prefer a global institutional order that

⁴⁴ But domestic political institutions also play a role in determining these outcomes. See Layna Mosley, *Labor Rights and Multinational Production* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 79-97.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 68-70.

would be likely to prevent, or at least reduce, transnational domination and to object to those social and economic inequalities that underpin transnational relations of domination. Let us consider the following principle of global justice:

The principle of global non-domination: each person, regardless of the society to which he or she belongs, is to have a right (a) to equal freedom from transnational domination and (b) to the material conditions that guarantee such freedom.

Three points should be noted about this principle. First, this principle targets primarily the relations of domination that obtain between individuals or groups of individuals at the *transnational* level. This principle does not directly address cases of domination that is purely domestic.⁴⁶ But it should be noted that domestic domination may sometimes encourage or reinforce transnational relations of dominance because powerful local elite can sometimes collaborate with foreign agencies to dominate the disadvantaged of their own country. For instance, the national governments or the political leaders of less developed countries often collaborate with foreign corporations in exercising domineering influence over the poor of their country in order to enrich themselves (by increasing government revenues or demanding bribes). Therefore, the sources of domination in these cases are both domestic and foreign. Preventing domestic domination could in these situations help to reduce people's

⁴⁶ To be consistent, a relational egalitarian would also condemn domestic domination. But since this is largely a problem of domestic social justice, I shall not focus on this kind of domination.

vulnerability to transnational domination.

Next, this principle states that people should be protected from arbitrary interference without regard to their nationality or citizenship. That is to say, this principle would condemn any institutional arrangement that makes some persons systematically more vulnerable to domination than others for no good reason other than their nationality or citizenship. Such unequal vulnerability to domination is incompatible with the ideal of relational equality in the global context.

Third, the principle is sensitive to the material conditions under which freedom from domination can be secured. Absolute deprivation, which is widespread in today's world, is certainly incompatible with promoting global non-domination.⁴⁷ But the principle would also condemn excessive global socio-economic inequalities that may lead to or reinforce transnational relations of domination. Although the ideal of non-domination does not require strict material equality among individuals, it does require a distribution of resources under which people are able to protect themselves against arbitrary interference, or impose retaliatory costs on arbitrary interferers.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ This is one reason why a relational egalitarian would support the principle of basic needs discussed above.

⁴⁸ Phillip Pettit, "Freedom in the Market," *Politics, Philosophy & Economics* 5 (2005): 131-49, at 141. See also *Republicanism*, pp. 158-60; and "The Determinacy of Republican Policy: A Reply to McMahon," *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 34 (2006): 275-83, at 281.

Still, it may be thought that such egalitarianism is only “trivially” associated with non-domination because egalitarian distributive commitments are desirable from the standpoint of justice only to the extent that they serve the goal of non-domination and not the reverse.⁴⁹ In response, it should be stressed that non-domination is itself an *egalitarian* concern in the sense that it constitutes part of the background conditions under which people can live together as equals to one another.⁵⁰ As such, this principle of global non-domination is robustly egalitarian both because it is directly grounded in the ideal of global non-domination and it condemns unequal vulnerability to relations of dominance in the global context. The concern here is that *relative* deprivation could make the worse off vulnerable to arbitrary interference exercised by advantaged persons or their agents.

There are in general two types of cases in which relations of dominance obtain at the transnational level. First, in some cases, the dominant agent exercises objectionable control over the poor living in other societies more or less directly. Consider first the actions of many transnational corporations (TNCs) in less developed societies. These corporations operating in the developing societies

⁴⁹ Ian Shapiro, “On Non-domination,” essay delivered as the inaugurate Brian Barry Lecture at the London School of Economics, 7th May, 2010, p. 2. But Shapiro maintains that non-domination is a demand of justice.

⁵⁰ Martin O’Neill, “What Should Egalitarians Believe?” *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 36 (2008): 119-56.

sometimes exercise considerable influence over the local economic policies and yet remain unaccountable to the people of the host country. These corporations can often determine, as Thomas Scanlon has put it, “what gets produced, what kinds of employment are offered, what the environment of a town or state is like, and what kind of life one can live there.”⁵¹ More generally, in the negotiations between national states and global economic agents we can see the imposition of the operational logic of the capital market on national economic policymaking, such as the importance attached to the authority of central banks, privileging anti-inflation aims over employment growth, deregulation of cross-border transactions, while other goals, such as social welfare provisions, which are deemed as making state less competitive in an integrated global capital market are delegitimized.⁵² Another example is the activities of the International Monetary Fund (IMF). What IMF represents and seeks to advance are not the interests of the powerful states per se but particular constituencies within these states. The financial ministers and central bank governors who speak for the member states in IMF are closely tied to the financial community of their states. So they naturally see the world through the eyes of the

⁵¹ Scanlon, “The Diversity of Objections to Inequality,” p. 44.

⁵² Saskia Sassen, *Territory, Authority, Rights: From Medieval to Global Assemblages* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006), pp. 247-8, 259-64. There are of course structural reasons why these particular agents are so powerful such as the globalization of finance (freedom of movement of capital) and the globalization of production.

financial community. As a result the policies of IMF often closely aligned with the financial interests of those in the advanced industrial countries.⁵³ The IMF can dominate its client states, and, by implication, their peoples, by attaching conditionality to loan agreements which require the borrowing state to meet the targets specified by the IMF (e.g. market liberalization, particular fiscal policies etc). But these conditions may in fact focus more on the interests affluent western creditors (by making sure the client states can repay their existing debts) than on the need for sustainable and equitable development for those societies.⁵⁴

Second, in some cases the dominant agents exercise arbitrary control through shaping the rules and institutions that redefine the options of others. The Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property (TRIPs) agreement is a case in which a small number of US-based corporation executives succeeded in amplifying their private interests in public international law that redefined the options for many people living in the developing world. Again, these private interests are the interests of a small fraction of affluent individuals who stand to benefit from this agreement, for example, the shareholders of these corporations and their executives. Global intellectual property right was first advocated by a group of 12 like-minded CEOs of

⁵³ Joseph E. Stiglitz, *Globalization and Its Discontents* (London: Allen Lane, 2002), pp. 19-20.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

US-based TNCs and their advisors who formed the Intellectual Property Committee (IPC) in 1986.⁵⁵ They successfully lobbied the governments of the US, Europe and Japan to press for their preferred policy on intellectual property through the GATT and the TRIPs agreement was adopted in the Uruguay Round in 1994. The TRIPs agreement provides intellectual property owners (patents, trademarks and copyright) with a 20-year monopoly right and requires signatory states to enact implementing legislation and enforcement measures. The distributive consequences of TRIPs are significant: it empowers the haves at the expense of the have-nots by freezing the status quo and closing the gate for up-and-comers.⁵⁶ As the result, the agreement closes down the options that had formerly been available to firms and individuals in less developed societies and significantly increased the cost of access to technology. Note that in all these cases, the dominant agents are ultimately acting *as a representative* of the special interests of some affluent individuals (such as shareholders of these corporations and foreign investors) at the expense of others who are relatively poor.

⁵⁵ The members of IPC include TNCs in chemical, computer, entertainment, pharmaceutical and software industries such as IBM, Pfizer, Johnson & Johnson, and Hewlett-Packard.

⁵⁶ Susan K. Sell, "Structures, Agents and Institutions: Private Corporate Power and the Globalization of Intellectual Property Rights," in Richard A. Higgott, G. Underhill and A. Bieler eds., *Non-state Actors and Authority in the Global System* (London: Routledge, 2000), pp. 91-106. See also Sell, *Private Power, Public Law: The Globalization of Intellectual Property Rights* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

Now we must consider two separate objections to the view that the principle of global non-domination gives rise to egalitarian distributive commitments. The first objection argues that the ideal of global non-domination cannot be plausibly translated into a demand for reducing global inequality among *individuals* as such. This is because the above cases of transnational domination are cases in which some transnational agents exercise arbitrary control over certain individuals in less developed countries. In fact, the cases described above give us more reason to reduce the inequality between states in some important aspects than to reduce global inequality among individuals. For example, we can seek to equalize the resources that each state can bring to international negotiations so that the weaker states can better defend the ability of their people to determine the course of their life collectively.

In response to this objection, it should first be noted that I am *not* arguing that the current global order allows the affluent persons to dominate the worse off persons living in less developed countries in their *interpersonal* relations in the same way that a feudal lord dominated his servants. It is true that these affluent persons do not dominate the foreign poor in virtue of their personal resources, but *collectively* they can exercise objectionably control over the worse off individuals in foreign countries, and this is important to understanding the nature of their relations. There are two reasons for this: (1) to the extent that these agencies—corporations, government

agencies, international organizations—are in fact the agents of the individuals they serve and are subject to their control, these affluent individuals exercise objectionable control over the foreign poor collectively through the actions of their agents;⁵⁷ (2) these relations of domination limit the ability of the poor states to determine their domestic policies, but what matters morally is that the decisions of external agents change and restrict the range of options available to those individuals, particularly the worse off among them, in those countries.

But why can't the ideal of global non-domination be achieved just by eliminating objectionable *international* inequalities? To begin with, although in practice the measures that aim at minimizing the possibility of transnational domination would most likely include policies that reduce the inequality in bargaining power of between rich and poor countries in international negotiations, there are reasons for thinking that these measures are not sufficient: (1) states can always be rightly regarded as representing the interests of their subjects. Too many governments lack meaningful accountability mechanisms to ensure that government decisions are sufficiently responsive to the interests of their subjects (including the interest to be free from

⁵⁷ The same happens in the domestic context as well. Sometimes domination takes place in a more interpersonal and unmediated manner but more often it takes place when the better off persons act collectively to shape the background institutions to interfere with the options for others.

foreign domination). (2) the ruling elites of the poorer countries can exert some marginal influence on how the global rules and institutions are shaped and are thus able to demand a price for their consent.⁵⁸ So it is highly unlikely that providing them with more resources can actually promote global non-domination.

Perhaps more important, a global egalitarian who is committed to the ideal of global non-domination must object not only to international inequality but also global inequality because it is possible to have a world in which there is international equality but domestic inequalities remain extremely high. If this is the case, relations of domination will exist within the domestic context but a global egalitarian will certainly find the situation objectionable. The reason is that if one objects to domination in the international realm, one must also object to domination that takes place domestically. Therefore, a global egalitarian who is committed to the ideal of global non-domination should demand not only international but also global equality (that consists of both international and domestic equalities).

Lastly, there is also a practical reason why we should care about reducing global inequality and not just international inequality in promoting global non-domination. The reason is to avoid the likelihood of a regressive transfer—that is, resources are

⁵⁸ Pogge, “Why Inequality Matters,” pp. 137-8.

transferred from someone in a rich country who turns out to be poorer than the recipients in a poor country. Rich countries and their citizens would certainly resent the idea that international redistributions to the poor countries would end up in the pockets of the local elite in the poor countries who may be better off than many of the contributors.⁵⁹ Note that international redistributions cannot work to reduce the possibility of transnational domination when they fail to benefit the worse off in the recipient countries. For example, it is possible that the local elite just capture most of the benefits following from these redistributions and the within-country socio-economic inequalities may just increase to outweigh the reduction in international inequality.

