

EQUALITY AND EGALITARIANISM

Exam Strategies: Coming off the fence, saying which theory is correct and WHY. Do not just regurgitate a debate around luck egalitarianism. Answer all parts of a question! Draw on discussion of levelling down objection, RE, priority and desert (if relevant). Distinguish between individual and institutional responsibilities of distributive justice. If possible, bring in arguments from the Disability Topic in APTJ into the essay. If question is posed in a vague way: Create your own framework for the question.

My own position: *On the side of relational egalitarianism. Distributions matter, but only in so far as they contribute to equal social relations. Relational values cannot be straightforwardly incorporated into a distributive egalitarian framework but have a distinctive interpersonal value. Even though luck egalitarianism captures the deep intuition that people should not be worse off than others out of things outside of their control, it is still incomplete as an egalitarian theory because it would permit inequalities which we would deem unjust, e.g. separate but equal bathroom facilities (at least under certain formulations of LE). Furthermore, we should be thinking not only about individuals, but also about social groups as units of concern to whom egalitarian duties are owed is sensible too – this allows us to identify structural injustices.*

DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

- › What is broad consensus amongst political philosophers?
 - > That **persons ought to be treated as equals**, that a moral equality between persons holds. However, disagreements arise on the question what this entails, and what the **currency of egalitarianism** is. (Cohen: The “*equilandum*”) Sen shows that equality is important to almost all political philosophers: For Rawls it is equality of liberty and equality in the distribution of primary goods, for Dworkin it is equality of resources - even Nozick demands equality of libertarian rights and utilitarianism assigns the same weight to all individual's interests.
 - This shows that the battle is not one about "Why equality" but one of "**Equality of What**".
 - The currency of egalitarian justice is **that fundamental respect in which people will be equal in an equal society** (Wolff 1998)
 - > A minimal constraint for a doctrine to count as egalitarian (Hurley): it must, "*for some X, favour relatively more equal patterns of distribution of X over relatively less equal patterns of X, other things equal.*"
- › Who bears duties of egalitarian justice?
 - > There can be individual and institutional responsibilities of distributive justice, though there exist questions of duties in a context of non-compliance – e.g. if the state fails to fulfil its duties toward its citizens. (see Cohen's work on this)
- › What are distributive and relational theories of equality about?
 - > **Distributive Equality** aims at distributing some currency equally, thus takes it for granted that there is something which justice requires people to have equal amounts of – e.g. Luck Egalitarianism
 - > **Relational Equality** is concerned with people enjoying egalitarian relations with one another, it is about equal social status, respect, recognition and against hierarchy – e.g. Anderson's Democratic Equality. Equality is hence conceived as a relational value. The aim is to achieve an **ideal society in which persons relate to one another as having the status of equals**.
- › What are different forms of distributive egalitarian theories (they differ in their currency of egalitarianism)?
 - > **Equality of Resources view:** justice requires distributing or transferring resources so that no further transfer would leave the agents more equal (Dworkin 1981)
 - > **Equality of Welfare view:** aims at distributing or transferring resources until no further transfer would leave agents more equal in welfare – this can be understood as preference satisfaction (Dworkin 1981)

- > **Equality of Capabilities:** distribution of resources should be evaluated in terms of its contribution to individual capabilities to function in various ways deemed to be objectively important or valuable (Sen)
 - This is similar to Arneson’s Equality of Opportunity for welfare view
- > What is Luck Egalitarianism about?
 - > Says that **inequalities due to brute luck are unjust**, whereas inequalities due to option luck are just. It is thus against the moral arbitrariness of unchosen inequalities. Note here that LE is compatible with different distributive theories of equality. **“Anti-luck” and “pro-choice”**
- > What is the difference between Pure and Pluralist Egalitarianism?
 - > Pure egalitarians care only about equality. **Pluralist egalitarians believe that there are multiple important principles or values.**
 - One can care about equality in itself and also care about utility and/or privacy and/or citizens having a sentiment of solidarity. All of these can be values (that is, components of a better outcome).

