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Justice Across Ages: A Response to Critics[1]

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ABSTRACT

In this piece, I respond to seven challenges to my book *Justice Across Ages*, which advances an egalitarian theory of age-group justice. There are many powerful insights in each of the articles featured in this special issue, and I try my best to respond to the core counterproposal or critique underlined by each author.

Keywords: intergenerational justice, age-group justice, equality, sufficiency, dignity, exploitation, basic income.

1. A ROADMAP

I am grateful to the editors and authors of this special issue for dedicating their precious time to the arguments in my book. There are many powerful insights in each of the seven articles featured, and I won't be able to do justice to each of them here. Nonetheless, I will try my best to respond to what I take to be the core counterproposal or critique underlined by each author.

I start with objections to the single most important contribution of my book: the dual suggestion (i) that egalitarians cannot dispense with a relational component to make sense of age-group justice, and (ii) that the case of age-group justice reveals something important about the nature of the misalignment between distributive and relational accounts. Kasper Lippert-Rasmussen and Devon Cass take issue with both claims. Kasper Lippert-Rasmussen agrees that relational considerations are a key part of a full account of what justice requires, but he questions whether these

[1] Acknowledgments: In addition to the wonderful authors who have responded to my book for this special issue, I want to thank Tom Parr and Andrew Williams for excellent editorial insights. I am also indebted to Paula Casal for hosting a symposium on my book at Pompeu Fabra, which formed the basis for this special issue. Thanks to the workshop participants, respondents, and many thanks also to Tim Meijers and Lasse Nielsen for detailed comments on the draft.

concerns need to be cashed out as egalitarian. I reiterate that *inegalitarian* relationships are the ones I am concerned with, and argue that it is unhelpful to explain objectionable domination, exploitation, and marginalization in a way that makes no appeal to equality. These relationships are oppressive and unjust precisely because (and when) they are inegalitarian. Devon Cass grants that bringing temporal concerns to bear on the intra-egalitarian disagreement between relational egalitarians and distributivists is fruitful, but he believes that each side can formulate theories responsive to both diachronic and synchronic considerations. I respond to Cass by first clearing up a misunderstanding, and then showing that the synchronic distributive alternative he proposes is inadequate.

The following section is concerned with two sets of egalitarian concerns that have been left mostly outside the scope of my book. Siba Harb regrets the absence of engagement with matters of global justice. Manuel Valente worries that concerns of longevity are not addressed as frontally as they should. They are both concerned that, if these issues were taken more seriously, it could lead to the endorsement of different principles of age-group justice. They also worry that the counterfactual simplifying assumptions that led me to bracket these issues could render my theory non-action-guiding in the real world. I acknowledge some insightful suggestions in their essays, while also showing that my theory is not as muted on these issues as they think.

I then turn to two alternative ways of theorizing age-group justice. I wrote *Justice Across Age* because philosophers and theorists of social justice had paid too little attention to the temporality of social justice, in general, and to questions of age-group justice, in particular. Two of my respondents, Axel Gosseries and Nancy Jecker, are exceptions to the rule, having written extensively on this topic over several decades and having influenced me in many ways. In her response, Nancy Jecker proposes that a theory of age-group justice grounded in dignity and capabilities is preferable to one grounded in prudence, like mine or Daniels's. I respond by carving out a moderate but important role for prudence to play in a theory of age-group justice, and show ways in which my relational egalitarian component effectively addresses the very same issues she is herself concerned with, and more. Axel Gosseries, on the other hand, makes the interesting suggestion that egalitarian theories that treat concerns of efficiency as endogenous will be able to dispense with the exogenous prudential requirements I propose in my theory. I find the suggestion illuminating, but I also highlight some potential concerns with this alternative approach.

Finally, I respond to Nicola Mulkeen: the only intervention in this special issue that focuses on my policy recommendations. Mulkeen argues

that my basic income proposal might face the dual charge of exploitation and paternalism. These are issues that she believes should worry me since I ground my account in relational egalitarianism, which will arguably be especially sensitive to these kinds of objections. I respond to these concerns, and insist that, on the contrary, basic income follows nicely from relational egalitarianism and would be more likely than not to promote its aims quite effectively.

2. A TIME FOR RELATIONAL EQUALITY

Devon Cass takes issue with my conceptualization of the difference between distributive and relational egalitarianism. We both understand relational egalitarianism as the view according to which a just society is one whose members relate as equals and treat one another as such. Distributive egalitarianism, on the other, we both understand as being concerned with ensuring that individuals get their fair share of the good X that matters most fundamentally to justice (resources, opportunities, welfare, capabilities, and so on). However, he disputes how I present the two approaches' respective temporality. He presents my view as follows:

> [T]he two views [relational and distributive egalitarianism] involve differing kinds of *temporal* concern. The distributive approach, she suggests, is concerned with equality over people's complete lives (diachronic equality), whereas the relational approach is concerned with egalitarian social relations at each moment in time (synchronic equality). (this volume, 67)

Cass thinks that this approach is enlightening in some respects. But he argues that relational and distributive equality each have diachronic and synchronic characteristics. Although it is quite natural that Cass was led to think this way about my arguments, his presentation of my view is not exactly accurate.

Here is where he is right: I do argue that there is a strong connection between diachronic temporality and distributive fairness. This is because principles of distributive fairness are typically concerned with the distribution of benefits enjoyed over complete lives. Since our lives are lived through time, individual investments and choices at T1 can lead to distributive discrepancies at T2 which are not unfair once we take into account the full diachronic picture. If a discrepancy at T2 is unfair however (for instance, because it is due to brute luck), a compensation at T3 will typically be justified. We may also design policies that invest in an age group with great benefits over time, disregarding the differential treatment this momentarily creates between different age groups, so long as

successive age groups benefit fairly over time. This logic of responsibility, compensation, and prudence is fundamentally diachronic. Our job as egalitarians, from that perspective, is to enforce or restore diachronic fairness between persons.

Cass is also right that I argue that accounts that appeal exclusively to distributive fairness are unlikely to find plausible ways to make sense of a subset of problematic synchronic inequalities. By contrast, I argue that relational egalitarians will have little trouble explaining why some synchronic inequalities of these later sorts can still be objectionable: they enable, facilitate, or constitute forms of marginalization, segregation, exploitation or other forms of inegalitarian relationships. And relational egalitarians don't have as forceful reasons as distributive egalitarians to focus on whole life inequalities. In the book, I do highlight one potential limitation of the relational approach concerning matters of justice for distant generations: since current people and future people do not coexist, it is harder to see how we would apply the command to build a community whose members *relate* as equals. It is much clearer how requirements of distributive fairness might apply between nonoverlapping generations.