The second objection argues that global non-domination cannot generate any *egalitarian* distributive commitment because it can be achieved through suitable institutional reforms that restrict the liberty of the powerful agents to abuse their power without significant redistributions of resources. For example, it may be thought that global non-domination can be achieved through democratizing international institutions, such as the WTO, the IMF and the World Bank, so as to reduce the influence of the powerful states in shaping the domestic policies of other countries. Of

⁵⁹ Milanovic, *Worlds Apart*, pp. 133-5.

course, these reforms are likely to bring about a more equal distribution of social and economic advantages globally but this will just be a by-product of pursuing global non-domination and *not* a demand of justice in its own right.

In response to this objection, it must be emphasized that I am not against institutional reforms which will constrain the more powerful agents and that are needed in order to promote standing in relations of equality. However, it does raise the question of whether reducing socio-economic inequalities is, as the objection suggests, entirely redundant. Let us for the moment consider an analogous case in the domestic context. In the discussion of democratic theory it is generally believed that reforming the political process alone is insufficient for guaranteeing the political equality between citizens when background socio-economic inequalities are great. Thus

Charles Beitz notes that:

“The historical movement toward democratic forms in industrial societies is plausibly understood as a series of efforts to offset the political effects of inequalities of wealth, class, and status. But the achievement of democratic forms...is obviously no guarantee that the course of public life will not be affected by inequalities in the social and economic background. Substantial background inequalities will be reflected in the outcome of the political process however that process is organized...One could have little reason for confidence that the outcomes of democratic decision making would treat one’s prospects equitably if the distribution of political resources favored those with vested interests in the defense of prevailing patterns of social advantages.”⁶⁰

⁶⁰ Beitz, *Political Equality: An Essay in Democratic Theory* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989), p. 192.

What can we infer from this? Although Beitz is talking about achieving democracy within a domestic society, it has general implications on how we can reasonably expect the broader egalitarian goals and values to be achieved against the background of substantial social and economic inequalities. If structural reform *without* limiting socio-economic inequality is insufficient for achieving an egalitarian society even within the domestic context, how can any we expect to achieve the same thing in the global context where the institutions are typically weaker?

5.7 CONCLUSION

This chapter has defended an account of global egalitarianism consisting of four principles of global distributive justice that follow from a commitment to equality as a relational ideal in the global context:⁶¹

1. *The basic needs principle: each person, irrespective of the society to which she belongs, is to have an equal right to the fulfillment of her basic needs without having to subject herself to unequal social relations.*
2. *The principle of global equality of opportunity: when engaged in economic cooperation one has a duty to ensure that the other participants can have a roughly equal chance to attain the benefits of their cooperation,*

⁶¹ These principles follow from the commitment to global equality as a relational ideal in the sense that the global institutional order should satisfy if people are to relate to one another as equals in the global context.

if they so choose.

3. The principle of non-exploitation: (a) the global institutional order should be designed to minimize the occurrence of transnational exploitation; and (b) inequality of social and economic advantages arising from exploitative interactions are to be arranged to reduce the probability of future exploitation.

4. The principle of global non-domination: each person, regardless of the society to which he or she belongs, is to have a right (a) to equal freedom from transnational domination and (b) to the material conditions that guarantee such freedom.

These principles provide a normative standard according to which we can decide what distributive arrangements at the supranational level are suitable for a community of equals.

Some may think that while the last three principles would condemn much of the existing socio-economic inequalities among individuals across societies, they draw only on derivative reasons as they maintain that socio-economic equality is desirable only insofar as it brings about certain desirable outcomes (e.g. ensuring fair terms of transnational cooperation, preventing or reducing transnational domination). But it should be stressed that these principles are grounded in the egalitarian ideal that people should be related to one another as equals in the global context. In other words, these principles are the ones we should adopt to govern our global institutions in order to ensure that our relation to one another in the global context is properly structured to reflect each other's status as equal persons.

Thus far I have argued that we should construct our relations in the global context on the basis of equality as an ideal for human relations and ensure that our global rules and institutions are compatible with this ideal. However, I have said very little, if anything, about the nature, the basis of our responsibility for global justice and whether my account of global distributive justice is overly demanding to the compliant agents. This will be the task of the next and final chapter.

CHAPTER 6

RESPONSIBILITY FOR GLOBAL JUSTICE

6.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapters I argued that a just global order is one that can provide the appropriate background conditions for people to relate to one another as equals. Such a global order should respect each person's rights to subsistence, to equal opportunity, to non-exploitative terms of interactions, and to freedom from domination. However, as Onora O'Neill has noted, unless the corresponding responsibilities are properly identified, claims to have rights amount only to rhetoric because "nothing can be claimed, waived or enforced if it is indeterminate where the claim should be lodged, for whom it may be waived or on whom it could be enforced."¹ Therefore, in this final chapter I shall turn to the problem of responsibility. In particular, this chapter

¹ *Towards Justice and Virtue: A Constructive Account of Practical Reasoning* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 129. See also "Agents of Justice," *Metaphilosophy* 32 (2001): 180-95.

will explore the questions of who bears these responsibilities, what these responsibilities require of those agents, and whether they are overly demanding on complying agents.

Before we turn to these questions, a few preliminary points need to be made. First of all, the term “responsibility” has a number of different meanings in moral and political philosophy. For example, to say that a particular person or agent bears the responsibility for a certain outcome may sometimes mean that this person or agent is responsible for bringing about the outcome in question and should be credited or debited with it accordingly. But my primary concern in this chapter is not with this kind of outcome responsibility.² Instead, this chapter will deal with the responsibility we have to act in ways that would promote just outcomes (or would prevent unjust ones) as defined by the account of global justice defended in the preceding chapters.³ In sum, our responsibility for global justice involves the responsibility to ensure that our relations to one another in the global context are properly constructed to respect each other’s equal status. As such, responsibility for global justice does not

² This idea of “outcome responsibility” comes from Tony Honore, *Responsibility and Fault* (Oxford: Hart Publishing, 2002), pp. 23-32; see also David Miller, *National Responsibility and Global Justice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 87.

³ This is not purely remedial in nature (see Miller, *Ibid.*, pp. 97-8) because it also involves a duty to refrain from acting in certain ways that lead to unjust outcomes either on their own or when combined with the effects of others’ similar activities.

necessarily imply finding the duty-bearer at fault for a past wrong. Rather, the purpose of assigning responsibilities is to determine what global justice requires of various agents.⁴

Second, this chapter will not try to make a distinction between the terms responsibility and duty. Some may think that whereas a responsibility calls upon the agents to do whatever necessary within the limits of other moral considerations to bring about a certain ends, a duty typically represents some more specific demands regarding what the agent is supposed to do.⁵ But it should be stressed that this distinction is in the end a matter of degree: to move from principle to particular act will always involve some degree of practical judgment by the relevant agent because it is highly unlikely that our principles of justice could be a set of algorithmic rules that tell us exactly what to do in any situation.⁶ Therefore, in this chapter I shall set this distinction aside and use the terms responsibility and duty interchangeably.

A final point to note before we go on is that our duties of global justice involve

⁴ So there is an important “forward-looking” element to the idea of responsibility. But of course one can be criticized for taking no action (or for taking ineffective actions) to fulfill one’s responsibility for justice. See Iris M. Young, *Responsibility for Justice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 92-3, 96, 105-7, 118.

⁵ See, for example, Joel Feinberg, “Duties, Rights, and Claims,” in *Rights, Justice, and the Bounds of Liberty: Essays in Social Philosophy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980).

⁶ O’Neill, “Demandingness and Rules,” in Timothy Chappell ed., *The Problem of Demandingness: New Philosophical Essays* (New York: Palgrave, 2009), pp. 59-69.

both negative and positive ones. There are two ways to conceive the distinction between negative and positive duties. The first focuses on whether the duty in question requires any positive action on the part of the duty-bearers: a duty is negative if its fulfillment requires only that the duty-bearer to refrain from acting in a certain way; in contrast, a duty is a positive one if its fulfillment requires the duty-bearer to undertake certain actions. According to this distinction, it seems obvious that our responsibilities for global justice involve both negative and positive duties because realizing the goals for global justice will require the responsible agents to refrain from acting and to undertake certain positive actions. The second distinction focuses on the moral implications of the duty involved: a duty is negative if it is a kind of duty to ensure that others are not unduly harmed through one's own conduct, and it is positive if it is a kind of duty to benefit others or to protect others from harms imposed by a third party.⁷ This distinction between negative and positive duties is different from the last one because sometimes agents will have to undertake certain positive actions in order to ensure that others are not unduly harmed by their conducts. For example, if an agent is indirectly responsible for the suffering of others because it participates in and maintains an institutional order that impose undue harms on the latter, the duty to

⁷ For this distinction, see Thomas Pogge, *World Poverty and Human Rights: Cosmopolitan Responsibilities and Reforms* (Cambridge: Polity, 2002), pp. 130-1.

ensure that others are not unduly harmed by one's own conduct would require that agent to undertake positive actions to reform the institutional order. It appears that our responsibilities for global justice must involve both positive and negative duties according to this latter distinction because we have duties to avoid causing injustice as well as duties to assist and to protect the vulnerable.

This chapter will be organized as follows. The next section will discuss what duties we have according to the relational account of global egalitarian justice. The third section will deal with the question of who bears the responsibilities for global justice. The idea is that various agents, including both individual and collective entities, should be responsible for bringing about just outcomes and the precise content of their responsibilities will depend on their respective position in the global order. The fourth section is about distributing burdens of pursuing global justice. The focus of this section is on the underlying principles that should guide the allocation of these burdens. Because of the gravity of current global injustices, taking the responsibilities for global justice may seem to be a daunting task. This raises the concern that my account of global justice is overly or unreasonably demanding on those who will be required to be the net contributors and should therefore be rejected. I will turn to this problem of demandingness in the fifth section.

6.2 THREE TYPES OF DUTIES OF GLOBAL JUSTICE

Now let us turn to consider the duties that are entailed by the account of global justice outlined in the previous two chapters. As noted earlier, the primary aim of thinking about responsibility is not to find a particular agent at fault but to determine what global justice requires of different agents. So we must have some rough ideas about the sorts of things that people are required to do or not to do as a matter of justice. To understand this question, it may be useful to start with Henry Shue's account of correlative duties of basic rights. According to Shue, the fulfillment of every basic right involves the following three types of duties:

- I. Duties to *avoid* depriving.
- II. Duties to *protect* from deprivation.
- III. Duties to *aid* the deprived.

Shue suggests that a basic right—the right to life, the right to security, and the right to subsistence—entails all these three types of duties.⁸ My classification of our duties of global justice is inspired by Shue's typology. However, it is crucial to note that the actual content of the duties I am defending are clearly different from his account of

⁸ *Basic Rights: Subsistence, Affluence, and U.S. Foreign Policy*, 2nd edn. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), pp. 52-60.

basic rights. In particular, I would interpret the duties to protect more broadly to include the duties to support or create institutions that would bring the world towards greater justice.