TELIC VS. DEONTIC EGALITARIANISM

- > From Parfit 1991
 - > **Telic Egalitarianism** holds that: **It is in itself bad if some people are worse off than others.**
 - **Obj.:** Levelling Down Objection
 - > **Deontic Egalitarianism** holds that: **We should aim for equality, not to make the outcome better, but for some other moral reason.** Thus, it states that people being worse off than others is not inherently bad but bad because it is unjust or involves wrongdoing. We should aim for equality for another moral reason, e.g. because it violates rights, fairness or justice.
 - The moral reason that Parfit has in mind here is (most probably) meant as *“treating other people equally”*. This is different from “making the outcome better”, which is a telic or consequentialist aim.
- > But O’Neill (2008) points out that the most attractive forms of egalitarianism do not fit this conceptual framework, e.g. what he calls **non-intrinsic egalitarianism**
 - > This form of egalitarianism rejects both the telic and deontic statements above, and merely holds that inequality is in itself bad. Reasons why inequality is a bad include: it creates stigmatizing differences in status, weakens self-respect, creates objectionable relations of power and domination.
 - > From this, O’Neill infers that **we do not need to face a strict dichotomy between ideals of social equality and ideals of distributive equality.** Rather, the former might provide a foundation for the latter via the provision of a set of non-intrinsic reasons for equality.
 - *“On the Non-Intrinsic egalitarian view, distributive equality is valuable because of its effects, and specifically by virtue of the fact that it brings about states of affairs that are themselves intrinsically valuable for egalitarian reasons”*
- > **IMPORTANT:** Deontic or telic egalitarianism cannot be subsumed into instrumental or intrinsic egalitarianism, and neither is equivalent to the distributive/relational egalitarianism views. Why? Because distributive egalitarians can be deontic – the way we treat people equally is by distributing stuff equally to them (they could alternatively be telic, too)

DISTRIBUTIVE EQUALITY

- > What unites distributive egalitarian theories is that **they aim to distribute some currency equally.** The key question is thus: What is the thing that needs to be equalized?
 - > Different versions: Equality of opportunity for welfare (Arneson 1989), equal access to advantage (Cohen 2011), Equality of ambition-sensitive endowments (Dworkin 2000)

FORMS OF DISTRIBUTIVE EGALITARIANISM

EQUALITY OF WELFARE

- > **Claim:** Treating people as equals entails making their lives equally desirable, so we need to equalize people's welfare levels.
 - > **Obj. (Expensive Tastes):** Those who have expensive tastes require a larger amount of resources to satisfy their preferences. It seems unreasonable to give them much more.
 - **Res. Involuntariness:** People might not be responsible for their expensive tastes, e.g. through a handicap which makes preferences (for mobility for example) more expensive to satisfy. This cannot be accommodated by resource egalitarians
 - **Dworkin:** This is why we should prefer the equality of resources view.
 - > **Obj. (Inexpensive Tastes):** There might be a person who has high welfare with fewer resources – “Tiny Tim”. But this does not undermine his claim to additional resources (Cohen 1989)

EQUALITY OF RESOURCES (DWORKIN)