Here is where Cass isn't exactly right though: I believe that relational egalitarians will have no trouble explaining why diachronic relational inequalities, albeit between coexisting people, are bad. They will believe, of course, that *enduring* oppression is a great source of concern. The aim is to establish communities whose members relate as equals: you don't interact as an equal with another when you are their inferior at a particular time, nor do you when you are their inferior over time. So, although I embrace a hybrid framework in my book (which appeals to both reasons of distributive fairness and relational reasons to theorize about equality and time), I do not deny that an account of temporal equality between overlapping generations could in theory be relational all the way down; that is, only appeal to relational reasons and treat distributive reasons as derivatively important.[2]

Hence, I am not troubled by the part of Cass's paper in which he suggests that the relational view can apply diachronically. I agree. What I mostly want to respond to is the other part of his paper in which he argues that reasons of distributive fairness can effectively make sense of the kinds of objectionable synchronic inequalities I worry about in my book. Here we

[2] One might want to propose that even distributive fairness is grounded in some relational commitments. We care about distributive fairness precisely because we think that a just society is one in which we view each other as equals and treat each other as such (see Dworkin 2002). This is another sense in which a temporal account of equality could be relational all the way down, even when it is cashed out in terms of distributive fairness.

disagree. Cass proposes a free speech case of changing places, in which we all have free speech only for certain parts of our lives. He contends that distributive egalitarians would have little trouble arguing against this state of affairs. Free speech is not the kind of good for which intrapersonal trade-offs would be allowed because of our continuous interest in living our lives autonomously. I of course agree with this verdict, and I think distributive egalitarians have some resources to object to this state of affairs (reasons of prudence mainly). However, I still think that some of our most important reasons for objecting are not captured successfully by the distributive approach. Basic liberties are goods that cannot be traded off diachronically, precisely because one cannot relate to others as equals without them. Cass himself cannot help but bring this explanation to bear on the problem in his paper. I think it is simply the most significant egalitarian objection to a swapping autonomy scenario.

Nonetheless, Cass offers a couple of alternative explanations for the rejection of these synchronic inequalities. The first is best captured as sufficientarian: Cass draws on my prudential sufficientarian requirement and on Paul Bou-Habib's threshold view to contend that we would not want a life that falls short of granting enough to live autonomously at each point. This is an important and essential point, as I say in the book. But it is a concern about individuals falling too low and makes no appeal to the synchronic inequalities we want to scrutinize in the first place with a swapping autonomy case. I have no doubt that sufficiency captures some of our intuitions in this case, but this isn't the most pertinent contender for an egalitarian explanation. Cass's second proposal is one that overlaps with the first and is about diachronic utility: the suggestion is that a good life (for Cass, an autonomous life) isn't compatible with synchronic inequalities in free speech. My problem here is that we would make our critique of synchronic inequalities dependent on some version of what diachronic utility entails. From this perspective, it is not clear why we should prefer synchronic equality in autonomy over a distribution that provides a continuous increase in free speech over time, for instance, and no synchronic equality at any point between age groups. Relational egalitarians can offer a less contingent reason to oppose these types of trade-offs, even when the benefits and burdens cancel each other out over time or make us all better-off in some important distributive respects over time. My top line is that some of our most robust egalitarian reasons for wanting free speech at all points are irreducibly synchronic and about the kinds of relationships that pertain between individuals at a given time. They are not derivative of diachronic fairness or diachronic utility, and we do not need to step outside egalitarianism (sufficiency, priority, or utility) to find them.

Although I said I agreed with Cass that the relational view applies diachronically (as well as synchronically, of course), I must say that I do not find the way he illustrates this point to be optimal. Cass takes the example of two flatmates dividing up chores equally over time. He uses this example as evidence that relational equality must allow for some aggregation over time: knowing that they are swapping fairly over time means we shouldn't object to the imbalance at any given time, and this suggests that synchronic relational imbalances can aggregate over time. I would look at this case very differently though. Relational equality does allow aggregation of some benefits and burdens over time; but it does not allow aggregation of synchronic relational inequalities over time. I would not call Cass's synchronic chore imbalance an example of relational inequality in the first place. You are not treated as an inferior just because you do the cleaning for another. You might get paid for it; or you might do it in exchange for something else, without exploitation: I do the chores, you do the admin, the commute to work, or the cooking. If this isn't a synchronic relational inequality, then the example cannot serve the purpose Cass wants it to serve. The story Cass tells of burden sharing is of course relevant for getting more information about *the nature of the synchronic relation itself*. It is fine to aggregate benefits and burdens over time when they do not betray our standing as equals. However, a synchronic form of domination in which a flatmate, to continue with Cass's example, arbitrarily governs or exploits the other flatmate, would not be found to be acceptable from the point of view of relational equality, even if they shifted position every year. The sum approach we are led to taking when approaching inequalities as matters of distributive fairness distorts our understanding of relational equality in problematic ways here. It isn't a pure aggregative matter. Inegalitarian relationships like infantilization, marginalization, exploitation, objectification and so on do not aggregate over time as simply as resources, wellbeing points or even opportunities.[3]

Cass further notes that any relational egalitarian account needs to accommodate the fact that some social hierarchies are unproblematic: doctors and patients, teachers and students, parents and children, attorneys and clients, and employers and employees. This has no bearing on the diachronic/synchronic story I tell. Not all students will become teachers, not all patients will become doctors. But, for Cass, this is meant to suggest that some synchronic relational inequalities between age groups could be of that type too: acceptable, perhaps even socially beneficial, hierarchies. I wouldn't agree that these analogies are reassuring, however.

[3] Note that distributive benefits might not aggregate over time that simply either. If there are two ways to allocate a pot of resources over time between two individuals, then distributive egalitarians would typically prefer the pareto superior option.

We must decide separately whether the doctor-patient relation, for instance, is a form of social hierarchy, and if it is, whether reforming the institution is needed. It is eminently plausible that we need to transform these hierarchical positions to ensure that they become more egalitarian than they currently are. Undeniably, we have already moved in this direction over time, and there is a long way to go. Moreover, doctor-patient relations (or teacher-student relations and the like) do not *need* to be hierarchical to deliver the good they are supposed to deliver. Quite the contrary. One cannot be a good and effective teacher or doctor when one relates to one's students or patients as social inferiors, infantilizing or objectifying them. And I can treat others as lacking expertise I have without treating them as social inferiors. I therefore treat the postulate that some social hierarchies are acceptable and beneficial with great suspicion. I would argue that they either aren't true social hierarchies, or they are indeed something to worry about as egalitarians.

This leads me to Kasper Lippert-Rasmussen's related response. He argues that while I "may well be right that to account for the moral undesirability of Unequal City (and similar cases discussed in the literature) we need to appeal to a relational ideal, it is unclear that this ideal must be egalitarian rather than nonegalitarian." (this volume, 51-52). To argue for this position, Lippert-Rasmussen zooms in on a slightly different part of my argumentation—the one in which I claim that my account rests on the premise of the basic moral equality of all persons (or their equal intrinsic moral worth). My entire project is motivated by the thought that the aim of our theorizing about justice is to establish what it means to relate to each other *as* equals, *given that we are equals*. It is uncontroversial to claim that our societies are disfigured by hierarchies of rank and status and that individuals are often unable to meet, relate and treat one another as equals across gender, class, race, immigration status, among other lines of division. That is the fundamental injustice we must remedy, I assume. Here is where Lippert-Rasmussen comes in though. He believes that a lot of the synchronic relationships we have reasons to oppose might not presuppose a denial of equal basic status. These "bad" relationships would remain objectionable even if equal status was granted, and this suggests that they could be bad for nonegalitarian reasons.[4] Lippert-Rasmussen further believes this isn't a big problem for my framework. On the contrary, it likely means that my account could be of value to nonegalitarians as well as to egalitarians. But, he argues, I should not insist that relational reasons are fundamentally egalitarian.

