Harsh and Disrespectful

Rescuing Moral Agency from Luck and Choice

Abstract

Many policies hinge on determining whether someone's situation is due to luck or choice. In political philosophy, this prevalence is mirrored by luck egalitarian theories. But overemphasizing the distinction between luck and choice will lead to tensions with the value of moral agency, on which the distinction is grounded. Here, we argue that the two most common contemporary critiques of luck egalitarianism, holding it to be *harsh* and *disrespectful* are best understood as illustrating this tension. Elaborating on this conflict, we argue that it should lead us to modify how luck and choice are used in theories of justice.

Keywords: distributive justice, luck egalitarianism, moral agency, individual responsibility, harshness, disrespect

Political debates are saturated with policies that hinge on a distinction between luck and choice. Unemployment benefits, for example, are often conditional on whether someone's joblessness is due to bad luck in terms of marketable talents or a choice not to work. Health care policies, similarly, often discriminate between, say, the unlucky bearers of genetic diseases and people with unhealthy lifestyles. In political theory, this saturation is mirrored by theorists who hold that a just society is one that emphasizes the distinction between luck and choice, ensuring that no one is worse off than others through mere bad luck—that is, through no fault or choice of their own (Arneson 1989; Cohen 1989; Dworkin 1982; Knight 2009; Lippert-Rasmussen 2016; Temkin 2003b). In Ronald Dworkin's well-known formulation, this means that for a (societal) distribution of resources to be just, it must be *endowment-insensitive* but *ambition-sensitive* (Dworkin 1982).

While the locus of such theories is the distinction between luck and choice, it is not always clear *why* this distinction is taken to hold such importance. The most plausible ground, we claim, is that the distinction is given importance through its fundamental connection to *moral agency*. For a number of theories that center

on the luck/choice distinction, a closer look reveals that the distinction is considered important for precisely this reason. Thus, respecting people's choices is important because such choices are a product of moral agency (Arneson 1999; Dworkin 2000, chap. 1; Lippert-Rasmussen 2016, chap. 2). Luck, on the other hand, does not originate in moral agency and, thus, should not be treated with similar respect (Otsuka 2002; Stemplowska 2008). With this grounding in mind, it becomes clear *why* distributions of benefits and burdens should reflect people's choices, but not natural and social contingencies—and why, as in our introductory examples, unemployment benefits and health care policies should track the choices people make.

In this article, however, we claim that hinging one's theory on the distinction between luck and choice sometimes causes *tension* with the very value upon which the distinction is founded: moral agency. Because of such potential tension and because the value of moral agency is more fundamental, the role of the luck/choice distinction in both politics and political theory should be reconsidered and modified to accentuate other dimensions than those usually brought to the fore by luck egalitarians.

The tension between moral agency and the luck/choice distinction comes to light in two different ways. First, critics (Anderson 1999; Fleurbaey 1995) raise *the harshness objection*, which warns against letting people suffer the consequences of their irresponsible choices when this entails leaving severely injured people in dire straits. While leaving them to their fate may be understood as a way of respecting their (past) choices, it fails to respect their (future) possibilities for moral agency. Focus, we argue, should be on how to ensure the moral agency of the unemployed and the unhealthy going forward, rather than evaluating their past choices and compensating them for bad luck. We should, in other words, prioritize *forward-looking*, rather than merely focusing on *backward-looking*, moral agency.

Second, *the disrespect objection* objects to the practice of probing and questioning individuals in order to evaluate whether their situation is due to luck or choice. A tension can occur, according to this objection, in the determination of whether someone has been responsible or not because this very judgement can involve invasive inquiries that fail to respect the agential status of the judged (Wolff 1998; Anderson 1999). A society committed to respecting the moral agency of its citizens, not only ensures that their capacities to act as moral agents are in place, but also *treats* them in a certain manner; as moral agents are to be treated (Schemmel 2012). Seeking to determine exercised agency often involves questioning or second-guessing people's agential capacities. And this can be in tension with treating them as moral agents in a non-consequentialist sense. Thus,

the luck/choice distinction can be objected to on the grounds that it is often accompanied by treatment that is not consistent with how moral agents ought to be treated.