- > **Claim:** People should have the same external resources at their command to make of them what, given their various features and talents, they can (Dworkin)
 - > Dworkin proposes **envy test as a metric of equality**: “No division of resources is an equal division if, once the division is complete, anyone would prefer someone else's bundle of resources to his own bundle.” – this test must be applied to people's bundles over the course of time (i.e. diachronically) not at any particular point
 - > **Insurance market:** People can insure themselves against the possibility of e.g. being handicapped. In this way, unchosen brute luck is transformed into morally inoffensive chosen option luck.
 - **Sequence of events:**
 - Envy test is applied. It tests whether people accept their bundle of goods. Once everyone does and no one feels envy, we have achieved an equal distribution.
 - People choose in the goods auction which kind of goods they want to have. The auction is the method by which one would go about distribution.
 - They enter the insurance market and choose what kind of bad luck they want to purchase insurance against.
 - The states are realized, people will be subject to luck (which they have either insured against or not).
 - So the **insurance market converts brute luck into option luck**. We end up in a situation where we can say to people: “You chose this particular conception of the good life”. It is your choice, and we are treating you like an adult. He even explicitly says that the insurance market can neutralize the effects of differential talents (which result from the genetic lottery).
Note (link to APTJ): This solution treats people with disabilities as being in need of financial compensation – it assumes a straightforward medical model of disability.
 - > Dworkin makes the point that **requirements of equality pull in opposite directions**: On the one hand, distributions of resources at any particular moment must be **ambition sensitive**; but on the other, they must be **endowment insensitive** - that is, they must not be affected by differences in abilities that would produce income differences amongst people with same ambitions.
 - Hence, his fundamental insight seems to be that it is unjust if people are disadvantaged by inequalities of their circumstances, but it is equally unjust for me to demand that someone else pay for the cost of my choices (adapted from Kymlicka)
 - > **Obj. (Different needs):** Disabled and able-bodied person both get the same share of resources even though the first will be worse off comparatively (Arneson)

- > Obj. (Resource Fetishism): **Resources are means to an end**, and it would be fetishist to focus on means rather than on what individuals gain with these means. Since resources matter to us insofar as they enable us to achieve goals that matter to us, a proper measure of equality should be based on people's opportunities to fulfil their goals (Sen 1980)

EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY (ARNESON)

- > Claim: For equal opportunity of welfare to obtain, each person must face an array of options that is equivalent to every other person's in terms of the prospects for preference satisfaction it offers. When equality of opportunity prevails, the assignment of individuals to places in the social hierarchy is determined by some form of competitive process.
 - > Need to **distinguish between formal and substantive equality of opportunity**
 - Formal equality of opportunity merely requires the position to be obtained to be open to all applicants
 - Substantive equality goes beyond that: the applicants' actual opportunities must be equal (e.g. reducing social stigma and discrimination)
- > *"when persons enjoy equal opportunity of welfare in the extended sense, any actual inequality of welfare in the positions they reach is due to factors that lie within each individual's control."* (Arneson 1989)
- > Rawls (1999): *"assuming there is a distribution of natural assets, those who are at the same level of talent and ability, and have the same willingness to use them, should have the same prospects of success regardless of their initial place in the social system."*

EQUALITY OF ACCESS TO ADVANTAGE (COHEN)

- > Cohen agrees with Dworkin that equality of welfare is not the right reading of the egalitarian claim, but disagrees with him that it should be equality of resources - he **rather endorses the view of equal opportunity for advantage, or equal access to advantage**. Thinks that we should compensate for disadvantages too that are beyond a person's control.

MY ADDITION: TREATING DISABILITY

- > The case of disability poses powerful challenges to any account of distributive justice. **An egalitarian needs to think about how we can adjust our theories and the world such that everyone can function as an equal**. Disability should be represented as a type of disadvantage that requires policy responses, but while still treating people with disabilities as equals.
 - > Equality of resources: Those who are disabled need more resources than those who are not
 - Compensation can be stigmatizing, and it assumes a straightforward medical model of disability. It could lead to isolation and marginalisation commonly experienced by PWD.
 - > Equality of welfare: People with mental disabilities or chronic diseases may report lower happiness levels than others, and that cannot be made up for easily.
 - > Equality of opportunity: It is just simply not possible to make everyone, disabled or not, have equal opportunities. A wheelchair will never be able to run marathons. We should rather care about equal respect and status.

WHAT IS THE SITE OF DISTRIBUTIVE JUSTICE?

- > **Rawls: The basic structure (the economic part of it)**
 - > Shape and character of institutions in a society, e.g. taxes, affect the distribution of benefits and burdens, so they affect whether just distribution obtains
- > **Cohen: Individual actions**
 - > What individuals do also affects the distribution and the degree to which justice obtains.