6.2.1 *Type I Duties: The Duties to Avoid*

The first type of duties of global justice is the duties to avoid acting unjustly or contributing to unjust outcomes. Broadly speaking, this type of duties requires the duty-bear to avoid, or refrain from, carrying out certain activities that would predictably lead to unjust consequences. The right to subsistence, for example, implies duties not to eliminate another person's only available means of subsistence. Type I duties are *negative* in two separate senses: first, they require the duty-bearers to refrain from taking certain actions that would deprive others of the means to fulfill their own rights and therefore these duties can be fulfilled without any positive action on the part of the duty-bearers;⁹ second, they stem from our general duty not to impose harm on others.¹⁰

More specifically, the relational account of global egalitarian justice implies the following type I duties:

⁹ Shue, *Basic Rights*, p. 54.

¹⁰ Pogge, *World Poverty and Human Rights*, p. 130.

I – 1: a duty not to subject others to unequal relationships.

This duty requires agents not to conduct their relations to others in a way that fails to respect others' standing as equals. First, it requires agents to avoid exercising domineering influence over others. For example, the trade representatives of affluent countries often manipulate the urgent needs of a developing country for access to their markets to force the latter to give up policies of protecting local infant industries or to open up their market to foreign goods. There is much evidence that such protection is effective in promoting economic development and they have been employed by most developed countries when they were at comparable stages of development. As such, the developed countries are "kicking away the ladder" by preventing the developing countries from pursuing the strategies that they themselves had used in order to develop.¹¹ In addition to avoiding domination, duty (I-1) requires agents *not* to take unfair advantage of others' vulnerability when interacting with them. For example, as argued earlier, transnational pharmaceutical firms exploit individual subjects living in poorer societies when they decide to conduct in developing countries clinical trials that cannot, for ethical reasons, be conducted in developed countries.

Another type I duty which follows from my account of global justice can be

¹¹ See Ha-Joon Chang, *Kicking Away the Ladder: Development Strategy in Historical Perspective*. (London: Anthem Press, 2002).

stated as follows:

I – 2: a duty to avoid carrying out activities that undermine the ability of others to satisfy their own basic needs of subsistence.

To be sure, this duty is also affirmed by a sufficientarian account of justice but it is important for the relational account of global egalitarian justice. The reason is that absolute deprivation will undermine the poor's ability to stand as equals in their relations to others; and it is possible for an agent to carry out activities that, combined with the similar activities of other agents, undermine other people's ability to meet their own basic needs and thereby making them vulnerable to relationships characterized by domination or exploitation. Therefore, if one accepts the relational account of global egalitarian justice articulated in the previous chapters, one should also accept the duty to avoid undermining other people's basic needs.

Consider, for example, the development of biofuels as an alternative to fossil fuels. Concerns of energy security, climate change mitigation, and economic development provide powerful incentives for several governments such as the U.S., the E.U. countries, Brazil and Malaysia to support the production of biofuels in their country. This has led to increased demand for crops that can produce biofuels, such as corn and sugar cane, and also a significant shift in acreage to the cultivation of these crops and the diversion of agricultural to fuel production. In addition to diverting

crops to non-food use, the production of bio-fuel also reduces the available land for producing other crops. This is one factor contributing to the rise of global food prices which in turn undermines the food security for vulnerable countries and populations. Although the impacts of biofuels production on destabilizing food prices may be smaller than it was first believed, biofuel production steps should be carefully evaluated for existing and potential future impacts on people's ability to meet their basic needs.¹²

These type I duties, however, are not the only duties of global justice. Our duties of global justice must involve something more than mere avoidance, for two reasons. First, complete reliance on type I duties for the fulfillment of people's justice-based entitlements are infeasible and undesirable because this requires a level of self-restraint that it seems unlikely to be honored by all agents.¹³ Second, type I duties tend to attribute the sources of injustice to particular wrongdoings committed by identifiable perpetrators. However, sources of global injustice can also be *structural* in the sense that they must be accounted for by a set of institutions or practices which systematically render some agents more vulnerable to the abuse of

¹² Nuffield Council on Bioethics, *Biofuels: Ethical Issues* (London: Nuffield Council on Bioethics, 2011), pp. 30-3, 72-3.

¹³ *Basic Rights*, p. 61-2.

power by others. These injustices occur only as a consequence of many individuals and institutions acting to pursue their respective goals and interests, for the most part within the limits of accepted rules and norms.¹⁴ As argued in Chapter 4, our relations to distant others in the global context are often mediated through complex institutions and practices which condition the possibilities and expectations of their interactions across borders. In other words, institutions play an important role in defining the relationships that persons from different societies stand to one another by conditioning the possibilities and expectations of their interactions. Therefore, there must be some duties of global justice to create or maintain appropriate institutions that can secure people's justice-based entitlements and equal standing in their relations to one another in the global context.

6.2.2 *Type II Duties: the Duties to Protect*

In addition to type I duties, Shue argues that there are duties to *protect* others against basic rights deprivation.¹⁵ The underlying thought is that if we endorse the ideal of relational equality in the global context, we must also recognize the duty to ensure that our relation to one another in the global context is properly structured to respect each other's equal status. This implies that individuals should support the institutions

¹⁴ For this notion of structural injustice, see Young, *Responsibility for Justice*, pp. 45-52, 175, 180.

¹⁵ *Basic Rights*, p. 60.

that serve to protect people's entitlements. Thus, these duties are shared by institutions and individuals— the former are responsible for enforcing and protecting people's justice-based entitlements, and the latter supporting these institutions in carrying out their functions or creating such institutions when needed.

Now let us consider what type II duties follow from my account of global justice:

II – 1: a duty to protect people against deprivation of their justice-based entitlements.

Shue argues for a duty to protect people against basic rights deprivation.¹⁶ In the context of our present discussion, the duties to protect should include a duty to protect people's just entitlements against individual and systemic threats. This duty is primarily shared by a number of different institutions including states, IGOs, and NGOs. For example, the government should bear the responsibility to protect its own members against subjugation to domineering or exploitative relations by a transnational corporation, but sometimes this protection may require multilateral government actions. In the global context, there may be some non-governmental enforcement institutions that bear some duties to protect. (I shall discuss their possible roles in the next section.)¹⁷ Although I am not in a position to propose any *specific*

¹⁶ Shue, *Basic Rights*, pp. 52-3.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 56. Again, Shue's primary concern is about protecting people's basic rights but his point can

institutional solution for implementing global justice, I would like to discuss other type II duties that would tell us something what kinds of institutions we should support (if they already exists) or try to create (if they do not currently exist):

II – 2: a duty to support or create institutions that would work to make it more difficult for powerful agents to realize their unjust intentions or to get away with their own unjust behaviors.

This duty requires the duty-bearers to support institutions that can prevent powerful agents from realizing their unjust intentions or sanction unjust behaviors. In cases where the appropriate institutions have not come into existence, the duty-bearers must work together to reform the existing institutions or to establish new ones. One possible way to achieve this goal is to enhance the transparency of several international institutions such the WTO, IMF, and World Bank by making deliberation and reasons informing decisions open to all. Transparency makes it harder for the powerful agents to get away with their unjust behaviors; and it also put pressure on the agents to give non-self-interested arguments for their actions to maintain their reputation and may even in the long run come to internalize such reasons.¹⁸

In addition, we may need to establish new agencies whose mission is to

also apply to our present discussion.

¹⁸ Simon Caney, "Cosmopolitan Justice and Institutional Design: An Egalitarian Liberal Conception of Global Governance," *Social Theory and Practice* 32 (2006): 725-56, esp. pp. 748-9.

investigate and call attention to the unjust behaviors of powerful agents. For example, some independent monitoring has been established to monitor the treatment of workers by multinational corporations in the global apparel industry and issue reports about their findings. By providing open and timely information, these independent monitoring agencies allow actors at the point of consumption to take an active role in pressuring the manufacturers, retailer, and even government officials to respect the workers' right at the point of production.¹⁹

Another type II also follows from my account of global justice is:

II – 3: a duty to support or create institutions that would enable agents to act on their just intentions and/or provide incentives for agents to act justly.

In addition to curbing unjust behaviors, there is a duty to design institutions that enable agents to act on their just intentions and promote justice in the global realm. These institutions will serve to overcome the collective action problem by ensuring compliance to just policies and allocating responsibilities.²⁰ In addition, it would be desirable from the point of view of promoting justice if there can be some institutional arrangements that create incentives for agents to act justly. For example, we can

¹⁹ Jill Esbenshade, *Monitoring Sweatshops: Workers, Consumers, and the Global Apparel Industry* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2004), pp. 165-97.

²⁰ Caney, "Cosmopolitan and Institutional Design," pp. 735-6.

consider adopting a system of trade that makes the right to trade conditional upon the promotion of labor standards either by applying trade sanctions to countries that fail to promote labor standards adequately or by offering additional trading opportunities to countries that promote labor standards adequately.²¹

A final type II duty that follows from my account of global justice can be stated as the following:

II – 4: a duty to support or create institutions that would enable the vulnerable persons or groups to make claims of justice on powerful agents.

This may be another way to create disincentives for powerful agents to act unjustly in the global context but it emphasizes the opportunities of the victims to make their voice heard. It is important to have institutions that allow the actual or potential victims to raise their concerns and bring those perpetrators of injustice to account.²²

For example, it is important to reform the WTO dispute settlement procedure to reduce the inequality between the rich and the poor trading countries in terms of legal capacity to present their position. A number of approaches are worth considering: legal advice and service should be provided to developing country members on WTO litigation and in the Appellate Body; the panels of dispute settlement can engage more

²¹ For this proposal, see Christian Barry and Sanjay G. Reddy, *International Trade & Labor Standards: A Proposal for Linkage* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008).

²² Caney, “Cosmopolitan and Institutional Design,” pp. 737-8.

aggressively in fact-finding; the WTO can appoint a small group of experts on WTO law and economics—composed of academics, lawyers, judges and economists—to review the rulings of the Appellate Body periodically in terms of jurisprudential and economic soundness and publish its findings.²³

6.2.3 Type III Duties: the Duties to Aid

Shue maintains that the fulfillment of basic rights also demands a third type of duties—the duties to aid the deprived. To be sure, this type of duties would be much less burdensome when the first two types of duties are generally fulfilled.²⁴ Some duties to provide assistance to the disadvantaged persons also follow from the account of global distributive justice defended in the previous chapters and it is likely that these duties would require something more than the minimal commitment to satisfying basic needs. These type III duties include the following:

III – 1: a duty to aid those who cannot provide for their own basic needs due to failures in the performance of type I and/or type II duties.

As argued in Chapter 4, relational egalitarians should care about basic needs deprivation because it would seriously undermine a person's ability to stand in

²³ For these proposals, see Mitsuo Matsuhita, "Some Thoughts on the WTO Dispute Settlement Procedure," in Gary P. Sampson ed., *The WTO and Global Governance: Future Directions* (New York: United Nations University Press, 2008), pp. 241-60.