Once we understand these critiques in light of the notion of moral agency, we discover that both critiques point to a conflict between this founding value of justice and the luck egalitarian concern with luck and choice. We call this *the unity thesis*.

> **The Unity Thesis**: prominent critiques of luck egalitarian theories of distributive justice point to a general tension between the luck/choice distinction and the more fundamental principle of respecting moral agency.

This reformulation of luck egalitarian critiques as a fundamental normative tension, reconstructs the debate in order to get a better grasp of the reasons and values at stake and, simultaneously, defends the notion that these two critiques are based on the same fundamental tension between standard luck egalitarianism and moral agency. But, importantly, studying this clash also teaches us something more generally about when and why individual responsibility is valuable. And while luck egalitarian theories and political ideas about individual responsibility contain important insights, these critiques, when properly reconstructed, show us that the backward-looking and purely outcome-oriented version, in which moral agency is standardly employed in luck egalitarianism, is inadequate to protect and properly respect this value. This, we argue, gives us reasons to dismiss luck egalitarianism, as it has thus far been depicted, and recapture the intuition of sensitivity to responsible choice in what we shall call *moral agency egalitarianism*.

I. Moral Agency and Luck Egalitarian Justice

To gain a deeper understanding of the notion of justice entailed in luck egalitarian theories, it is helpful to take a step back and look at the more fundamental question of *why* it is a matter of justice how persons fare relative to each other – a question which is sometimes referred to as the basis of equality (Carter 2011). When luck egalitarians claim that justice requires a choice-sensitive distribution, they are making a claim about what is entailed by egalitarian justice—about how we, distributively, ought to respond to the fact that persons are moral equals (or, at least, ought to be treated as such). And, in theorizing about the implications of moral equality, they are implicitly relying on statements about *why* (all) persons (and only persons) are equals. After all, theories of justice

are usually limited to persons and, thus, must rely on a feature of persons which makes *them* and only them (equal) bearers of justice claims.[1]

This question of "basic equality" has been comparatively neglected in political philosophy. However, a promising range of replies are grounded in *moral agency* (Carter 2011; Parr & Slavny 2019; Rawls 1971, §77; Williams 2005). What makes it appropriate to include persons (and only persons) within the scope of egalitarian justice, according to this view, is that persons are moral agents and that this commands a certain treatment. Bernard Williams, for example, notes "a certain human desire to be identified with what one is doing, to be able to realize purposes of one's own, and not to be the instrument of another's will unless one has voluntarily accepted such a role" (Williams 2005, 100). John Rawls, along related lines, delineates the scope of egalitarian justice to "moral persons," who are defined as having a conception of the good and a sense of justice (Rawls 1971, 505). While the replies of Carter, Williams, and Rawls to this basic question differ in their specifics, they concur that egalitarian justice is grounded in people's (capacity for) moral agency. The unifying idea is that persons have equal claims of justice due to their capacity for constructing, revising, and pursuing plans and purposes in the light of the plans and purposes of others—for short, the capacity to exercise moral agency.[2] This capacity gives persons a claim on conditions and resources needed to construct and follow their plans and warrants a certain *treatment*; as someone who has plans of their own and is able to reconsider them.[3]

Interestingly, luck egalitarians often rely on a similar notion of moral agency in their accounts. Dworkin, for example, grounds much of his political philosophy on a small set of fundamental ethical principles. His theory of equality of resources, which has grown to be a cornerstone of luck egalitarian theorizing, is constructed around the assumptions that the success of each human life is of equal objective importance, and that it is immanent in that success that human persons exercise responsibility and choice over their own lives (Dworkin 2000, 5-6).[4] Like in Rawls and Williams' descriptions, Dworkin's reference to the importance of choosing one's path seems to be tied, at a fundamental level, to the value of moral agency.[5]

---

[1] And which excludes, for example, potatoes from being (equal) bearers of justice claims.