- Example: Institutionally, women have equal rights by law in most countries (anti-sex-discrimination), but de facto they are still experiencing oppression (the feminist would say “the personal is political”)
- > Considers an ideal society, in which incentives are not needed, because all members of society internalised Rawls’s principles
 - So the talented in an ideal society would not need incentives to work hard
- > [Cohen \(2000\)](#) argues for an **egalitarian ethos**, whereby in a society there exists a social norm that one should make choices with regard to egalitarian values, and this norm is internalised by most people.
 - This differs from Rawls, who views individual duties merely to be supporting just institutions and cooperating with others when they are not in place
 - Example: To overcome racism, only having non-racist institutions is not sufficient, individuals must internalise norms of racial equality

LUCK EGALITARIANISM

- > What is the distinction between Option Luck and Brute Luck?
 - > **Option luck**: Result of deliberate risk-taking ([Dworkin](#): “*a matter of how deliberate and calculated gambles turn out – whether someone gains or loses through accepting an isolated risk he or she should have anticipated and might have declined*”)
 - > **Brute luck**: Result of unintended or unforeseen risks ([Dworkin](#): “*a matter of how risks fall out that are not in that sense deliberate gambles.*”)
- > Claim: **Unchosen and uncourted inequalities ought to be eliminated and chosen inequalities should be left standing**. Thus, no one should be worse off than someone else due to bad brute luck. In other words, the distribution should be **ambition-sensitive and endowment-insensitive** ([Dworkin 2000](#)). Proponents of LE: [Cohen](#), [Dworkin](#)
 - > Obj. (Everything is choice): Even when I go out and get hit by a lightning, this was my own choice, so I should be responsible for the outcome. The resulting inequality would thus be justified. But this seems unreasonable.
 - Reply: Not all choices justify an inequality but only “*deliberate and calculated*” ones. The consequences must have been reasonably foreseeable and avoidable. Taking a walk and not foreseeing the possibility of being hit by a lightning does not justify an inequality as the risk was very small.
 - > Obj. (Determinism problem): Everything we do is causally determined, so how can we be held responsible for the option luck that results from our choices?
 - Reply: No need to solve the free will/determinism debate here. [Cohen](#): It does not impede on the principle, because it merely states that “*if we are relevantly responsible, then the inequalities are just*”
 - > Obj. (Harshness): Negligent Driver Example ([Anderson](#)) – Consider a driver who suffers an accident due to his own negligence LE seems to say that since it is the driver’s own fault, he should not have a claim to any medical care but left to his own fate.
 - Reply: It may not be that distributive equality gives us a reason to save the driver, but other values might, e.g. helping others in dire need, charity... (when it is at not much cost to oneself). So LE does not necessarily conclude that the driver should be left to die.
 - > Obj. (Exploitative) – LE is exploitative because it ignores the plight of those whose disadvantages are the result of their own choices. “**Problem of vulnerable caretakers**”: Consider a mother who is single and unemployed and who declines a job offer for the sake of children. LE seems to say that she should forego unemployment benefit, or that she should not be transferred any extra resources given that it is what she herself chose.

- Reply: Need to look at the background conditions from which the choice was made: Does the mother enjoy equal opportunity? Was it a declinable gamble, so reasonable to expect the mother to accept the job?
 - LE still seems to have a blind spot when it comes to acknowledging and recognizing different ways people may be actually or potentially disadvantaged.
- > **Obj. (Demeaning, lack of respect)** – The distributive egalitarian ideal comes into tension with other egalitarian values, such as feeling respected by others and treated as an equal. (Wolff 1998)

Example: To qualify for welfare/unemployment benefits, one would have to go through the demeaning and shameful process of explaining to the state why they couldn't get a job due to factors outside of their control, e.g. their lack of talents. By collecting data and exerting controls, the message sent is one of **suspicion and distrust** and can be perceived as highly insulting.