²⁴ Shue, *Basic Rights*, p. 63.

relations of equality with others. This follows that our duties of global justice should include a duty to aid those who are unable to fulfill their own basic needs. Sometimes people are unable to secure their basic needs (and for their dependents) or are under systematic threat of deprivation because some other agents have conducted their activities in ways that violate their type I and/or type II duties. Being subject to unequal relations can be capability-denying. Domination and exploitation may seriously undermine the victims' capacity to secure their own basic needs. Under such circumstances, some other agents would have the responsibility to provide resources for these victims so that they can meet their basic needs. This duty does not fall equally on all agents of justice which happen to be in a position to provide assistance. Since the deprivation that triggers the duty to aid is actually caused by certain objectionable forms of relation, agents who are privileged by these relations should be under a more stringent responsibility to provide aid.

By labeling this duty as a duty to aid, I do not mean to imply that all the duty-bearers are merely innocent bystanders who happen to be in a position to provide aid. The duty to aid here simply means a duty to improve the conditions of others as a requirement of justice and so it is compatible with the fact that the duty-bearers are themselves implicated in the progress that harms the poor by jeopardizing their ability to provide for their basic needs.

III – 2: a duty to aid those who cannot provide for their own basic needs due to natural disasters.

This duty is uncontroversial and would certainly be affirmed by a sufficientarian account of global distributive justice. In cases where some people are in desperate need but no other agents are causally responsible for their deprivation, it would be perverse to think that these people are not entitled to any assistance. Part of the reason is that absolute deprivation due to natural disasters would also undermine a person's ability to stand in relations of equality with others in the global context. Type III duties should therefore include the duty to aid those who suffer from basic needs deprivation through no fault of their own or of others. This is a more purely positive duty in the sense that it does not involve any previous wrongful acts of other agents.

There is a third and final type III duty that follows from my account of global justice:

III – 3: a duty to aid those who lack the necessary material conditions to stand in relations of equality in the global context.

Not surprisingly, our general duty to conduct our relations in ways that reflect our status as equal moral agents would require something more than a commitment to meeting people's basic needs. First of all, the relational account of global egalitarian justice would imply a duty to aid those who lack the necessary resources to avoid or

escape from entanglements in unequal social relations. Moreover, even when the rules regulating global economic interactions are fair, there is no guarantee that all equally talented and motivated persons would have an equal chance to attain the newly opened advantages. It may be the case that some people are prevented from acquiring the qualifications needed to attain the advantages at stake merely because their country lacks the necessary health and educational infrastructure.²⁵ Therefore, the commitment to global equality of opportunity entails a responsibility to aid those who lack the ability to acquire the talents that they need to attain the advantages of global economic integration.

I have in this section discussed a set of duties implied by my account of global distributive justice and they are of three types. But do we all share these duties, or can some institutional agents also bear the responsibilities in relational to global justice? I am going to answer this question in the next section.

6.3 WHO ARE THE RESPONSIBILITY-BEARERS?

In this section I turn to the question of what entities can be expected to discharge the

²⁵ Sylvie Loriaux, "Global Equality of Opportunity: A Proposal," *Journal of International Relations and Development* 11 (2008): 1-28, at 15-16.

responsibilities for pursuing global justice. Following Onara O'Neill, I shall call these responsibility-bearers *agents of global justice*.²⁶ Note that my use of the term is morally neutral. By identifying someone or some group as an agent of justice, I only mean to suggest that it makes sense to hold this person or group responsible for promoting justice (or preventing injustice) but not that these agents are in fact acting justly. Fairly obviously, that some agents are using their powers and capacities for unjust ends does not mean that they cannot be reasonably expected to discharge their responsibilities of global justice. If anything, this means that they have more stringent responsibilities to undermine global injustice. Again, it should be stressed that labeling some agents as agents of global justice does not necessarily mean they committed some wrongs in the past.

What conditions, then, must be met for an entity (either individual or collective) to be counted as a responsibility-bearer in relation to global justice? Let us consider the following two conditions:

1. The entity must be able to undertake intentional actions; and
2. The entity must face some normatively significant choice; involving the possibility of doing something that would promote or undermine global

²⁶ O'Neill, "Agents of Justice," *Metaphilosophy* 32 (2001): 180-95.

justice.²⁷

The rationale behind the first condition is obvious. An entity cannot be appropriately regarded as an agent of global justice if it is not an agent in the first place. To be qualified as an agent, the entity must be able to form and revise intensions and act in light of these intensions and the external environment.²⁸ Individuals can of course be regarded as agents in this sense. But it is important to note that *collective* entities can also be agents. First, a group of individuals may come to have a joint intension and coordinate their actions to carry it out. In the process their individual actions can be best describe as an effort to contribute to the collective goal. Also, there is some common knowledge among the participants that each is doing his or her part in pursuit of their collective goal.²⁹ A group of friends organizing a camping trip together is an example of this kind of collective agent. Alternatively, a collective entity may have the organizational structure and standing decision procedures that specify the roles of its various members. These features enable it to form collective intensions that are relatively independent from the intentions of its members and to issue authoritative directives to its members to carry out its intentions. Any act taken

²⁷ For this second condition, see Christian List and Philip Pettit, *Group Agency: The Possibility, Design, and Status of Corporate Agents* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 155-9.

²⁸ List and Pettit, *Group Agency*, pp. 19-20.

²⁹ Tracy Isaacs, *Moral Responsibility in Collective Contexts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 36-45. See also Anna Stilz, "Collective Responsibility and the State," *The Journal of Political Philosophy* 19 (2011): 190-208, esp. 191-2.

under these conditions can be described as an act of the entire group, which is distinct from the acts of its individual members.³⁰ A business corporation is an obvious example of this type of collective agent. Needless to say, not all collective entities possess the required degree of agency. Consider, for example, a pure aggregate of persons grouped together because they share some common characteristic, such as the brown-eyed people, wealthy white North Americans.³¹

The second of the above conditions stipulates that the agent must be able to further or undermine the pursuit of global justice either through its own activities or through the accumulative outcomes of its activities and the activities of other agents. The thought is simply that an agent which cannot help or undermine the pursuit of a certain goal cannot be held responsible for doing so. This condition, however, does not require the agent to be a powerful actor in international politics. For example, ordinary citizens may contribute to global justice by acting together to press for changes in their state's foreign policies in a way that brings about just outcomes. In many cases, agents (both individual and collective) contribute to justice or injustice by following the accepted and expected rules and conventions of the institutions

³⁰ Isaacs, *Moral Responsibility in Collective Contexts*, pp. 28-32. See also Stilz, "Collective Responsibility and the State," p. 191-2; List and Pettit, *Group Agency*, pp. 31-5; and Peter French, *Corporate and Collective Responsibility* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984).

³¹ Stilz, "Collective Responsibility and the State," p. 192.

within which they act and they may believe in good faith that their options to act otherwise are seriously constrained by the same institutions. But this does not mean that they cannot be expected to act together to bring about institutional reforms or to establish the necessary institutions which are desirable from the point of view of global justice.

Nonetheless, fitness for being held responsible for promoting global justice does not require *moral* agency. The ability to make normative judgment about the options one faces is not a necessary condition for an entity to become an agent of global justice.³² For my present purpose I do not have to show that collective entities can be moral agents because even if collective agents are not proper subjects of moral praise or blame, these agents can nonetheless perform tasks that help to promote global justice for the reasons mentioned above. And it is always possible to hold those individuals belonging to these collectives whom morally responsible for the collective's misdeed.

In what follows I shall identify five types of agents of global justice that meet both the agency condition and the normative choice condition. They include: (1) states; (2) intergovernmental organizations; (3) non-governmental organizations; (4) private

³² This condition for moral agency is mentioned in List and Pettit, *Group Agency*, pp. 155, 158-9.

firms; and (5) individuals. These agents are highly heterogeneous in terms of their capacities, vulnerabilities, and command over resources. They also occupy different positions in a complex web of interactions and interdependence that exists across political boundaries. In general, all these types of agents share type I as well as type III duties discussed above. As for the duties to protect, the picture becomes slightly more complicated: duty (II—1) mainly falls on states, intergovernmental organizations, and non-governmental organizations; the other sub-classes of type II duties are mainly shared by states, private firms, and individuals.³³

1. States

States are the first kind of agents that bear responsibilities for global justice. The first condition: states exhibit the characteristic of collective agency (with the exceptions of failed and occupied states). It is because states generally have the binding decision procedures that allow them to deliberate about their intentions and the institutional structure to realize such intentions. Acts undertaken as a result of these procedures can be properly regarded as the acts of the state as a whole.³⁴

³³ This is just a rough overview. The actual duties an agent of justice could assume depends on its capacities, command over resources, and position in the prevailing global order.

³⁴ Stilz, "Collective Responsibility and the State," pp. 191-2.

The second condition: states face normatively significant choices with the possibility of either promoting or undermining global justice. In today's world they are the only organizations with coercive means to compel others to comply with their demands without incurring sanctions. As such, states can contribute to global justice by constraining the ways in which other powerful agents, such as private firms, may act. States also have control over who has access to their own market and therefore they can sometimes use the means of economic coercion, for example, threats of denying access to the domestic market or imposition of tariff, to secure concessions from other economically more vulnerable states in terms of trade policy, labor standard, and environmental protection.³⁵ These actions may constitute a form of domineering influence over the life conditions of many people, particularly the poor, outside their borders.³⁶ Finally, states—particularly the powerful ones—play a significant role in international regulatory regimes that shape the terms of interaction between various public and private actors in the global context.³⁷ Thus, they can be expected to make these regulations consistent with the demands of global justice. It

³⁵ Daniel W. Drezner, "The Hidden Hand of Economic Coercion," *International Organization* 57 (2003): 643-59.

³⁶ For some cases of how the U.S. exercises domineering influence over weaker states and their citizens, see Richard W. Miller, *Globalizing Justice: The Ethics of Poverty and Power* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), chap. 5.

³⁷ For this view, see Daniel W. Drezner, *All Politics is Global: Explaining International Regulatory Regimes* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007), pp. 32-59, 184-201.

has often been argued that these rules are shaped in favor of the more affluent states at the expense of the global poor. To be sure, small or weak states are often “rules-takers” in international regulatory regimes and it is important not to overstate the freedom states have in terms of how the global rules are set.

2. *Intergovernmental Organizations (IGOs)*

In addition to states, intergovernmental organizations (IGOs), such as the United Nations, World Trade Organization, the International Labor Organization, the World Health Organization, the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund, should bear some responsibilities for global justice. There are currently 246 IGOs in the world. These organizations transcend political boundaries and constrain the behavior of their members by providing norms for future policy, and interactions process that socialize new participants.³⁸

The first condition: these organizations are collective agents which have control over their own actions, thus satisfying the first condition mentioned above. These IGOs have the standing decision procedures, implicit and explicit norms, established practices that give rise to collective intentions, which are relatively independent from

³⁸ Peter Willems, “Transnational Actors and International Organizations in Global Politics,” in John Baylis, Steve Smith, and Patricia Owens eds., *The Globalization of World Politics*, 4th edn. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 332-47, esp. 341-2.

the intentions of their members, and various degrees of institutional capacity to act on such intentions. Although IGOs are formed by states and they must count on the latter's support and resources in order to perform their mandate, they are not completely dependent on states, not even on the most powerful ones. Once a certain transnational institution is created, the options of its member states are constrained by the rules and procedures of the institution and non-compliance will always involve certain costs in terms of sanction, reputation, or retaliations.