[2] See Parr & Slavny (2019) for a very systematic argument in favour of this idea.

[3] See Rawls (1971), §77 for the former point, Carter (2011) for the latter, and Williams (2005) for both.

[4] See also Dworkin (2011), 203-204, in which he elaborates further on the connection to moral agency, relying on the principles of self-respect and authenticity. See also Clayton (2016).

[5] See also Arneson's (1999) reflections on this issue. While his arguments are mainly concerned with showing that it is difficult to draw a clear distinction between humans and non-human animals when determining the scope of principles of justice, they nonetheless point toward the idea that

Dworkin, thus, recognizes the centrality of moral agency in political morality. This seems to be true for other, more unambiguously luck egalitarian, accounts of justice as well. Kasper Lippert-Rasmussen in *Luck Egalitarianism*, for example, claims that what a just society should aim to distribute equally is "that which [people] care about non-instrumentally and not unreasonably so" (Lippert-Rasmussen 2016, 135) and that people's equal moral standing is grounded in "their capacity to be non-instrumentally concerned with things in a distinctive way, say, one that involves long-term planning" (ibid, 61). What distributive justice aims at, then—*why* it is important—is enabling people to live and choose in accordance with their (long-term) plans, and specifically, non-instrumental concerns—and enabling this (equally) for everyone (Meijers & Vandamme 2019). People's capacity for moral agency, in other words, seems to be the very reason that we care about how benefits and burdens are distributed among them. Many luck egalitarians, then, accept and even explicitly appeal to moral agency as a grounding value of their account.[6] For these theorists, the tension we point to is problematic for reasons *internal* to their theory; because it points to a potential value clash within their theoretical framework.

Other luck egalitarian theorists, like Cohen, remain vague on the issue of why people have claims of justice, sometimes appealing to fairness, but deliberately sidestepping the deeper question of what it is about persons that makes them bearers of claims of justice, fairness, or otherwise (Cohen 2006). For such theorists, our claim that their theoretical commitments are sometimes in tension with moral agency, pushes them towards answering the more basic question of why persons are bearers of claims of justice *if not* due to their status as moral agents.

Specifically, the clashes arise because of the particular, narrow way in which moral agency is employed in luck egalitarianism. Recall that luck egalitarianism holds that it is unjust if some people are worse off than others through no fault or choice of their own (Arneson 1989; 2000; Cohen 1989; 2006; Lippert-Rasmussen 2001, 2016). This is also often phrased as a concern with *exercises of personal responsibility* (Dworkin 2000, 287-288; Lippert-Rasmussen 2016, chap. 2). Thus, it is crucial for luck egalitarianism to track the extent to which people's fortunes are due to luck or choice. For Dworkin, it matters that everyone has an equal opportunity space (or, as he would say, an equal share of resources) for

---

the scope of principles of justice is relevantly tied to considerations of rational agency (122) and affection (126-127).

[6] Within theories of egalitarian justice, we might say, there is something akin to a 'thicker' version of Will Kymlicka's "egalitarian plateau" (2002, 4), upon which theories of justice, more broadly, are constructed. What we might call a "moral agential plateau".

living in accordance with their choices, for pursuing their own conception of the good life.

In emphasizing the connection between past exercises of responsibility and distributive outcomes, luck egalitarians standardly accentuate *one* dimension of moral agency. We might call this manner of respecting moral agency *backward-looking responsibility* (Feiring 2008; van de Poel 2011); respecting people's past exercises of moral agency, compensating them if their poor situation is due to (past) bad luck, but not if it is due to (past) bad choices.