 - Reply: in an ideal world, revealing one's own lack of talents would not be considered as shameful. There is "nothing to be ashamed of"
 - Reply to reply: Even if a source of shame is contingent and even irrational it can still be experienced as such (Wolff 1998)
- > **Obj. (Levelling down)** – Parfit 1984: Consider two groups, whereby one group has more of some good than the other. A natural disaster causes the initially richer group to lose some of its goods so that both groups end up with the same amount of good. Suppose neither group knows of the existence of the other.
 - A numerical example would be:
 - I) Half at 100, half at 150, II) Everyone at 99.
 - It seems that a LE would favour the reduction in the differential bad brute luck between the groups, and hence that the new distribution is in some ways better than the previous one.
 - Parfit: Only Telic egalitarianism faces the Levelling Down Objection. This objection only applies to distributive egalitarianism, since the groups do have relations amongst each other.
 - O'Neill (2008) objects: Non-intrinsic egalitarianism can also prefer the "equal" society over the other, given that the unequal distribution may represent an affluent but class-ridden society, marked by forms of servility, domination and oppression.
 - One can also give a "**Pluralist response**", saying that though there are strong reasons to promote equality, these do not need to always trump other considerations. Such pluralist egalitarian views are untroubled by the Levelling Down Objection (O'Neill 2008)
 - *"Egalitarians should reject the Levelling Down Objection and should regard it as toothless against any but the crudest egalitarian views."*
 - "I, for one, believe that inequality is bad. But do I really think that there is some respect in which a world where only some are blind is worse than one where all are? Yes. Does this mean that I think it would be better if we blinded everybody? No. **Equality is not all that matters.**"* (Temkin 1993)
- > **Obj. (Inequalities across time)**: Distributive egalitarianism has counterintuitive consequences when we apply the principle of equality across people's lives, rather than just at one point in time (Bidadanure 2016)
 - **Unequal City Example**: Assume a deeply unequal city where the elderly live very impoverished lives, but the young live extremely lavish lifestyles. Assume further that those who are presently elderly also lived lavish lives when they were young, and that the young will live impoverished lives when they are older. → On luck egalitarian account, no individual in this case is disadvantaged by bad brute luck, since all other individuals have/will receive the same treatment throughout their lifetimes.
 - But this seems implausible to anyone with egalitarian sensibilities. One should not only look through the diachronic distributive lens, but also the **synchronic relational lens**.

RELATIONAL EQUALITY

- › **Claim:** There is more to equality than equality of resources or welfare – it is about relational values such as **recognition, respect and equal standing**.
- › The comparison that matters “*are among those who stand in **social relations** with one another and in which the goods of equality are essentially relations of equal authority, recognition, and standing*” (Anderson 2012)
- › **Anderson’s (1999) Democratic Equality.** Democracy is understood as “*collective self-determination by means of open discussion among equals, with rules acceptable to all*”
 - > Characteristics:
 - Aims to abolish socially created oppression
 - Is about equal social standing, living in a community of equals – this is what makes it a relational theory of egalitarianism
 - Aims for equality across a wide range of **capabilities** that are necessary to functioning as an equal citizen - e.g. effective exercise of political rights, participation in civil society etc.
 - It refrains from making intrusive and moralizing judgements about how people *ought* to behave and use their opportunities.
 - This is because it does not condition citizen’s enjoyment of their capabilities on whether they use them responsibly.
 - > This, according to Anderson, allows us to analyse injustices in regard to other matters besides the distribution of resources and other divisible goods.
 - > Ultimately, **what people owe one another is the social conditions of the freedoms need to function as equal citizens.**
 - Two people are equal when both accept the obligation to justify their actions by principles acceptable to the other, and in which they take mutual consultation, reciprocation and recognition for granted.
 - This covers basic capabilities but does not go much beyond that! We do not owe it to people who have birth defects that make them appear ugly to pay them beauty surgeries. But rather, we could adopt new forms of acceptable physical appearance so that those with birth defects can function as equal citizens.
 - > Relational egalitarianism in Anderson could be understood as the **state creating the possibility for equal relationships among citizens.**
 - > **Note:** *The notion of “citizen” itself might be controversial on relational grounds.*
- › **Objections**
 - > **Obj.: RE could be consistent with radical inequalities. It thus isn’t really an egalitarian theory**
 - **Reply:** radical inequalities would be rarely, if ever, allowed under RE since they would most likely lead to exploitation and domination – hence unequal social relations. The relational principle does have distributive implications (Scheffler). There is empirical basis for this.
 - > **Obj.: RE guarantees people equal treatment regardless of their choices** (it is “ethically insensitive” – Dworkin). That would lead to the prudent having to pay the costs from the behaviour of the imprudent.
 - **Reply:** RE should be understood as a reciprocal relation between individuals and society. The state does not impose health insurance on others, but it does expect that one comes to the aid of others when their health needs are urgent. The basic duty of citizens, acting through the state, is not to make everyone happy, but to secure the conditions of everyone’s freedom (Anderson 1999)
 - **Reply:** In regarding the economy as a cooperative venture, workers accept the demand of “interpersonal justification” (Cohen), namely that any consideration offered as a reason for a policy must be acceptable to everyone.
 - DE guarantees access to social conditions of freedom to all citizens, regardless of how imprudently they conduct their lives (this is where it differs from LE). The only exception is criminal conduct.