[4] We even have reasons to object to the domination of animals, which could suggest that equality of moral status is inessential to the relational commitment.

I thank Lippert-Rasmussen very much for this critique, which follows neatly from a debate we had in another special issue about whether relational concerns in general are best captured as egalitarian or not. David V. Axelsen and I (2019) argued against what we called the *internalization* and the *externalization* strategies often employed by distributive egalitarians: when the latter encounter valid egalitarian claims that are relational in nature, they either redescribe them as distributive (and denature them in the process, we argue), or they recognize them as relational but treat them as commitments that are foreign to equality (and best captured as concerns about community, freedom, solidarity, etc.) In this new special issue, Lippert-Rasmussen takes examples of what I call *inegalitarian relationships* (like domination, marginalization, and exploitation), and attempts to show that they need not be inegalitarian to be objectionable. So, this is a version of the *externalization strategy*. Consider, he proposes, *symmetric domination*: a situation in which two agents can shoot one another, or seriously harm each other in some other way, at any given time. They are both at the mercy of another's arbitrary interference, and so they are both dominated, Lippert-Rasmussen contends. And yet, since they are symmetrically positioned, they relate to one another as equals. Lippert-Rasmussen believes that this suggests both that one doesn't need to register a deficit of egalitarian relating in order to object to domination and that (at least some) relational reasons are not fundamentally egalitarian.[5]

I really don't think I should bite these bullets. First, the injunction to treat others as equals, with respect to their basic equality, requires more than treating them the same as they treat you (the kind of equality we have in symmetric domination).[6] We must also treat others in a way that shows respect for their basic dignity as persons. The parties in *symmetric domination* don't exhibit that. But, in any case, *symmetric domination* is not an instance of domination as I would define it. We of course have very strong reasons to remedy this situation but not as an instance of domination. Domination pertains when individuals or groups are embedded in a systematic hierarchical relationship in which one party has the power to interfere arbitrarily in the other party's life (Pettit 2005; Vrousalis 2013). Being able to harm others at will is a basic fact of our mutual vulnerability as humans: at any given moment anyone has the power to run me over

[5] This could seem like a verbal dispute which doesn't reflect issues of normative importance. We clearly do have strong reasons to prevent domination, whether it is asymmetric or not. But my position is that we cannot theorize injustice adequately without making this difference clear. I hope to begin to show why in this section. For more, see Axelsen and Bidadanure (2019).

[6] Somewhat in the same way that distributive egalitarianism requires something other than simply treating people the same.

when I cross the street and I have the very same power over them. This is not domination, or domination is just interpersonal vulnerability. We are reminded of I. M. Young (1990: ch2), for instance, who includes violence as a face of oppression, but specifies that it is *systemic violence* that is oppressive (although we of course have reasons to regret violence in general). *Systemic* violence is a form of violence that only certain individuals have reasons to fear: their group membership makes them vulnerable to unprovoked attacks which seek to humiliate them. This is a narrow definition of oppressive violence and somewhat mirrors the tightness that I would confer on a concept of domination. If we insist on defining domination as broadly as Lippert-Rasmussen proposes, then we will need a new concept to refer to the paradigmatic cases of oppressor/oppressed dialectics that theorists throughout history have felt the need to single out.

Relatedly, I do not think that my relational objection to domination could do without a commitment to the idea that humans are moral equals. If an agent dominates another, there are two possibilities. In the first instance, the agent views the dominated as an inferior. In that case, the domination is a failure of relational equality in the most basic sense. In the second instance, as Lippert-Rasmussen proposes, the agent dominates another without viewing them as inferior in a basic sense. But in that case, we would complain that the domination is unfitting *given* the moral status of the oppressed as an equal. The treatment is not just cruel, it is also unjust and immoral to treat a person that way. Importantly, in treating them that way, the oppressor *degrades, debases,* or *demeans* the oppressed to such an extent that it can turn them into beings whose humanity and personhood are harder to recognize. Perhaps the dominator is trying to degrade their status precisely so that it feels more appropriate to take advantage of them and deny their claim not to be violated. The history of inegalitarian domination is surely partly of that kind: you dominate in order to reduce to a brute, and then you use the brute status to justify subjection. Hopefully this begins to suggest that one cannot dispense of a notion of basic equality in order to understand domination. Removing equality from the picture would be misleading. Again, this is not to deny that there are also nonegalitarian reasons to object to domination (well-being, safety, order, stability, dignity, community, etc.). But egalitarian reasons are constitutive of what's wrong with it.

3. WHATABOUTISMS?

Siba Harb argues that matters of global justice aren't adequately captured by my account. Manuel Valente argues that matters of longevity justice

aren't adequately captured by my account. There is a sense in which these complaints are forms of *whataboutism*: the practice of responding to an argument by raising a different issue.[7] As such, these charges are not quite fair. *Justice Across Ages* is a book about age-group justice, not about global justice, nor about longevity justice. As an egalitarian, I of course care about a range of inequalities: socioeconomic inequalities, gender inequalities, racial inequalities, global inequalities, and so on. These are all getting in the way of what justice requires. My exclusive focus on age issues for the purposes of this book was motivated rather by the neglect of age by philosophers and the default assumption that age inequalities are not a great source of moral concern. On the contrary, I contend in the book that we need an account to help us navigate these problems. It doesn't really matter that the book doesn't do it all. The point of the book is to zoom in on one missing piece.

But, in turn, dismissing Harb's and Valente's critiques as whataboutisms would be unfair for two reasons. First because, as Harb points out, I want my account to be action-guiding and it won't be if my idealizing assumptions distort the nature of the problem it is trying to fix. Harb and Valente argue that I assume away respectively (i) the fact of migration and existing global injustices, and (ii) the fact that some individuals will die younger than others. In the book, I myself recognize the dangers that come with counterfactual idealizations. For instance, I depart from Daniels's (1988) stipulation that society is "just except for age issues" as a starting point for theorizing about age-group justice. How could a theory of age justice, I ask, be helpful to us if it were relevant only for a world in which everyone's claim to their lifetime fair share was already granted? Instead, we need a theory of age-group justice that can guide us in a world in which there exist many unjust inequalities. In this spirit, I wrote a section on intersectionality which tries to make prudential principles work within the grain of other matters of social justice. So, if I felt the need for my theory to work within the grain of social justice for some social issues, why not do the same for other social issues, like global justice and longevity justice?