Another aspect of how the luck/choice distinction is used in luck egalitarian theories is worth mentioning. Specifically, luck egalitarianism is a theory of distributive justice, conceptualizing justice as a specific distributive (responsibility-sensitive) pattern. The role of moral agency revolves around ensuring that *distributive outcomes* reflect people's exercises of past agency. This concern with distributive outcomes is central, of course, because distributions govern whether people have the resources, opportunities, capabilities, etc. needed to construct, revise, and pursue their plans for the good life—i.e. to live as moral agents.

But respect for moral agency, we claim, is broader than distributive outcomes and its backward-looking elements. Part of what it is to respect someone as a moral agent has to do with looking to the past and letting them bear the costs (or reap the benefits) of former choices. Were this not the case, no one would, as William's put it, "identify with what one is doing" (Williams 2005, 100). But, first, respect for moral agency also requires ensuring that people have the required resources, opportunities, capabilities, etc. needed to construct, revise, and pursue their plans for the good life going forward. In other words, it entails a concern with *forward-looking responsibility*; whether people are able to make responsible choices going forward (Feiring 2008; van de Poel 2011). Whether, in other words, they have the resources needed to exercise moral agency in the future—independently of which choices they have made in the past. If moral agency denotes the capacity to realize one's own projects, distributions must be responsibility-sensitive in a way that captures this forward-looking aspects of being an agent too.[7] This concern with the forward-looking dimension of moral agency, we argue, is at the heart of the harshness objection.

Second, respect for moral agency requires a concern not only for the distributive outcomes that persons face but also how they are *treated*. A just society, grounded on respect for moral agency, is one in which citizens treat each other, and the

---

[7] See also Emily McTernan (2015) who argues that practices of holding people responsible should be judged on whether or not they promote egalitarian values.

state treats them, as it is appropriate to treat moral agents—independently of distributive outcomes. Moral agents, for example, should not be treated with distrust or a lack of common courtesy and should not be made to demean themselves (Wolff 1998, 107-110). Respect for persons with the capacity for constructing, revising, and pursuing plans and purposes, who do so in the light of the plans and purposes of others, precludes such treatment. Moral agents should be treated with the courtesy, trust, and respect of someone acting on well-conceived motives and with the interests of others in mind. In Carter's (2011) words, moral agents are to be treated with *opacity respect*; certain agential capacities should be assumed in people and they should be treated accordingly. This is significant because it entails that a concern for moral agency cannot focus solely on distributive outcomes but must also attend to how these outcomes come about and how states treat and relate to their citizens even when this does not impact distributive outcomes. Respect for moral agency, then, entails considerations that are broader than distributive outcomes. This, we argue, is what is at the heart of the disrespect objection.

These two ways in which standard luck egalitarianism fails to incorporate respect for moral agency, thus, underlie two of the main critiques with which their focus on the luck/choice distinction has been met. And while luck egalitarians might object that the conception of moral agency which underlies their theories does not (and ought not) incorporate forward-looking and non-distributive elements, our reconstruction of these two critiques will show why a proper appreciation of moral agency means that it should.

II. Harshness

First, luck egalitarianism has been accused of being unreasonably *harsh*. The theory is charged with having the implication that we should let imprudent choosers suffer the consequences of their choices—even when these leave them very badly off. This issue has traditionally been portrayed as demonstrating that luck egalitarianism is too harsh on bad choosers, either by allowing them to be left with unacceptably bad outcomes compared to their imprudence (Fleurbaey 1995), or by failing to show equal respect and concern towards them by "abandoning the negligent" (Anderson 1999, 296).[8] More specifically, asking a reckless driver or a helmetless motorcyclist to internalize the costs of her imprudence, might entail leaving the person with severe health deficiencies and

---

[8] Like Anderson, Nicholas Barry argues that the abandonment critique suggests "that egalitarian justice contains more than one core principle" (2006, 99). We argue, instead, that the critique suggests that luck egalitarianism is an imperfect instantiation of the more fundamental notion of moral agency.

injuries (or, alternatively, place crippling financial costs on her if asking her to shoulder the medical expenses). This, on a strict reading of luck egalitarianism, seems to be the appropriate way of respecting her choices in the backward-looking sense—since it would be unfair to impose the costs of her recklessness on others.