The second condition: IGOs do face normatively significant choices with respect to global justice. For instance, they can monitor the behavior of other transnational actors, such as states and transnational corporations, and make it more difficult for these agents to act on their unjust intentions. Moreover, these organizations can be relied on to overcome the collective action problem for transnational cooperation and allocate responsibilities.³⁹ On the other hand, IGOs can be a source of global injustice. For example, these organizations are capable of exercising domineering influence over small and weak states and thereby subject their citizens to hardships. Some international institutions such as the WTO, the World Bank and IMF, are capable of steering the course of development of poor developing countries, and thus have great impacts on the life prospects of individuals living in those countries.

³⁹ Caney, "Cosmopolitan Justice and Institutional Design," pp. 735-6.

3. *Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs)*

International NGOs, and in some cases, national NGOs, can be expected to bear some responsibilities for global justice. NGOs are the organizations that make up the third, or voluntary, sector in contrast to firms in the private sector and governments in the public sectors. Admittedly, NGOs include a highly heterogeneous group of organizations, representing a wide range of interests and concerns. But some generalizations about their capacities and powers are still possible.

The first condition: these organizations are collective agents capable of undertaking intentional actions. They usually have missions (that can be regarded as public statements of collective intentions) and standing decision procedures which make collective intentions possible and the organizational structure to carry out such intentions.

The second condition: it is possible for NGOs to contribute to the pursuit of global justice, if they so choose. First of all, they can identify problematic consequences of globalization that might otherwise be ignored. NGOs are often the first to use global information networks to identify problems of justice that are not raised or resolved by existing international arrangements. NGOs in service or advocacy works are often in

close touch with otherwise voiceless populations and so recognize problems that are invisible to other agents. Since their financial support depends on public visibility of the problems, they also develop linkages to media and raise public awareness about critical problems.⁴⁰ By campaigning on specific issues that have normative implications on the question of global justice, such as sustainable development, labor rights, and fair trade, INGOs can articulate new values and norms to guide and constrain international practice. They can also mobilize resources and act directly on important public problems.⁴¹ In addition, NGOs sometimes have the credibility that can enhance their capacities to effect desirable changes. NGOs with a strong local-level presence and relationships, frequent communication, and greater avenues for participation are likely to develop greater trust among the poor and vulnerable. NGOs may also be more trusted by local governments than less responsive or accessible official actors of intergovernmental agencies. Finally, private-sector firms may prefer to partner with INGOs over governments or other official actors to gain credibility in socially responsible investment activities.⁴²

⁴⁰ L. David Brown, Sanjeev Khagram, Mark H. Moore, and Peter Frumkin, "Globalization, NGOs, and Multisectoral Relations," in Joseph S. Nye Jr. and John D. Donahue eds., *Governance in a Globalizing World* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institute Press, 2000), pp. 271-98, at 283.

⁴¹ Ibid., pp. 283-4.

⁴² Stephen C. Smith, "Organizational Comparative Advantages of NGOs in Eradicating Extreme Poverty and Hungers: Strategy for Escape from Poverty Traps," in Jennifer M. Brinkerhoff, Stephen C. Smith, and Hildy Teegen eds., *NGOs and the Millennium Development Goals: Citizens Action to Reduce Poverty* (New York: Palgrave, 2007), pp. 121-48, at 135-7.

4. *Private-Sector Firms*

Private-sector firms, particularly transnational corporations (TNCs), are the fourth kind of responsibility-bearers.

The first condition: these firms or corporations are collective agents in the sense they can form collective intentions (usually the pursuit of financial welfare of their shareholders) and the capacity to act on such intentions.

The second condition: private-sector firms can adopt business practices that reflect the due interests of the stakeholders in developing countries such as insisting on core labor standards. Moreover, TNCs can foster the institutional development of developing countries within which they operate: they can promote good governance by example and practice in countries where formal institutions are weak. Finally, TNCs can promote development through their core business activities: they provide incomes in weak employment environments. They also produce and distribute goods and services. Their presence can therefore provide greater availabilities of offerings and opportunities in the marketplace to broaden local production capabilities and reduce dependence on the low value-added primary goods.⁴³ However, private-sector

⁴³ Hildy Teegen, "Achieving the Millennium Development Goals: Ways for MNCs to Effectively Interface with NGOs," in Subhash C. Jain and Sushil Vachani eds., *Multinational Corporations and Global Poverty Reduction* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2006), pp. 261-86, esp. 272-4.

firms may have an interest in sustaining the institutions that produce unjust outcomes because they may themselves benefit from such injustices.

5. *Individuals*

The final kind of responsibility-bears for global justice is individuals. It should not be controversial to claim that individuals count as agents in the sense mentioned above. However, it requires more arguments to show that individuals satisfy the second condition. One may doubt that individuals are agents of global justice because they are not major actors in global politics and they often seem so powerless in the face of various transnational institutions. So to what extent are individuals facing normatively significant choices with the possibility of promoting or undermining global justice?

First of all, individuals can influence the acts of the above-mentioned collective agents in virtue of their specific role in these institutions—political leaders, government officials, representatives in international organizations, citizens, corporate executives, shareholders, NGO staff, individual donors, and so on. This is because every collective action requires *individual* participations.⁴⁴ Therefore, when we allocate responsibilities to collective agents, we are at the same time allocating responsibilities (albeit indirectly) to individuals who constitute these collectives; and

⁴⁴ See, for example, Isaacs, *Moral Responsibility in Collective Contexts*, pp. 38-41; and List and Pettit, *Group Agency*, pp. 35-6.

the occupants of these institutional positions can certainly be expected to carry out their organizational roles in ways that respect the relevant duties of global justice.

Second, and equally important, individuals can act collectively or contribute to collective endeavors to promote global justice. For example, ordinary citizens can pressure their state to adopt foreign policies that discharge its duties of global justice or to call for reforms in certain transnational institutions. They must also be willing to pay for such endeavors. Consumers can voice their concerns about the conditions of the workers who made the goods and urge the firms to adopt commercial policies that would lead to morally better outcomes. In the end, the burdens arising from these responsibilities must fall on the shoulder of particular individuals.

In this section I have identified the types of agents that can be held responsible for promoting global justice. A related issue is how to allocate the burdens of pursuing global justice among individuals. This will be addressed in the next section.

6.4 DISTRIBUTING BURDENS

In the previous sections I have identified the relevant agents of justice and discussed three types of duties in relation to global justice. These duties will make demands on

various agents of justice in the sense that individuals will have to sustain a loss in well-being as a result of complying with their requirements.⁴⁵ For example, an IGO may be responsible for promoting global justice in a certain way but the burdens of doing so will in the end fall on some individuals (such as citizens of wealthy societies). This prompts the questions of how to allocate the burdens associated with carrying out the duties of justice and on what basis. My concern in this section is with the underlying principles that should guide the allocations of such burdens.

One can identify at least three principles for allocating these duties to different agents:

The casual-responsibility principle: those who cause the problem should pay for its remedy.

The benefit-from-injustice principle: those who have benefited from the problem should bear the burdens of addressing it.

The ability-to-pay principle: those who have the capacity to address the problem should bear the burdens and their responsibilities should increase with their capacity.

In the rest of this section I shall examine these three principles in turn.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ *Moral Demands in Non-Ideal Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000). Murphy's discussion is about the demands of different conceptions of morality on complying agents but his points can also be applied to the demands of different conceptions of justice.

⁴⁶ The first and the third principles are proposed by Simon Caney in his discussion of how the burdens of dealing with climate change should be allocated. See "Climate Change and the Duties of the Advantaged," *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy* 13 (2010): 203-228. See also "Human Rights, Responsibilities, and Climate Change," in Beitz and Goodin eds., *Global Basic Rights*, pp. 227-47, esp. 239-45. The second principle is defended by Daniel Butt, *Rectifying*

Let me begin with Principle 1 which states that those who cause the problem should pay. This principle enjoys a considerable degree of intuitive appeal. The underlying idea is that causal responsibility should play a part in any plausible account of who should pay the price for addressing a problem. In the context of our present discussion, this principle maintains that the burdens of addressing global injustices should first be borne by the agents that are causally responsible for the unjust outcomes in question. So it can be restated as the following:

Principle 1: those who have acted unjustly and imposed harm on others or those who have caused, either individually or collectively, unjust outcomes should pay for its remedy.

Note that this principle attributes remedial responsibility to agents who are morally responsible for the unjust outcomes (i.e. can be subject to moral blame) as well as those who are not. When applied to the relational account of global justice developed in the previous chapters, Principle 1 will single out the agents (a) who have subjected others to relationships characterized by domination or exploitation, or have imposed unfair terms of cooperation in their interactions with others; and (b) the agents whose activities have jeopardized other people's basic right to subsistence. These agents are required to bear the burdens for all or some of the following: (i) to alter the terms of

their relations in ways that respect each other's equal status; (ii) to provide assistance to those who have been disadvantaged by their activities; (iii) to reverse the harm they have done on others; and (iv) to ensure that their future interactions with others will be consistent with principles of global justice.

It may be objected that this principle is indefensible because there are some agents who are excusably ignorant about the actual consequences of their activities. In reply, it must be stressed that finding an agent responsible is not the same as finding the agent at fault. Also, it may be argued that principle of strict liability is appropriate when the consequences of one's activities jeopardize the fundamental interests of some others.⁴⁷

A final point to note is that the agents who are singled out by the first principle should not be required to contribute all of their resources to the fulfillment of their unmet duties.⁴⁸ For example, these burdens should not be so great to cause deprivation on the part of the responsibility-bearers or to make them vulnerable to exploitation or domination. The reason is that it would be self-defeating for a theory of global justice to assign responsibilities in such a way that make the responsibility-bearers vulnerable to unjust treatment themselves.

⁴⁷ Caney, "Climate Change and the Duties of the Advantaged," p. 208.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 213.

However, this principle has important limitations. In the first place, this principle cannot cope with the burdens of addressing cases of injustices caused by the activities of earlier generations.⁴⁹ For example, it may be argued that the current state of global poverty and inequalities are originated in the history of colonialism. But all these perpetrators have died and therefore, if we do not want to leave the relevant burdens unallocated, we must attribute them to some other agents. Second, those agents who passively benefit from injustices are not required to bear any burdens regarding its remedy. These limitations, however, does not show that the principle of contribution should be abandoned when determining the allocation of burdens of pursuing global justice but only that it needs to be complemented by some other principles that can cope with the unallocated burdens.

Let us consider a second principle now. This principle states that those who have benefited from the problem should bear the costs of addressing it. In our present discussion it implies that the receipt of benefits stemming from injustice can confer responsibilities on the beneficiaries to provide assistance to those who have been unjustly disadvantaged. So this principle can be restated as the following:

Principle 2: the agents who have benefited from injustice should bear the

⁴⁹ Ibid., pp. 210-11.

costs of addressing it.