- The approach of DE is to **insure only against the losses of certain types of goods**, which are guaranteed types of goods within the space of egalitarian concern. Individuals still have plenty to lose from irresponsible conduct.
 - E.g. smoker would be paid the treatment for lung cancer in hospital, but they wouldn't be entitled to compensation for loss of enjoyment of life, or reproach from relatives who disapprove of lifestyle
- RE can also find other remedies, for example instead of giving out material compensations, there could be a social effort aimed at ensuring that people make prudent decisions in the future.

DISTRIBUTIVE VS. RELATIONAL EQUALITY – DISCUSSION

- › What are the **key differences** between distributive and relational egalitarianism?
 - > Distributive equality understands equality in terms of an equal distribution of some good, but RE sees equality as a kind of social relation between persons.
 - > It seems that **distributive egalitarians believe that distributive equality has *intrinsic* value** and is required by fairness, while **relational egalitarians value distributive equality merely *instrumentally***, to the extent that it contributes to promoting a society of relational equals. (Bidadanure 2016)
 - Example: Very equal society where people have same opportunities, standard of living, enjoying full and equal set of capabilities etc. – But some have luxury cars and some not. The possession of luxury cars does not translate into higher status in this specific society. **On relational egalitarian grounds, nothing seems wrong with this type of society.** But on some distributive egalitarian accounts, one might object to this distributive inequality.
 - > But of course, RE is also concerned with the distribution of resources, since it requires that everyone has access to enough resources to avoid being oppressed by others, and to function as an equal in civil society.
- › What are tensions between Distributive and Relational Egalitarianism?
 - > **RE permits inequalities which LE condemns, and vice versa:**
 - RE condemns consequences of option luck such as poverty, which create social stigma
 - Example: “**Separate but equal**” bathroom facilities for different racial groups would still be unequal even if the quality of the facilities were equal – this is because their function is to constitute certain racial groups as an inferior caste (Anderson 2012)
 - LE condemns distributional inequalities which RE deems fine as long as they do not create social hierarchies, e.g. some people owning sports cars and others not, but this not translating into differences in social status
- › Can distributive equality be reduced into a relational equality framework?
 - > Not really. There are certain distributive prerequisites that provide persons with means to participate in ways which preserve their equal standing in the eyes of others (Elford)
 - Example: people who lack adequate good, clothing, shelter, education or medical care cannot participate in political life or civil society on the same footing as others, or only with great difficulty.
 - > Elford (2017) argues that distributive of equality can be in tension with a relational view, in two ways
 - **Telic**: what we said above. The fact that relations of social equality is dependent on goods being distributed in a certain ways means that independent distributive principles can be in tension with distributive requirements imposed by relational equality
 - **Deontic**: requiring or permitting certain distributive inequalities is itself inconsistent with treating or respecting persons as social equals. (see LE and the critique by Anderson)
- › Can relational equality concerns be **reduced into a distributive egalitarian framework**?
 - > **YES** side of the debate: “Relational values” can be seen as yet another good to be distributed. Relational goods significantly contribute to individual resources and/or wellbeing and cannot be compensated for

by material goods such as money, so distributive egalitarians should care about their allocation (Gheaus 2016)