Second, Harb and Valente note that global and longevity issues have a direct and *special* bearing on age-group justice. Valente's concern is that some individuals die young, which undermines my claim that age is special (compared to race and gender) in that we can expect to pass through the various age categories. Harb's concern is that some individuals are born in one country and move to another country midway through their lives, which also runs counter to my assumption that what is special about age is that individuals age through institutions. The cases of those who die young

[7] Adapted from the New Oxford American Dictionary.

and those who leave before the end or arrive midway through destabilize my starting assumption. Let me thus respond to Harb and Valente's important comments in turn.

The thrust of Valente's objection is that we cannot abstract from longevity issues when theorizing about age-group justice. His view is that inequalities between those who die early and those who die late are too entangled with issues of justice between those who are young and those who are older to be treated as independent issues. To some extent, I agree. Many of my intuitions and theoretical moves, especially as they pertain to the diachronic fairness and prudential parts of my account, already make reference to longevity issues (and take them into account along the way). Complete lives egalitarianism, the first building block of my theory, requires that we ensure that individuals (and successive generations) have access to their fair share of resources over time. Important discrepancies in diachronic opportunities, resources, or outcomes should worry us, the principle tells us. From this perspective, vast longevity gaps between those worse off socioeconomically and those best off are obviously concerning and need to be remedied. Let's call these *socioeconomic longevity* issues. A further longevity issue, as Valente points out, is the inequality between those who die prematurely through an accident or illness and those who live a life of approximate normal length. Let's call these *premature death longevity* issues. Complete lives egalitarianism gives us reasons of distributive fairness to worry about both.

The second building block of my theory, prudential lifespan planning, is also concerned with longevity questions. The prudential procedure assumes an *average* life expectancy. That already takes care of some interpersonal disparities. In addition, my prudential requirement is cashed out intersectionally. In a nutshell, lifespan efficiency requires that we target diachronically corrosive disadvantages; that is, the types of disadvantages that are most likely to cluster over time and generate long-term negative outcomes (Wolff and de-Shalit 2007). One textbook case would be child poverty; another would be homelessness in young adulthood. By addressing these corrosive issues as a matter of priority, we can undermine the compounding effects of disadvantage over time. This prudential requirement thus works to redress *socioeconomic longevity* inequalities. The requirement of lifespan efficiency also goes some way in reducing some *premature death longevity* inequalities by recommending early investments in childhood health, for instance. I concede, though, that an account of age-group justice could be even more sensitive to longevity issues than mine. If you assume more risk-averse planners (planners who would be *really* worried about dying young), then you could

end up with an even stronger distributive leaning towards early years than I advocate for. But I think my proposal isn't oblivious to this issue, especially when I am concerned with *ex ante* distributions.

Where exactly do Valente and I disagree then? My contention isn't that longevity issues are irrelevant. My point in the book is rather to show that we shouldn't confuse and conflate age issues with longevity issues. Age-group justice, as I define it in the book, is the problem of justice that arises between those who have aged and those who can reasonably expect to age. The question for prudential reasoning, specifically, is: what do those who are likely to reach the average life expectancy owe those who have reached that age? And what do those who have reached that age owe those who are likely to reach that age? The question for relational egalitarians is: what kinds of relations between young and old honor their equal status and enable their standing as equals? These two sets of questions are what my theory of age-group justice is about. Turn it into the problem of inequalities between the short-lived and the long-lived and you are not addressing these age issues any longer. Valente proposes that, when faced with the choice between early paradise (in which young people live well and not the old) and late paradise (in which old people live well and not the young), we have reasons of longevity justice to prefer early paradise. I don't deny that we might have longevity-related reasons of diachronic fairness to prefer an early paradise to a late paradise. But the reasons of age-group justice I develop in the book are meaningfully distinct: we have reasons of prudence and synchronic relational equality to oppose both early and late paradise.

There is a sense in which, if you care about *distributive fairness*, the absolute worse-off are going to be those who die very young (and I would add those who die young *and* grew up disadvantaged). One way to address this issue is to compensate the dead *ex ante* by frontloading resources to early years (Fleurbay et al. 2014). Another is to figure out what protection ideally placed individuals would have purchased against early death (Dworkin 2001). Valente here has an original alternative approach. While my relational component has little to say about longevity issues of the premature death type, he argues that we may have *relational reasons* to prioritize the short-lived. In addition to being treated unfairly distributively, Valente believes the short-lived are often stigmatized (because we often take them to be responsible for their fate), marginalized (because the interests of the short-lived are treated as unimportant), exploited (because welfare states can instrumentalize the short-lived and extract a net benefit from them), and dominated (because politics can become dominated by the long-lived designing policies for their own interests). I worry that cashing out these issues in terms of inegalitarian relationships

overstretches them at the risk of seriously undermining their moral significance. It seems to me that the unfortunate fact of premature death, at least of the accidental kind, cannot meaningfully lead to the charge of exploitation. Just because costs and benefits end up reshuffled in ways that are disadvantageous to a party, it doesn't make an exchange exploitative. The exploited and exploiter in this case are not inferiors and superiors. They don't enjoy higher and lower status. We sometimes don't even know who the (very) short-lived are until they are gone. I have the same issue with Valente's examples of stigmatization, marginalization, and domination. In each of these cases, I worry the use of the terms does not correspond to social hierarchies of the kind we have relational reasons to worry about.

Let me now turn to matters of global justice. Siba Harb's concerns are incisive. Harb worries that *Justice Across Ages* doesn't address issues of global justice or migration and that this might call into question its applicability to the real world. Worse, overlooking global issues could mean that my principles recommend policies that exacerbate global injustices. I was provoked by this critique. I have lived in four countries so far, and I have origins in four more. It would pain me if my account could not help us make sense of the common case of an individual moving to a country halfway through their life. Harb has convinced me that it would be interesting and worthwhile to develop a global theory of age-group justice. That said, I will point out ways in which my account already provides ways to address the issues Harb explores.

First, the principles that form the main basis for Harb's objection are the prudential principles. Take the case of an immigrant from a poorer country who arrives in a richer country halfway through their life. Harb worries that they will have missed out on the early investments recommended by lifespan efficiency. They are now middle-aged and might only get the kind of goods and opportunities granted to those who are middle-aged. Are they being wronged by my account? Should they be compensated? Nothing in my theory suggests that they shouldn't. If anything, diachronic fairness might recommend that they receive some starter package that would ensure that they aren't significantly worse off than others over time. Moreover, many interventions could still act as investments on their lifelong outcomes, and these may be recommended on grounds of lifespan efficiency.