This principle does not assume that the beneficiaries themselves have played any causal role in the generation of the unjust outcome in question. The receipt of benefits is in itself sufficient to justify the bearing of burdens on the part of the beneficiaries. It may be thought that this historical principle applies only to cases where there were some specific events of injustice that conferred some benefits on some agents at the expense of others. However, it seems to me that this principle can be extended to cases where the causes of injustice are institutional or systematic. In particular, this principle would also assign burdens of addressing injustices to persons or institutions which are benefiting from unjust institutions or practices.

Two arguments can be invoked to support this historical principle. First, these benefits gained from injustice can be treated as kind of “unjust enrichment” which the recipients have no right to retain.⁵⁰ So when some agents have to bear the burdens of redressing such injustice, we should start with those who have received benefits from it and these beneficiaries can raise no complaint because their having these benefits is without proper bases in the first place. A second, and related, argument is that whenever some agents benefit from injustice while others suffer from it, a distortion

⁵⁰ For a discussion of the concept of unjust enrichment in English law, see Lord Goff and Gareth Jones, *The Law of Restitution*, 7th edition (London: Sweet & Maxwell, 2007), pp. 16-52.

in a fair scheme of distribution is created and placing the burdens associated with promoting justice (or redressing injustice) on the agents who have benefited unjustly would help to correct this distortion by cancelling out both unjust gains and losses.⁵¹

When applied to the account of global justice developed in the previous chapters, the second principle implies that those who stand in a privileged position in their relations to others and have benefited from being so positioned should bear the burdens of changing the status quo. For example, the ordinary consumers in the affluent societies may have benefited from the exploitative practices of the apparel industry in the developing countries in the sense that they are able to enjoy a wide range of choices in clothing at low prices. These consumers are not subject to the first principle although they are hardly innocent bystanders to the injustices that are being perpetrated in many developing countries.⁵²

Principle 2 is, however, not without limitations. First, it cannot cope with the burdens of addressing unjust states of affairs which are not caused by human activities. For example, there may be cases in which some people are unable to meet their own basic needs as a result of a natural disaster. Moreover, in some cases of injustice, the

⁵¹ Butt, *Rectifying International Injustice*, pp. 120-2.

⁵² Young, *Responsibility for Justice*, p. 145.

benefits received from injustice may be smaller than the losses suffered from the victims. If we rely solely on principle 2, then what an agent is required to sacrifice for the sake of promoting justice cannot exceed the benefits it obtained or received as a result of either incidents of unjust acts (committed by some other agents) or of some unjust institutions or practices. Therefore, even if the beneficiaries are willing to give up their unjust gains, this may not be enough to put the situation right. Finally, promoting global justice may require the cooperation and contribution of agents which have not been implicated in historical injustice. For example, the establishment of the appropriate institutions that would the necessary background conditions for individuals to relate to one another as equals in the global context may require the work of many agents (including the victims of injustice) which have not received benefits from historical injustice. The burdens of doing so need to borne by some agents. Therefore, one may add a third principle which is intended to cope with the remaining responsibilities that both Principles 1 and 2 fail to address.

The third principle states that those who have greater capacity to contribute to promoting global justice should be assigned relatively larger burdens in doing so. For our present purpose, it can be restated as the following:

Principle 3: those who have the capacity to promote justice should bear the burdens and their responsibilities should increase with their capacity.

The third principle assigns the burdens of promoting justice and/or undermining injustice to the agents who are capable of so doing and divide them among the capable agents according to their different degrees of capacity. According to this principle, affluent persons and those organizations which have power over the structural process that produce unjust outcomes should pay more for the costs of bringing the world towards greater justice. In assessing different agents' capacity, we have to consider two different factors: one has to do with the effectiveness of different agents in performing the required tasks; the other has to do with the relative costs they have to bear.⁵³

It may, however, be thought that this final principle is non-relational in nature because the agents who have the capacity to contribute may not be those who are standing in morally relevant relations to others in the global context. Imagine, for example, we have discovered a previously unknown island in the middle of the Pacific Ocean the inhabitants of which have been living in complete isolation from the rest of the world and they are not contributing to or affected by global climate change. Suppose further that these islanders are extraordinarily bountiful and have the living standards comparable to those found in the most affluent societies in today's

⁵³ Miller, *National Responsibility and Global Justice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 103-4.

world. Should these islanders be required to share the burdens of bring about a more just global order? It seems unfair to hold these islanders responsible for promoting global justice if they cannot expect to benefit from a just global order but a relational egalitarian does not have to hold that Principle 3 applies to these islanders regardless of the relation they stand to foreigners. From standpoint of relational egalitarianism, these islanders do not owe any egalitarian obligations of justice to outsiders because, by hypothesis, they do not stand in any justice-triggering relations to people living outside their island.⁵⁴

To conclude, I have considered three principles for allocating the burdens of pursuing global justice to different agents. Although there may be some overlapping of these principles, each of them is based on distinct arguments.

6.5 *THE PROBLEM OF DEMANDINGNESS*

Having explored the duties generated by the relational account of global egalitarian justice, I shall now turn to discuss whether this account imposes excessive demands on complying agents. The concern here is that, given the current state of global

⁵⁴ For a discussion of what types of relationships can give rise to claims of distribution justice, see Chapter 4 of this dissertation.

inequality, my account of global justice may require too much sacrifice on the part of affluent individuals.

Note that the problem of demandingness is different from that of motivation, and my primary concern is *not* whether the affluent individuals are sufficiently motivated to discharge their responsibilities for global justice. Needless to say, the problem of motivation is an important issue for global justice. We can address the problem of motivation either by enhancing people's motive to carry out their responsibilities (say, by cultivating people's dispositions of empathy, respect, and action) or by changing the ways in which such duties are discharged (say, by designing institutions that create more favorable conditions for individuals to carry out their responsibilities).⁵⁵

However, the point of the demandingness objections is certainly not that certain duties of justice exist only when the relevant agents are actually motivated to fulfill them.⁵⁶

It does not follow from the fact that the affluent individuals lack the motivation to discharge their responsibility for global justice that the conception of global justice in question is overly demanding.

⁵⁵ For the first approach, see Neta C. Crawford, "No Borders, No Bystanders: Developing Individual and Institutional Capacities for Global Moral Responsibility," in Beitz and Goodin eds., *Global Basic Rights*, pp. 131-55; for the second approach, see Lichtenberg, "Are There Any Basic Rights?" in the same volume.

⁵⁶ For a critique of this view, see Christopher Heath Wellman, "Relational Facts in Liberal Political Theory: Is There Magic in the Pronoun 'My'?" *Ethics* 110 (2000): 537-62.

Another point to note before we proceed further is that we are considering the demandingness of different accounts of justice—including the relational account of egalitarian global justice defended earlier—under the condition of moderate scarcity. We need to make this assumption because extreme scarcity would make most conceptions of justice potentially very demanding on complying agents because fulfilling the duties of justice may drastically limit their ability to live the kind of life they want to live. On the other hand, exceptional abundance will make most accounts of justice significantly less demanding and therefore the complaint of excessive demandingness would be of no practical importance.⁵⁷

Although some collective entities are supposed to bear the responsibilities for global justice, it is important to note that these responsibilities have to be discharged by the collective actions of those individuals who constitute these collective entities and any burden associated with these responsibilities will ultimately fall on those individuals. For example, even if we assume that it is the affluent states that should take the responsibility for aiding the foreign poor, such transfers of resources would most likely cause some decline in the quality of life the members of these states because the resources they could have retained for themselves are now transferred

⁵⁷ Following Hume, Rawls maintains that moderate scarcity is among the circumstances which define the role of justice. See *A Theory of Justice*, pp. 109-10.

elsewhere.

There are three possible responses to the demandingness objection. First, one may claim that a conception of justice can never be overly demanding because whenever an individual is required by justice to sacrifice something, he is no longer entitled to it. The underlying thought is that a conception of justice imposes unreasonable burdens on individuals only when it requires some individuals to have a level of advantage that is lower than what they deserve. But this is impossible because what one deserves is defined by the conception of justice in question. Second, one may argue that there can be some plausible standards for judging whether a conception of justice is overly demanding but denies that one's own account of justice is overly demanding according to any of these standards. Finally, one may accept that the account of justice one previously affirms is too demanding and then try to cope with that problem by revising it so that the demands it imposes on people will be more reasonable.

However, the first position is implausible because instead of addressing the problem of demandingness, it simply defines it away. Because every conception of justice requires individuals to undertake some burdens to contribute to the goals it favors, we must ask whether such burdens are reasonable to the complying agents. It

seems to me that a conception of justice can be demanding too much, or too little, of individuals. I also reject the last of the above options because in the rest of this section I am going to argue that my account of global justice is not overly demanding according to any plausible standard of demandingness.

Now let us consider a number of standards that one may use to judge the demandingness of a conception of justice.

6.5.1 *Factual Status Quo*

The first standard of demandingness we should consider treats the status quo—that is, how things are and can be expected to be in the future. According to this standard, a conception of justice makes demands on individuals to the extent of any losses he does or would suffer just because of his compliance with it comparing with the level of advantage he can expect as things now stand.⁵⁸

But the standard of factual status quo cannot guide us in determining whether a particular account of justice is *overly* demanding. The reason is that, according to this standard, the demandingness of an account of justice depends entirely on the extent to which the current situation deviates from the ideal of justice and how much individuals are benefiting from existing injustices. Imagine a world in which some

⁵⁸ Murphy, *Moral Demands in Non-ideal Theory*, pp. 34-5, 47.

individuals are deriving huge benefits from exploiting others. In this world any account of justice that prohibits exploitation would be extremely demanding towards these individuals because they would be much worse-off should they comply with its demand. But this does not constitute any reason for claiming that such an account of justice is overly demanding. The reason is that it makes little sense to claim that an account of justice is *overly* or *unreasonably* demanding on complying agents simply because the status quo is grossly unjust, and the costs of transition to a more just state of affairs would be very high.

6.5.2 Comparative Demands

Another standard we may use to judge the demandingness of a conception of justice is to compare how individuals fare or are expected to fare under different conceptions of justice.⁵⁹ According to this standard, a conception of justice makes demands on individuals to the extent that the individuals would have to forgo something that they would be entitled to under an alternative conception of justice. For example, an egalitarian conception of justice makes demands on the better off persons because these persons can expect to enjoy a higher level of advantage if a more minimal (and thus less demanding) conception of justice is adopted. This standard seems to

⁵⁹ Ibid., pp. 40-1.

correspond to the thought that some individuals may benefit more from a particular conception of justice than from another. But it is doubtful that it can serve as the standard for deciding whether a conception of justice is *overly* demanding.