- **Obj.: Relational equality has a distinctive impersonal value** (Elford). See below
 - Example: Oxford posh boys outwardly treating their Scouts as if they were equals with themselves, but they don't really think that they are. This does not lead to direct welfare losses (since the scouts don't know what the boys really think) but it still seems something is wrong here.
 - This example illustrates that “regarding someone as an equal” and “treating someone as an equal” can come apart. (Cohen 2013)
- > **NO** side of the debate: Since the goods to be distributed are social relations, **the relative “amount” that one has is not independent of what others “have”**.
 - “The goods of equal social relations are not ‘distributed’ separately to individuals because they are essentially shared by those who stand in such relations.” (Anderson 2012)
 - “Social relations of equality are complex and require a complex response” (Anderson 2012)
 - Young agrees with Anderson in that the purpose of equality theory is less to identify “unlucky sources of inequality” but rather to **identify how institutions and social relationships conspire to restrict the opportunities of some people** to develop and exercise their capacities.
- > Wolff (1998) states that there are in fact at least **two ideas equally central to egalitarianism – fairness and respect** – and that there **can be a degree of tension between them**.
 - “Fairness” is the demand that no one should be advantaged or disadvantaged by arbitrary factors. But an excessive concern for distributive equality can undermine relational equality.
 - Seems like we cannot reduce one into the other.
- > Elford (2017) maintains that equal social relations have an **impersonal value**, even if this typically arises along things that are good for persons.
 - Example Caring Relationships: Clear that relations of care involve goods of personal value, but it would be mistaken to think that caring relations are valuable only because of the way in which they enhance the wellbeing of individuals’ lives. There seems to be something valuable about caring for others which is virtuous, good, meaningful, over and above its contribution to wellbeing.
- > Which conception can **explain egalitarian social movements better**? Egalitarian social movements from the 1960s to the present have tried to overcome inequalities of gender, race, sexuality, disability ... this has led to a shifted focus on issues of culture, representation and organization of civil society (Fraser 1997)
 - > Anderson: Relational conception of equality can explain the logic of these cultural agendas better. They are about how members of different groups should relate to one another
 - Example: Critical race theorist’s critiques of hate speech are grounded in how it can reproduce the subordination of oppressed groups.
 - > We should be concerned about the politically oppressed, about inequalities of race, gender, class, about victims of nationalist genocide, slavery etc. (Anderson 1999)

OTHER ISSUES

MORAL UNIT OF CONCERN: INDIVIDUALS OR GROUPS?

- > Philosophical theories of equality typically assume that the **relevant entities when evaluating equality or inequality are individuals**:
 - > Dworkin: offers his theory as methodologically and morally individualistic

- > **Temkin:** *“The core of the egalitarian’s position is that it is bad for one person to be worse off than another through no fault of their own. (...) Correspondingly, concern about inequality between society’s groups must ultimately be understood as concern about inequality between groups’ members”*
- > **Rae:** Worry that group-conscious assessments of inequality wrongly collapse individual circumstance into a group average – but there are always many individual differences.
- > But **Young (2001)** argues that the **importance of measuring inequality in terms of social groups** (e.g. class, gender, race etc.) **lies in that it reveals the structural inequalities** which are particularly relevant for making judgments of justice and injustice. **People treat others as group members**, and the product of many such actions sometimes results in structural inequalities.
 - > Examples:
 - Gender roles and expectations structure men’s and women’s lives in systematic ways which result in disadvantage and vulnerability for many women and their children. Women tend to be the primary caretakers in the family and so depend economically on their husbands – this means they are less likely to end up in high-earning jobs. (**Okin**)
 - Processes which reproduce residential racial segregation.
 - > *“structure refers to the relation of basic social positions that fundamentally condition the opportunities and life prospects of the persons located in those positions”* (**Young**).
 - *“structural inequality, then, consists in the relative constraints some people encounter in their freedom and material well-being as the cumulative effect of the possibilities of their social positions...”* These are socially caused.
 - > What follows from such an understanding is NOT that a certain distributive pattern should be produced, but rather, **what equalizing action should do is to intervene in the institutional processes and actions which constrain individuals’ exercise of their capacities**