Second, on my account there are three irreducible features of a theory of age-group justice. My most original addition is that we must establish communities whose members relate to one another as equals, regardless of their age. That principle gives us strong reasons to redress the exact

types of inequalities that Harb worries about. To turn that ideal into reality, we must recommend policy interventions that will, for instance, ensure that older members of our community aren't segregated, marginalized, or otherwise excluded. This is true, I argue, independently of considerations of fairness over time and thus regardless of whether those individuals have lived in the country for their entire lives or not. In fact, the assumption of a full life lived in a given country has no bearing on the relational requirement. So, there is no reason to worry that my account, all things considered, wouldn't recommend significant rates of transfers to new entrants. On the contrary, the relational component of my theory provides reasons to establish egalitarian relationships between all community members.

I have shown, I hope, that my account can approach halfway migration in a suitably egalitarian manner. But I have not addressed the related complaint that my account is restricted to the scope of (i) domestic justice and imagines (ii) a wealthy society that is (iii) closed, and that (iv) each country got their fair share.

(i) That my account is one of *domestic justice* is not completely true, although I confess that I draw on a lot of national policy examples that invite a statist reading. My framework could in principle apply at all levels, from infra-national to supra-national. It could apply to the level of a medical agency (trying to make decisions on the distribution of some given scarce resource between age groups), at the level of a city, state, supranational region, international institution or even at the global level (if we are deliberating the distribution of a vaccine across borders across age groups, for instance). At each level, keeping in mind diachronic fairness, lifespan sufficiency and efficiency, and synchronic relational concerns will help us navigate difficult decisions, armed with pertinent ethical tools.

(ii) That I assume a *wealthy society* is not completely true either. It is true that I draw mostly on the three countries I know best (France, the UK, and the US). But I also pay attention to issues specific to other countries, as in my chapter on youth quotas in parliaments, which addresses a policy proposal that exists so far only in a handful of countries in the Global South, most of them in Africa. In any case, I think that it is true that some challenges will arise in contexts in which resources are scarcer, but I would deny that the most basic command wouldn't apply the same (equality applies diachronically and synchronically: we should pay attention to lifespan sufficiency and lifespan efficiency, and to how individuals relate at any given time across age lines).

(iii) To some extent, I do assume a *closed society*. I emphasize what is special about age and, in doing so, focus on the fact that we all age (although

not all to the same age) and that we experience burdens and benefits as we do. It is true that an individual could find themselves in a double gains or double pains situation by moving country halfway. As I have shown, I think my three principles (especially the relational component) can still help us navigate the winning and losing cases just introduced.

(iv) To some extent, I also assume that each country has discretion over their national resources. I obviously think resources are extremely unfairly distributed from state to state. I think that, of whatever amount x France currently has available for its constituents, only 1/y of x rightly belongs to France. This suggests that only 1/y of x should ideally be distributed in the way my account recommends. However, it is still significantly better for x to be distributed in a way that reduces relational inequalities and diachronic clustering of disadvantage. One can (and should) argue for a better national distribution of x through social policy while maintaining a commitment to transferring some of the x in question to those who need it, and have a claim to it, outside the state. Just as expanding healthcare in the US wouldn't be viewed as anti-egalitarian because it doesn't take account of global injustices, advocating for age institutions that distribute resources between young and old in a way that promotes fairness and relational equality domestically doesn't either.

In conclusion, Valente raises some important considerations. But his insistence on the short-lived stems from a focus on diachronic distributive fairness, which I try to move beyond in the book. It isn't that these considerations are unimportant; it is rather that they shouldn't be emphasized so much as to eclipse the other matters of social justice I discuss in the book. Harb also raises important considerations. But I think my account isn't unresponsive to the global issues she rightly believes should be addressed. What is clear to me is that the relational component of my theory of age-group justice can help guide us in these cases, precisely because the simplifying assumption that we all age (which runs counter to the premature death and migration halfway cases) has little bearing on it.

4. ALTERNATIVE FRAMEWORKS

Although age-related issues have been undertheorized by philosophers, there are important exceptions. In my work, I have been most influenced by four theorists of age-group justice: Norman Daniels, Dennis McKerlie, Axel Gosseries and Nancy Jecker. Each of these authors brought something unique and important to this area of research. Norman Daniels (1988) proposed that we should consider the delivery of goods and services between different age groups as mirroring optimal transfers within a

single life. Although I take issue with some of Daniels's overall framing of the problem and argue that it offers an incomplete story, I am hugely indebted to him. Dennis McKerlie (1992, 2013) helped highlight some of the limitations of the diachronic approach when it is endorsed as a full theory of age-group justice. He showed that treating age-group justice exclusively as a matter of diachronic fairness and diachronic utility leaves strikingly dystopian states of affairs unchallenged. Although I think he eventually failed to deliver a compelling egalitarian addendum, and although I argue that his subsequent move to prioritarianism isn't needed, I am hugely indebted to McKerlie.

I am fortunate that the two other key authors on age-group justice, Nancy Jecker and Axel Gosseries, have written responses to my book in this special issue. Nancy Jecker (1989, 2013, 2020) brought to the table a much-needed critique of the ways in which Daniels's appeal to normalcy in the prudential lifespan account could be oppressive. After all, what does it even mean for those in later life to be brought back to an age-specific *normal* level of functioning? Aren't we chasing our tails if we try to derive *ought* statements from what *is?* Over the years, Jecker has come to propose that we should instead think about age-group justice in terms of basic capabilities. In her own recent work, she offers a proposal to correct a middle-age bias she identifies in both policymaking and theories of age-group justice. I use Jecker's powerful arguments in my book to put pressure on Daniels's work and to propose a modified set of prudential principles. Axel Gosseries (2011, 2014) has done more work than anyone else to grapple with what is special about age, as compared to race and gender, and to shed light onto the distinction between age-group justice and birth-cohort justice. My brief time with Gosseries as an advisor as a visiting doctoral student has shaped my work in many ways. In his own work, Gosseries offers a compelling sufficientarian approach to age-group justice. To treat persons fairly is to ensure that they have access to their fair share over their complete lives, and that they don't fall below a critical threshold throughout their lives (what Gosseries calls *continuous sufficiency*). My theory of age-group justice is greatly indebted to, and overlaps importantly with Jecker's and Gosseries's, but their rejoinders in this special issue are a good opportunity for me to specify the nature of our disagreements and offer a defense of my approach.

In this special issue, Jecker mostly takes issue with the prudential part of my tripartite account. She remains troubled by my limited and modified appeal to Daniels's prudential procedure and his *normal* range of opportunities. At the most basic level, the prudential framework simply enables us to incorporate facts about the shape of a life, and what makes a

life go well, to establish what we are owed at different life stages. But Jecker is concerned that the prudential procedure is vulnerable to midlife biases and cannot generate robust sufficientarian claims for all. More specifically, Jecker worries that too little will be granted to those in old age because of a variety of problematic assumptions that planners will have about what a life worth living looks like. This is because rational planners behind a veil of ignorance would have to know that they could not be infants or cognitively impaired and would therefore assume the standpoint of a middle-aged individual. This, she believes, would lead them to plan from the biased perspective of a middle-aged individual. For this reason, Jecker prefers to ground sufficiency in human dignity and to flesh it out in terms of basic capabilities.