The most obvious problem with this standard is that it cannot tell us whether a conception of justice is *overly* demanding. The reason is that, by employing this standard, all we can claim is that one conception of justice makes more demand on a particular set of individuals than another conception of justice does but it does not entail that this conception of justice is imposing *unreasonable* burdens on these individuals. In short, we cannot claim that a conception of justice is overly demanding simply because some individuals would be better off under an alternative conception of justice. Another problem with this standard is that different groups of individuals would fare differently under alternative conceptions of justice and it is unclear which individuals we should focus on. For instance, an egalitarian conception of justice makes demands on the better off persons in the sense that these individuals can expect a higher level of advantage under a libertarian conception of justice. On the other hand, a libertarian conception of justice makes demands on the poor in the sense that they can expect a higher level of advantage under an egalitarian conception of justice. But it remains unclear whether either of these conceptions of justice is *overly* or

unreasonably demanding.⁶⁰

6.5.3 Proportionality

A third standard of demandingness compares the moral importance of the losses the complying agents have to sustain with the goods that such compliance is expected to produce. What is overly demanding would always depend on the moral worth of the outcomes the account of justice is aiming to achieve in relation to the losses imposed on the complying agents.⁶¹ According to this standard a conception of justice would be overly demanding when it requires any individual to sacrifice something morally important for some goals that lack comparable moral importance. For example, a conception of justice which requires a large number of individuals to stay in absolute poverty so that the better off can maintain their luxurious style of living would be overly demanding to the poor by this standard because the moral worth of the losses it imposes (freedom from poverty) outweighs the value of the goal (satisfying a preference for a luxurious life-style).

The consideration of proportionality could perhaps at least provide us with some

⁶⁰ It is nonetheless possible to argue that we should give priority to how the worse off persons fare under alternative conceptions of justice. But this consideration is external to the standard of comparative demands.

⁶¹ Robert Goodin, "Demandingness as a Virtue," *The Journal of Ethics* 13 (2009): 1-13.

standard regarding whether a conception of justice is *overly* or *unreasonably* demanding. It is hardly controversial to suggest that a conception of justice which requires some individuals to sustain morally significant loss for some relatively trivial goals is imposing unreasonable burdens on them. My account of global justice, however, does not seem to be overly demanding by this standard. Once we take into consideration the goods associated with standing in a relation of equality to one another in the global context such as non-domination and fair terms of cooperation, and compare them with the losses that a privileged citizen in the affluent world may have to sustain, it would be hard to insist that the sacrifice imposed by this conception of justice is overly demanding as compared with the moral worth of these goods.

6.5.4 Absolute Level of Well-being

A fourth standard we may employ to judge the demandingness of an account of justice is to consider the absolute level of well-being that complying individuals would likely to enjoy in an ideally just society. According to this standard a conception of justice is overly demanding when complying with its requirements will (or is very likely to) leave individuals below a certain minimal level of well-being. However, the plausibility of this standard depends much on how the threshold is set. Perhaps one relatively uncontroversial baseline is that of subsistence. Therefore, we may think that

a conception of justice would be overly demanding when complying with it would endanger people's subsistence.⁶² Now it should be noted that an account of justice may be more or less demanding to different individuals depending on the level of well-being they can reasonably expect when complying with its demands. For example, a libertarian conception of justice which gives absolute priority to the right to private property is overly demanding because those who cannot provide for their own subsistence would have no justice-based claim against the well off. In other words, this account of justice could be very demanding on those who are under the threat of absolute deprivation. But this account of justice is considerably less demanding on the affluent individuals who now have their property rights protected without the responsibility to assist the poor.

Although the absolute level of expected well-being could be a plausible standard for judging whether a conception of justice is overly demanding (provided that one can come up with a non-arbitrary threshold level), there is no reason for thinking that my account of global justice is overly demanding in this sense. First, as argued in the previous chapter, it is committed to securing people's basic needs because that is one

⁶² Again, it is worth bearing in mind that we are not primarily concerned with the demands of justice under the circumstances of extreme scarcity because extreme scarcity is likely to make *any* account of justice or morality potentially very demanding on complying agents.

of the necessary preconditions for people to stand in a relationship of equality to others. Second, it distributes responsibilities partly according to the agents' capacity for carrying out the tasks and so those who are badly off in absolute terms are unlikely to bear excessive burdens for the pursuit of justice.

6.5.5 Tension with Special Responsibilities

A fifth standard that may be employed to judge the demandingness of a conception of justice is to consider whether it leaves enough room for individuals to discharge their special responsibilities arising from personal relationships and group affiliation. According to this standard a conception of justice is overly demanding when it is incompatible with people's special responsibilities in the sense that individuals cannot be reasonably expected to fulfill their special responsibilities if they comply with its requirements. For example, a conception of justice that requires people to spend all their efforts and resources to maximize the overall good is overly demanding as it severely undermines the complying agents' ability to attend to their special responsibilities arising from various personal relationships. Now it may be argued that a commitment to any egalitarian conception of global justice such as mine is incompatible with our special responsibilities towards our fellow compatriots and therefore it is overly demanding. The idea is that we would not be able to accord

priority to the interests of our fellow compatriots if we adopt an egalitarian conception of global justice.

To this I have three replies. First, this problem of demandingness is supposed to apply just as much to the domestic context as it does to the global one. The reason is that special relationships exist at the national level as well as the sub-national level, for example, the family, circle of friends, and so on. If we think that an egalitarian conception of global justice such as mine is overly demanding because it conflicts with our special responsibilities, we must also think that an egalitarian conception of domestic justice is also overly demanding. Second, it may be argued that one's responsibilities for global justice does place legitimate constraints on how one is to fulfill one's special responsibilities to one's nationals or fellow compatriots. As such, one has special responsibilities to one's compatriots only to the extent that having such responsibilities is compatible with one's responsibilities for global justice. To consider a domestic analogue: no one would seriously dispute the claim that parents do have some special responsibilities towards their own children but how they can legitimately fulfill such special responsibilities must be constrained by the demands of justice. Similarly, it can be argued that how one may legitimately attend to their special responsibilities to their compatriots so long as one does not violate one's

duties of global justice. Third, it could be argued that our special relationships can give rise to special responsibilities only under the condition that these special relations would not undermine global justice. That is to say, although our special relationships have non-instrumental values, whether they give rise to special responsibilities are conditional upon their not violating certain moral constraints and such constraints are themselves defined by a conception of justice.⁶³

This section has considered five different standards that may be employed to judge the demandingness of a particular conception of justice. I have argued that there could be some non-arbitrary ways for deciding whether a conception of justice is *overly* or *unreasonably* demanding but my account of global justice is not overly demanding according to any of such standards.

6.6 CONCLUSION

It is time to conclude. This chapter has discussed our responsibilities for global justice. I have argued that the following duties follow from the account of global distributive justice defended in the previous chapters:

⁶³ Arash Abizadeh and Pablo Gilabert, "Is There a Genuine Tension between Cosmopolitan Egalitarianism and Special Responsibilities?" *Philosophical Studies* 138 (2008): 348-65.

I. The duties to avoid:

- (1) A duty not to subject others to unequal transnational relationships;
and*
- (2) A duty to avoid carrying out activities that undermine the ability of others to meet their own basic needs.*

II. The duties to protect:

- (1) A duty to protect people against deprivation of their justice-based entitlements;*
- (2) A duty to support or create institutions that would work to make it more difficult for powerful agents to realize their unjust intentions or to get away with their own unjust behaviors;*
- (3) A duty to support or create institutions that would enable the agents to act on their just intentions and create incentives for agents to act justly; and*
- (4) A duty to support or create institutions that would enable the vulnerable persons or groups to make claims of justice on powerful agents.*

III. The duties to aid:

- (1) A duty to aid those who cannot provide for their own basic needs due to failures in the performance of type I or/and type II duties;*
- (2) A duty to aid those who cannot provide for their own basic needs due to natural disasters; and*
- (3) A duty to aid those who lack the necessary material conditions to stand in relations of equality in the global context.*

In the third section I argued that various agents, including states, IGOs, NGOs, private firms and individuals, should bear the responsibilities for global justice because these agents can either promote or undermine global justice through their activities. The fourth section is about distributing the burdens of pursuing justice. I argued that responsibilities for global justice should be assigned according to the following two

principles:

Principle 1: those who have acted unjustly and imposed harm on others or those who have caused, either individually or collectively, unjust outcomes should pay for its remedy.

Principle 2: the agents who have benefited from injustice should bear the costs of addressing it.

Principle 3: those who have the capacity to promote justice should bear the burdens and their responsibilities should increase with their capacity.

Because of the gravity of current global injustices, taking responsibilities for global justice may seem a daunting task. This raises the concern that my account of global justice is overly demanding on those who are required to be the net contributors and should be rejected on this ground. In the last section I considered a number of standards according to which one might judge whether an account of justice is overly demanding. I argued that only some of these standards—the consideration of proportionality, absolute level of well-being, and tension with special obligations—are plausible but my account of global justice is not overly demanding according to any of them.

CONCLUSION

My aim in this dissertation is to defend global egalitarianism, but unlike many defenders of global egalitarianism I have sought to ground it in a relational account of equality. I began by examining three challenges to global egalitarianism—the *Argument from Coercion*, the *Argument from Reciprocity*, and the *Nationalist Arguments*—and argued that the global egalitarian ideal is not vulnerable to these oft-stated challenges. I then turned to the more constructive task of developing an egalitarian theory of global distributive justice that is grounded in the value of equality as normative ideal for human relationships. I tried to articulate and defend an ideal of *relational* equality that applies at the global level. This ideal, I argued, gives us reason to reject institutional arrangements that generate excessive socio-economic inequalities among individuals living in different societies. Finally, I discussed the relevant responsibilities and the distribution of burdens associated this account of global justice. The aim of the following pages is to summarize the points that have

been raised in the previous chapters. (Please note that all appropriate footnotes and citations can be found in the preceding chapters.)

I. COERCION

Chapter 1 examined the Argument from Coercion, according to which equality is a demand of justice only among those who are subject to a shared network of coercive governance. It should be noted from the outset that a coercion theorist does not have to deny that some form of coercion (e.g. border controls) exists in the international arena; but she must show that coercion exercised by the state against its own members is normatively distinct so that the principle of equality applies exclusively within states. Therefore, Chapter 1 considered a number of attempts to account for the normative peculiarity of *political* coercion, and argues that none of these attempts succeeds, in the end, in restricting the scope of egalitarian justice to the state. More specifically, the chapter examines four distinct arguments: they appeals, respectively, to: (i) the profound distributive consequences of coercion, (ii) the fact that people are the putative co-authors of state coercion, (iii) the claim that state coercion is relevant because nonvoluntary subjection to others generates claims of egalitarian justice, and (iv) the fact that only states have the immediate day-to-day power to enforce its rules against individuals. It maintained that the above reasons fail to tell us why the boundary of political coercion should define the scope of egalitarian justice. However,

one would not be wrong to think that political coercion needs justification if it is to be legitimate. In fact, the Argument of Coercion draws heavily on this intuition. So what could justify political coercion other than people's *relative* distributive shares? Chapter 1 considered a *democratic* approach to the justification of political coercion. This approach maintains that political coercion is justified when those who face it are given the opportunity to participate in the political process that determine how coercion is exercised as free and equal citizens. I argued that this alternative approach, which focuses on political legitimacy, is more consistent with autonomy, better reflects our concern about the coercive nature of the state, and meets the requirement of particularity. Consequently, one can address the problem of justification of political coercion without committing oneself to the claim that equality applies only when there is political coercion.