SUFFICIENTARIANISM

- > **Frankfurt 1987:** What should matter intrinsically to an individual isn’t how well they do compared to others, but whether they have enough, given their aims and aspirations – **doctrine of sufficiency**.
 - > His argument is that “economic egalitarianism” (= the view that it is desirable for everyone to have the same amounts of income and wealth) confuses what is wrong in situations of poverty or where inequality matters. What is truly the moral issue is whether people have enough, not whether they have the same as others.
- > Why Sufficientarianism?
 - > Aims at limiting the scope of the levelling down objection
 - > A responsibility-insensitive form of Sufficientarianism may constitute a suitable alternative to prioritarianism, at least from the viewpoint of demandingness.
 - > In conditions of scarcity, equality is not valuable
- > You **cannot be both a sufficientarian and egalitarian:** Above the threshold of sufficiency, it does not matter anymore whether there is an unequal distribution.
- > Objection:
 - > **Sufficientarianism is not enough** (**Casal 2007**). Forms of Sufficientarianism setting a low threshold and not being combined with any demands of justice above the threshold are quite undemanding.
 - Resp.: Sufficientarianism does not have to be formulated in an undemanding way: can set the threshold high and with responsibility-insensitivity below that threshold. Then it would be quite demanding.
- > **Casal 2007** presents arguments that may be advanced to support the sufficientarian claims and argues against them:
 - > The **Scarcity argument** claims that there are sometimes weighty instrumental reasons to not distribute equally, especially in cases where there is not enough for everybody (e.g. medicine). But Casal argues that this does not impede plausible egalitarian convictions, namely that even if universal sufficiency is

attained, equality still matters - and even if it cannot be attained, equality may still matter in distribution of benefits.

- > Under any reasonable reading, "*egalitarians are committed to distributing rather than destroying benefits*" - In the medicine case they want to give everyone the equal chance to survive, not to all let them die!

PRIORITARIANISM

- > Prioritarianism generally seen as being an alternative to, or possible replacement for egalitarian views. It holds that: **Benefiting people matters more the worse off those people are.** In economic speak, it says that there exists diminishing marginal moral significance of gains in well-being.
 - > Thus, what matters is to improve the situation of the least well off as much as we can.
- > The benefit of prioritarianism is that it **avoids the levelling down objection.**
 - > Objection: The utility functions of people in regards to money are not the same (disabilities, different preferences) ([Frankfurt](#))
- > Can we be both an egalitarian and a prioritarian?
 - > [O'Neill \(2008\)](#) suggests yes: One can believe in both the Non-intrinsic badness of inequality and the diminishing moral importance of greater benefits. This seems to adopt a pluralist view: You can value equality and utility.

DESERT

- > Concept of Desert ([SEP Article](#))
- > Principle of desert: It is desirable that each person should gain good fortune corresponding to her virtue (deservingness)
- > Often there are situations in which desert and equality (and in fact priority, too) will both recommend equalizing transfers
 - > Consider a situation in which a person is badly off, but has more than he deserves and another person is well off, but has less than he deserves. Call the first person a sinner and the second person a saint. An advocate of equality (and priority) would say that we should help the sinner, but the principle of desert would suggest that it is morally better to aid the saint, who has less than she deserves ([Kagan 1999, 2012](#))

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