I won't deny that midlife biases are an issue, of course, as my critique of ageist discrimination against young and old confirms. But I do not think that my account is particularly vulnerable to this problem. Even if it were true that planners were necessarily going to be biased, the prudential procedure itself does not dictate every decision about fair distributions in my book. Instead, I extract from the procedure early on two rules of thumb for designing policies: ensure that there is enough to support key opportunities at each stage (lifespan sufficiency); and ensure that resources are available early enough to prevent diachronic clustering of disadvantage (lifespan efficiency). We do not need to go back to the procedure each time we need to make a decision. And I do not think that there are any reasons to believe that lifespan sufficiency and efficiency, as I understand them in my book, are biased toward any particular age group.

That said, midlife biases could find their way in elsewhere: in the application of my rules of thumb to practical contexts. When it comes to specific decisions and deliberations, we need more than general principles and rules of thumb: we need real deliberators thinking hard about how these rules of thumb apply without age bias. If these deliberators are in middle age, or if they have lived in societies that tend to be prejudiced about ageing and the end of life, then this will most likely pave the way to biases. How can my account avoid this issue? Daniels foresaw an important role for accountability for reasonableness procedures. In a more political vein, in my book, I advocate for age-integrated parliaments (these could also be age-integrated mini-publics, age-integrated decision committees, etc.), through age quotas if need be. Age integration, I argue, should help ensure that the interests of specific age groups do not get sidelined in the establishment of prudent proposals. The paradigmatic case of bias would be of an age cohort that dominates politics and continuously advocates for age policies that benefit their cohort, voting first in favor of affordable

childcare when they have young children and against it when they get older, for instance; or, more generally, focusing on policies that address the concerns of their age groups (health, security, etc.) and disregarding the very issues that were theirs earlier on (employment, childcare, etc.). So, I agree with Jecker that midlife biases could be an important issue. But I do not think that these will always be to the disadvantage of those who are oldest, and I see this as an implementation issue and discuss how to remedy it in the book.

Jecker is also concerned that my sufficiency requirement, because it contains an appeal to normal opportunities, is too entangled with the empirical norms of a particular society. What we treat as a normal range of opportunities for older members of our community will differ in different places. The risk she sees is that we would afford too little to those who live in places in which it is "normal" to have few resources, opportunities, and entitlements in old age. This resonates with one of Harb's earlier concerns that my theory is designed with a wealthy nation in mind. Jecker believes her list of capabilities offers a more aspirational benchmark for poorer countries.

I do not think that my account leads to this problem, however. As I argue in the book, lifespan sufficiency is best understood by appeal to two thresholds: one *absolute* and the other *relative*. The absolute threshold requires that individuals be granted what they need to live free from deprivation. This threshold is defined by appeal to non-deprivation and can be indexed on some robust indicators like basic needs, or even a basic list of capabilities. This threshold is not relative, and it would not necessarily shrink in poorer countries. Of course, in a context of high scarcity, some claims could go unmet, but that's a problem for the capability approach too. What my account does suggest, however, is that contextual, cultural, and empirical norms matter in establishing the requirements of the *relative* part of the threshold. In a place in which young adults or older members of a community do not value or aspire to the opportunity of being spatially independent from their parents or adult children, for instance, a policy aiming to enforce that opportunity would not be part of the granted age-specific opportunity range. Of course, as clarified above, deliberative procedures need to be in place to ensure that all age groups can express what matters most to them in a way that ensures that policies continue to reflect what people aspire to and value (rather than what they have come to find normal). Finally, I do discuss in the book an *ideal* range of opportunities: a benchmark that serves the aspirational purposes Jecker has in mind.

Lastly, Jecker is right to point out that prudence alone cannot ground a

range of important claims. This is precisely where my relational component comes in. Jecker took this relational component on board in recent work, but she mostly sees it as an underpinning justification for a robust sufficientarian threshold (Jecker 2020). I have no problem with this application. I agree that relational equality provides further reasons to ensure that individuals stand above a robust threshold. But I want to emphasize that my relational component does more than that: it is egalitarian, not merely sufficientarian. It is concerned with how people relate and stand in front of each other. This demands more than bringing people above a threshold of resources, opportunities, or capabilities. It requires that individuals have a particular outlook on other age groups, do not hold certain beliefs about them, and don't view them as inferiors or their claims as unimportant. It requires that no age group is segregated (for instance, in retirement homes), marginalized (for instance, from politics), stigmatized (as a burden on the economy), demonized (as dangerous and malevolent threats to safety), etc. A relational *egalitarian* component also provides a deeper critique of ageism (the belief that people of a certain age are inferior in some central respects) than sufficientarianism, since it focuses not just on the array of opportunities or capabilities that members of different age groups have, but also on how they are viewed, portrayed, and treated below *and* above the threshold.

Moving on to Axel Gosseries's critique. One of Gosseries's suggestions is that one doesn't need to treat prudential requirements as exogenous to concerns of egalitarian fairness. In particular, he claims, one doesn't need a separate principle of lifespan efficiency when theorizing about equality over time. It suffices instead to choose a version of distributive egalitarianism that takes efficiency concerns seriously in the first place. If we choose leximin egalitarianism or Gini prioritarianism as a starting point, Gosseries argues, we can dispense with prudence altogether. Gosseries doesn't deny that this wouldn't address any of my relational concerns. But, if his proposal is sound, it suggests there may be a simpler and perhaps more effective way to theorize age-group justice than I propose: one that combines (and revises) my diachronic principles.

Gosseries's suggestion might seem puzzling. Why would interpersonal efficiency recommend a distribution that is intrapersonally efficient? Suppose for instance that we maximize the sum of resources present in the life with the lowest sum of resources, as leximin recommends. Shouldn't resolving interpersonal conflicts in this way still leave open several ways of resolving intrapersonal conflicts over the allocation of resources across life stages? And why believe that pareto efficiency will help guide us between options? I think that Gosseries's suggestion is that a leximin

egalitarian would recommend *some* of the same conclusions I reach with lifespan efficiency. For instance, they would target corrosive disadvantages early on to avoid clustering of disadvantage, since that would significantly improve the position of the least well-off.

Gosseries believes one disadvantage of treating efficiency considerations as exogenous is avoiding internal conflict. He believes my framework is vulnerable to internal dilemmas that might threaten its action-guiding-ness. He claims that if we endogenize efficiency concerns, we can "offer ways of weighing its importance that are perhaps more precise than leaving us with an undefined equality-efficiency trade-off" (this volume, 122). I saw my role in *Justice Across Ages* as making sense of the sometimes-conflicting intuitions we have when we theorize about age, time, and equality. And so, my account is constructed in a way that indeed sometimes creates difficult choice situations. But, as I show in Chapter 4, many of these trade-offs can be overcome, and I show concrete ways in which we might do so. I am hoping that my three policy chapters, in which I apply my principles to concrete policy debates, are a testament to my account's ability to guide policymaking.