II. RECIPROCITY

Having discussed one leading argument against global egalitarianism, I turned in Chapter 2 to consider a second prominent account—the Argument from Reciprocity. This, recall, holds that egalitarian obligations of justice obtain only between citizens and residents of the same state because equality is a requirement of *reciprocity* in the mutual provision of some important collective goods that can only be provided by the

state. This chapter advanced three claims. First, it maintained that the Argument from Reciprocity is indefensible if it is taken to mean that the relevance of equality presupposes the existence of *cooperative* practices. The reason is that if one interprets the Argument from Reciprocity in this way, it will follow that powerful individuals can free themselves from the demands of egalitarian justice simply by imposing oppressive terms of social interactions on the vulnerable persons.

It then examined the claim that what justifies egalitarian entitlements is one's *contribution* to the state's capacity to provide basic collective goods; and foreigners do not have such entitlements because they do not contribute in the relevant ways. It responded that this argument faces a dilemma: either the account of *contribution* is too thin to justify a claim to equality; or the account is too thick and exclusive so that some residents and citizens are at risk of being excluded from the scope of egalitarian justice.

Despite the above arguments, no one can deny that the special relation of state-based reciprocity has moral significance. Chapter 2 considered three reasons for attributing moral significance to the special relation of state-based reciprocity, namely, (i) it enables the participants to preserve one another's autonomy; (ii) it has profound and pervasive impacts on people's life chances; and (iii) it generates special duties among fellow citizens and residents. The chapter maintained that although these

reasons do account for the moral significance of the relation of sharing a state, they do *not* imply that the scope of egalitarian justice should be restricted to the state.

III. NATIONALITY

Chapter 3 turned to a third leading argument against global egalitarianism. Unlike the first two which focus on the normative significance of the *state* the third one considers the moral significance of *nationality* and its implications for global justice. The chapter focused on David Miller's works which present a sophisticated and powerful challenge to global egalitarianism. It examined three arguments by Miller.

The chapter began with Miller's anti-universalist argument that people may reasonably reject the liberal egalitarian conception of justice that conflicts with their deeply-held worldview. The problem with this argument is that the existence of conflicting conceptions of justice as such does *not* show that the liberal egalitarian principles are indefensible. More important, this argument is incompatible with Miller's own minimalist conception of global justice because some basic human rights are not in fact universally respected by all cultures.

Chapter 3 then turned to consider the *metric problem*—the problem of specifying the appropriate metric (or metrics) that would allow us to determine whether two

persons in different societies are equal in some relevant aspect (for example, have equal resources or equal opportunity). In response, I argued for the following: (1) the metric problem does not give us any decisive reason to reject global equality of opportunity as a fundamental principle; (2) it wrongly assumes that the metric problem arises only in the global but not the domestic realm; (3) it fails to show that we have to rely on nation-wide cultural understanding to make opportunity comparisons; and (4) it exaggerates the difficulties of making cross-national comparisons of opportunity.

After addressing the metric problem, Chapter 3 considered the *dynamic problem* which states that transnational redistribution to offset inequality is inconsistent with holding nations responsible for their decisions that influence the levels of resources and opportunities available to its members. Central to the dynamic problem argument is the assumption that individual members can be held responsible for the collective actions of their nation and these collective responsibilities extend to what their national forebears did in the past. To question this idea of national responsibility, Chapter 3 considered two models of collective responsibility—the *like-minded group model* and the *cooperative practice* model—but argued that neither supports Miller's conclusions.

A potentially more fundamental problem with the idea of national responsibility is that it is inconsistent with our deeply held conviction that it is unfair to penalize people for decisions and conducts in which they take no part. If one accepts national responsibility because people generally identify themselves with their national forebears and receive some benefits from their nation, then one must also accept that the children should be held responsible for bad parental choices. But it is simply perverse to think that children should be held responsible for the choices of their parents.

Despite the above misgivings about *national* responsibility, it seems reasonable to think that individuals can sometimes be held responsible for redressing the wrongful harms which their national forebears inflicted on others. To address this concern, Chapter 3 considers the foundations of inherited responsibility for historic injustices and argues that accepting it does *not* imply that poor people should be held responsible for the imprudent decisions or social practices of their national forebears. This type of inherited responsibility can be explained by the fact that the present generation have benefited from the historical injustice in question and therefore can be held responsible for redressing it.

Chapter 3 concludes the critical part of my dissertation. Central to these anti-egalitarian arguments is the claim that the domestic and the global contexts are different in some morally relevant way and that difference should define the scope of egalitarian justice. But it turns out that the differences they focus on either do not actually exist, or, if they exist, are not morally relevant in a way that restricts the scope of equality. I turned in Chapters 4 and 5 to the more constructive task of articulating a relational account of global equality. My approach is to first argue that an attractive ideal of relational equality applies at the global level, and then identify a set of principles of global distributive justice that are grounded in this ideal.

IV. RELATIONAL EQUALITY

Chapter 4 therefore provides an account of what it means for people to stand in a relation of equality to one another in the *global* context. It argued that we do stand in a justice-triggering relation to distant strangers in the global context and suggests ways in which such relations should be constructed to respect each other's equal status. But before we proceed, it should be noted that we do stand in some normatively significant relations to distant strangers. The reasons are as follows.

Shared institutions with pervasive impacts: the current global order consists of a complex set of transnational institutions which enable various agents from different

jurisdictions to interact with pervasive and profound impacts on one another. These institutions are made up of two elements: first, clusters of connected norms, principles, and rules; second, clusters of norms organized into stable and on-going social practices. Together they establish the broadest parameters within which various actors interact with one another in the global realm. The global trading system, the global financial institutions, and the system of state sovereignty are some examples of these institutions.

Cross-borders interactions and interdependence: it has been argued that global economic interdependence (as illustrated by the growth in international trade and investment) is a necessary and sufficient condition for claims of distributive justice to arise. But to understand the moral significance of people's relations to one another in the global context, one has to look beyond the economic realm and consider other arenas of global interdependence. Chapter 4 considers three such examples of global interdependence: globalization of economic production; the relocation of heavily polluting industries; and global environmental interdependence.

After showing that we do stand in non-trivial relations to one another in the global context, Chapter 4 identifies three aspects of relational equality and argues that this ideal applies in the global context. In particular, it generates support for the

following three imperatives: (1) supporting the self-respect of each participant, (2) avoiding domination of some by others, and (3) embodying fair terms of cooperation for common endeavors. Each of these aspects represents a way in which people can be related to one another as *equals*. I argue that this kind of equality has instrumental as well as non-instrumental values and we should therefore ensure that our relations to one another in the global context are properly structured to respect each other's equal status.

V. PRINCIPLES

Having defended the ideal of global relational equality, I turned in Chapter 5 to consider its *distributive* implications. I there defended four principles of global distributive justice:

1. *The basic needs principle: each person, irrespective of the society to which she belongs, is to have an equal right to the fulfillment of her basic needs without having to subject herself to unequal social relations.*
2. *The principle of global equality of opportunity: when engaged in economic cooperation one has a duty to ensure that the other participants can have a roughly equal chance to attain the benefits of their cooperation, if they so choose.*
3. *The principle of non-exploitation: (a) the global institutional order should be designed to minimize the occurrence of transnational exploitation; and (b) inequality of social and economic advantages arising from exploitative interactions are to be arranged to reduce the probability of future exploitation.*
4. *The principle of global non-domination: each person, regardless of the*

society to which he or she belongs, is to have a right (a) to equal freedom from transnational domination and (b) to the material conditions that guarantee such freedom.

All in all, the above four principles provide a normative standard according to which we can decide what distributive arrangements at the supranational level are suitable for a community of equals. And according to these principles, we now have good reasons for rejecting institutional arrangements that tend to generate excessive inequality of social and economic advantages among individuals across the world. Some may think that while the last three principles would condemn much of the existing socio-economic inequalities among individuals across societies, they draw only on derivative reasons as they maintain that socio-economic equality is desirable only insofar as it brings about certain desirable outcomes (e.g. ensuring fair terms of transnational cooperation, preventing or reducing transnational domination). But it should be stressed that these principles are grounded in the *egalitarian* ideal that people should be related to one another as equals in the global context. In other words, these principles are the ones we should adopt to govern our global institutions in order to ensure that our relation to one another in the global context is properly structured to reflect each other's status as equal persons.

VI. RESPONSIBILITIES

The final chapter of this dissertation addressed the problem of responsibility in relation to global justice. It explored the questions of what duties follow from my account of global justice, who can be expected to bear them, and whether they make excessive demands on complying agents. It defended the following sets of duties:

I. The duties to avoid:

- (1) The duty not to subject others to unequal transnational relationships;
- (2) The duty to avoid carrying out activities that undermine the ability of others to meet their own basic needs.

II. The duties to protect:

- (1) The duty to protect people against deprivation of their justice-based entitlements.
- (2) The duty to support or create institutions that would work to make it more difficult for powerful agents to realize their unjust intentions or to get away with their own unjust behaviors;
- (3) The duty to support or create institutions that would enable the agents to act on their just intentions and create incentives for agents to act justly;
- (4) The duty to support or create institutions that would enable the vulnerable persons or groups to make claims of justice on powerful agents.

III. The duties to aid:

- (1) The duty to aid those who cannot provide for their own basic needs due to failures in the performance of type I or/and type II duties;
- (2) The duty to aid those who cannot provide for their own basic needs due to natural disasters;
- (3) The duty to aid those who lack the necessary material conditions to stand in relations of equality in the global context.

After discussing the responsibilities for global justice, I identified five types of agents

that can be expected to bear such responsibilities. My claim is that various agents, including *individuals* and *collectives*, should be responsible for promoting global justice but what exactly do such responsibilities require would depend on their respective position in the global order. States, international governmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, private firms and individuals are the agents that should bear the responsibilities for global justice.

There is also a question of how the burdens associated with these responsibilities should be distributed among individuals; and Chapter 6 argued for the following three principles which should guide the allocation of these burdens:

- 1. Those who have acted unjustly and imposed harm on others or those who have caused, either individually or collectively, unjust outcomes should pay for its remedy.*
- 2. The agents who have benefited from injustice should bear the costs of addressing it.*
- 3. Those who have the capacity to promote justice should bear the burdens and their responsibilities should increase with their capacity.*

Finally, Chapter 6 considered a number of standards according to which one might judge whether an account of justice is overly demanding. I argued that my account of global justice is not unreasonably demanding on the complying agents according to any plausible standard of demandingness.

All in all, this dissertation presents an egalitarian theory of global distributive justice that is grounded in equality as a normative ideal for how human relationships should be conducted. Instead of simply extending principles of justice from the domestic to the global context, it advanced an ideal of relational equality that applies globally and defended a set of principles of justice that follow from this ideal. As such it provides a powerful set of considerations in favor of global egalitarianism – one different from the standard luck egalitarian vindication of global equality and not vulnerable to the objections that have been leveled against luck egalitarian arguments for global equality.

(Word count: 90,855)

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