So, let's focus instead on whether we have other reasons to prefer Gosseries's combined approach. One first reaction to this proposal is that a view like leximin commits us to a lot more in terms of efficiency than the narrow focus on lifespan efficiency I propose. Leximin egalitarianism "takes efficiency into account, especially to the extent that efficiency gains can benefit the least well-off, albeit at the cost of larger inequalities" (insert ref with page). This view has the advantage of casting off levelling-down objections (reducing inequalities is only required when the worse-off can be made better off). Although I always found this move (as well as the move from equality to priority) interesting, I have never really taken the levelling-down objection to be a good enough reason to reject purer forms of egalitarianism. There is nothing original in my response here. I worry that efficiency considerations are often a way to rationalize and make excuses for inequalities. It always seemed best to me to treat efficiency considerations as important variables, but ones that may conflict (rather than be one with) egalitarian considerations. Moreover, even in those cases in which less inequality would not bring *any* benefits to those who are worse off, there might still be a good reason (even though maybe not decisive) to intervene, namely one of distributive fairness. Leximin egalitarians, by contrast, would find nothing to regret in such a case—the inequality in question is not unjust.

Back to lifespan efficiency. All this principle tells us is that we ought to allocate burdens and benefits, resources, and opportunities across ages in

such a way as to ensure that we have access to these early enough, when that would make our lives better than the alternative. That gives us one circumstance in which an inequality in spending between age groups might be unbiased and fair. This type of efficiency is focused on supporting optimal access to resources over time. Now, granted, it overlaps with some recommendations of leximin: the injunction to decluster diachronic disadvantages by targeting early corrosive disadvantages will improve the position of the worse-off. But lifespan efficiency does not entail that we should accept any socioeconomic inequalities that are beneficial (or neutral) for the worse-off. Lifespan efficiency is silent on that; it is a restricted notion of efficiency that stems from a prudential procedure centered on utility within a single life. This makes me skeptical that efficiency-driven egalitarian considerations and lifespan efficiency considerations would be redundant.

But let's assume for a minute that they indeed overlap extensively: that some forms of efficiency-compatible egalitarianism led to some of the same conclusions as a stricter egalitarianism plus lifespan efficiency. What I mostly care about is for an account to have all the aspects it needs to have (distributive egalitarianism over a complete life, lifespan sufficiency, lifespan efficiency, and relational equality at each point). Other combinations of these four components should be fine too. But my account, like Daniels, is more specific on how efficiency considerations determine matters of age-group justice specifically. It helps address frontally the question of which inequalities between young and old matter. It offers a more specific answer than "do whatever makes the worse-off as well off as they can be". Instead, it fleshes out what contribution age-group justice makes to egalitarian justice. As Daniels first showed, egalitarians have mostly overlooked these issues by not addressing them head on. What I hope to have done in my book is to bring these issues under a microscope in a less residual and implicit way than more general formulas might. But perhaps it is true that some forms of distributive egalitarianism might not need the lifespan efficiency add-on as much as others.

5. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

In Chapter 6 of *Justice Across Ages*, I apply my theory of age-group justice to the debate between basic income and basic capital. Basic Income is a cash payment provided to all members of a community without conditions and on a regular basis. Basic Capital is a lump sum payment to all individuals when they reach adulthood. The differences between these two programs have animated philosophers over the years. My chapter shows that a lot of

this disagreement can be captured through a temporal lens: having a clearer sense of how equality applies through time helps pinpoint these programs' comparative advantages and limitations. Basic Income and Basic Capital can both be framed as tools of diachronic fairness, lifespan sufficiency, lifespan efficiency, and relational equality. But, in a nutshell, basic capital fares particularly well on the lifespan efficiency front: an injection of capital in early adulthood maximizes lifespan utility by ensuring that young adults are not lacking in the resources they need in their formative years. Basic capital might not fare as well in terms of lifespan sufficiency and relational equality, though. Even those who would spend their lump sums wisely could still end up without long-term economic security and vulnerable to the kinds of exploitative contracts that relational egalitarians have reasons to object to. Think, for instance, of someone using their basic capital to buy a house that significantly loses value, or to fund a training program only to struggle to find employment because of unpredictable labor market disruptions. Basic income is better suited to protect against future risk of economic insecurity by *guaranteeing* a regular lifelong income rather than hoping that the early cash injection provides such security. Basic income, however, is nonmortgageable, and does not allow young adults to invest in high-return long-term projects. For this reason, it could fare worse than basic capital in terms of lifespan efficiency.

As I show in the book, there are ways to rescue each proposal from its purported limitations. But recognizing nonetheless that there is a slight trade-off, I proposed a hybrid cash program: BBI (Babybond+Basic income). The program enforces basic income as a true right of existence for the full lifespan. Parents would get half of their kids' basic income as a form of regular child benefit and the rest of the children's basic income would be automatically saved up in a child savings account. When individuals reach adulthood, they would access the saved-up cash (very much like a form of basic capital), all the while starting to get their basic income on a regular basis. This alternative fares better as a tool of egalitarianism over time compared to the pure basic income or basic capital proposals, without costing more than basic income (assuming as a baseline a basic income that is indeed enforced from birth to death).

In her piece, Nicola Mulkeen complains that my cash proposal could be paternalistic and exploitative. Mulkeen takes these issues to be *internal* to my account because Mulkeen rightly assumes that the charge of paternalism and exploitation are particularly concerning for a relational egalitarian. In what follows, I take these two objections in turn.

Mulkeen argues that it is paternalistic to deny a lump sum payment to

individuals on the basis of the judgment that they would be better off with a lifelong equivalent paid in small installments. It is, after all, *their* fair share. The charge of paternalism is a hard one to swallow in general for basic income proponents. Indeed, an important motivation for basic income is precisely that we need to do away with paternalistic and patronizing systems of social protection that distrust individuals and scrutinize their every choice. Relational egalitarians also have strong reasons to oppose paternalism, especially insofar as it is embedded in a hierarchical relationship in which a superior party with power over an inferior party disregards the wishes of the latter in establishing what is best for them. So, is my basic income proposal worryingly paternalistic?

In response, I first want to pinpoint that, in terms of freedom of choice, my proposal is undeniably a considerable improvement over pure basic income proposals, since it contains a lump sum payment. That said, Mulkeen's concern is principled: the basic income portion of my proposal would have to be alienable for the program to be truly anti-paternalistic. What if, in addition to her first lump sum, Peggy wanted a second basic capital instead of her lifelong basic income? Is there a way to deny her request that doesn't fall prey to the paternalism charge? I think that one could plausibly articulate my proposal for a lifelong basic income payment without using paternalistic arguments. It isn't just because we worry about Peggy's future once she has alienated her right to a lifelong basic income that we would deny her request. Basic income is an instrument of relational equality insofar as it helps build a society in which individuals are not so poor that they might easily be treated as inferiors, exploited, dominated, and objectified. It isn't just for Peggy's own sake that a lifelong basic income is desirable, it is for the sake of building communities of relational equals. That is true of many other social interventions. It is hard to imagine that we could stand as equals if we didn't have any kind of public education or socialized healthcare. We are justified in restricting the scope of individual choices to secure a common good that each of us has a duty to help produce and which wouldn't be attainable otherwise. This, I hope, is enough to convince some that the charge of paternalism can be escaped.

Let me add a second response for those who would insist that my defense of the nonmortgageable nature of basic income is best captured paternalistically. My response is that this type of paternalism wouldn't be the kind I would most worry about anyway. For relational egalitarianism, paternalism is particularly objectionable when it is demeaning, insulting, and fails to respect the equal status of individuals.[8] The paradigmatic case

[8] For more on how paternalism can disrespect and how it should concern egalitarians, see Shiffrin (2000).

is one in which a group with a lower social status is denied the opportunity to play an active role in deciding what is good for them. Many types of paternalism are like this: state administrators provide food vouchers instead of cash to low-income individuals because of the widely held belief that they cannot be trusted with cash; in doing so, they disrespect individuals living in poverty and reinforce the stereotype that their bad behavior is a suitable explanation for their precarity in the first place. The creation of an underclass that is viewed as inferior in the process of justifying and implementing paternalistic interventions is a very concerning feature of paternalism. When we implement an education, healthcare, or income program that is universal, we are likely to avoid this worse-case scenario. It isn't just Peggy, and people like her, that we deem incapable of using cash in the way they see fit. We design a policy that applies to all. At worst, it assumes that we are all incapable of making the right choices for ourselves and need to be guaranteed monthly income to be protected against ourselves. At best, it makes no mention of bad attitudes and instead appeals to a range of long-term risks that will apply to the prudent and the imprudent. It doesn't single out and create a socially inferior group that needs to be compelled. It builds a robust floor to ensure universal protection against all-too-common risks. For these reasons, the charge of paternalism against basic income shouldn't be a great source of concern, *especially* for relational egalitarians.

Next, what should we make of Mulkeen's charge of exploitation? Does basic income exploit some to the advantage of others? Those who argue that it does typically complain that a basic income program would subject workers to exploitation by those who choose to lead an unproductive life. The hardworking would be forced to live with less than what they would otherwise have in order to support the idle. Like paternalism, since exploitation is a prominent example of the kinds of inegalitarian relationships we have strong reasons to prevent, a policy program that exploits could hardly be defended as a relational egalitarian proposal. However, I do not think this charge of exploitation is warranted, and Mulkeen herself comes up with creative ways to respond to this charge.

First, a universal basic income could be partly funded in ways other than via a tax on income from labor. The use of sovereign wealth funds, taxes on the exploitation of natural resources, carbon taxes, value-added taxes (especially on luxury goods), data taxes, and a wealth tax could all generate a significant portion of the funds necessary for a basic income. An additional avenue for funding such proposal would be through social bonds—which are debt instruments used to finance social projects whose purpose is to address a ramified social issue. Income poverty is extremely

costly and correlated with countless negative externalities—deaths of despair, mental illnesses, visits to the ER, crime, incarceration, addictions, violence, poor educational outcomes for children, etc. The eradication of cash poverty could be funded partly through a future expected saving on each of the long-term negative externalities engendered by poverty. None of these funding sources are vulnerable to the charge of exploitation of the lazy by the hardworking, and that should be enough to reduce the charge of exploitation. That said, it is implausible to think that a generous basic income wouldn't tap into the income tax system too. It would also be undesirable and a missed opportunity to avoid funding basic income through a progressive tax code. So let us grant, for the purposes of argumentation, that some hardworking taxpayers would indeed be vulnerable to idle individuals choosing to live a frugal lifestyle on the dole. Three further responses can be offered.

First, perhaps basic income enables some exploitation, but so what? Following the same logic, perhaps publicly funding equal police protection and healthcare beyond the level required to secure pareto efficiency also produces some exploitation, since these are available both to those who work and those who decline to do so. Maybe that is exploitative, but it's hard to believe that the appropriate response to those who refuse to work is to withhold protection from aggression and illness. The same goes for basic income. Moreover, as Mulkeen herself points out, exploitation is pervasive in our societies in ways that basic income (like universal healthcare) could help address. Typical cases include individuals who are vulnerable to predatory lending practices, to employers who know they can get them for cheap, or to landlords charging excruciatingly high rents just because they can. It is plausible to think that basic income would go a long way in reducing these exploitative practices. By affording workers income disconnected from labor, a generous basic income would increase their ability to exit exploitative contracts and bargain for better wages and working conditions. By increasing individuals' economic security, it would improve their ability to withstand economic shocks and reduce their dependence on a predatory financial system for loans. If this is all plausible, then basic income would reduce several paradigmatic cases of exploitation. Even if we grant that it might enable one type of exploitation (of taxpayers by the idle) that was not possible before, it could still be defended as an anti-exploitation measure all things considered.

Second, it is important to acknowledge that the fear of exploitation by the idle is grounded in a long history of myths and stereotypes about those living in poverty. These myths would have a significant proportion of those on benefits unmotivated to work and eager to game the system. These

myths are not grounded in robust evidence, however. There is, on the contrary, countless evidence that unconditional cash does not lead to idleness (Hasdell 2020). This suggests that the charge of exploitation by the idle is a political ruse we should not pay too much attention to in designing safety nets.

Finally, I don't actually think that basic income is exploitative, at least not in the way relational egalitarians should conceptualize exploitation. There are many definitions of exploitation, but here I am following Vrousalis (2013) in thinking that an individual exploits another if they are embedded in a systemic relationship which enables A to instrumentalize B's vulnerability to extract a net benefit from B. If we follow that definition of exploitation, then even the idiosyncratic case of the malibu surfer who chooses not to do any productive work might not be an exploiter. There is no reason to assume a systemic hierarchical imbalance between surfers and workers. The individual choosing to live off their basic income would be taking advantage of a social program that lets them do that. Workers would be getting basic income too and they would be allowed, like everyone else, to pursue other life plans. Moreover, when there isn't full employment, it is often because there aren't enough jobs. With the threat of technological unemployment and the realization that economic growth cannot be a plausible solution considering climate change, we must be open to the thought that those choosing to live a frugal existence and experimenting with low-consumption lifestyles would be doing others a service. Rather than exploiting hardworking taxpayers, they would be choosing not to take up a scarce employment opportunity that's in high demand. Inflating the case of the malibu surfer is not sociologically sound, anyway, but I would argue that even this case isn't straightforwardly exploitative.

In conclusion, I do not think that the dual concern of paternalism and exploitation undermines the case for basic income. In fact, I think that relational egalitarians are especially well positioned to block these charges. The relational approach helps clarify what types of paternalism and exploitation we should most worry about and helps sort through important differences between cases that are superficially similar. Whether parties are embedded in a hierarchical relationship in which one side is treated as an inferior and disrespected by the other side matters a great deal in establishing whether instances of paternalism and exploitation are objectionable, and whether they deserve to be characterized as exploitative and paternalistic in the first place.

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