The harshness objection has been widely discussed, interpreted in a number of different ways, and luck egalitarians have given several replies (Albertsen 2016b; Albertsen & Midtgaard 2013; Cohen 2008; Knight 2005, 2015: Lippert-Rasmussen 2016, chap. 6; Stemplowska 2017; Voight 2007). These include downplaying the genuineness of people's choices and the extent to which these costs should be borne by victims of imprudence. While these replies help luck egalitarians avoid the most extreme outcomes of the critique, however, they remain committed to the core luck egalitarian idea of ensuring a distributively just outcome of the effects of past exercises of choice—that is, *only* the backward-looking dimensions of moral agency.

The harshness critique can be reconstructed in light of the considerations about moral agency outlined above, and this helps us see the reasons and values at play in the disagreement more clearly. Rather than being a disagreement about the reasonable implications of past choices, this is better understood as an instantiation of the unity thesis; as a tension between emphasizing the backward-looking dimensions of the luck/choice distinction and respecting the more fundamental value of moral agency. And while most luck egalitarians are not committed to the extreme outcomes placed in the spotlight by the harshness critique, this does not impact our broader claim that justice requires deemphasizing backward-looking concerns and preserving forward-looking exercises of moral agency. In this way, the harshness objection can be reconstructed as a disagreement about whether the emphasis on luck and choice should be allowed to undercut its own normative basis; respect for people's moral agency.[9]

And as Zofia Stemplowska notes, no matter how luck egalitarians choose to respond to the harshness objection, they cannot avoid the problem entirely. Indeed, it seems reasonable to say that luck egalitarians are committed to biting the bullet of the harshness objection *at least* in its very general form; that sometimes, justice entails "leaving people to bear even terribly heavy disadvantages" rather than allowing them to impose these costs on others

---

[9] Instead of saying that it is a tension between two ways of respecting moral agency, Alexander Brown holds that it is a tension between two values which feed into a broad notion of responsibility; fairness and human flourishing (Brown 2005, 33-36). We take this to be compatible with our argument here.

(Stemplowska 2009, 254).[10] They are committed to doing so because, otherwise, they would be giving up backward-looking responsibility completely and their view would no longer be luck egalitarian. Stemplowska, as an illustration, asks the reader to imagine "a mountain climber who insists on going uninsured and unprepared on numerous mountain expeditions," and whose rescue imposes significant costs on others. She asks: "[s]hould the climber's claim on the resources win each time against the claims of others in virtue of the fact that if he or she does not get the resources he or she will be left to die?" (2009, 252). Again, if the luck/choice distinction is to have the crucial role that luck egalitarians and others ascribe to it, surely their reply must be no (Albertsen 2016b). At some point, the climber must be held accountable and justice, thusly, must entail harshness.

Dworkin seeks to pre-emptively protect himself from the harshness objection by allowing for the protection of basic rights through compulsory insurance.[11] But, even so, given the emphasis on luck and choice in Dworkin's general framework, it seems that *at some point* the climber should be abandoned *because of* the irresponsibility of their choice – in order to respect this choice. Thus, it seems implausible, on Dworkin's conception, that compulsory insurance schemes would cover *continuously* imposing such costs onto others. A luck egalitarian might very well, in accordance with Stemplowska's claim, favour such a conclusion.

Importantly, however, this need not be detrimental to the idea of ensuring that people are respected as choosers, which is at the core of luck egalitarianism, but careful consideration is needed if we are to understand the prospect of a responsibility-sensitive account of justice which respects moral agency. More careful attention needs to be paid to the roles given to backward and forward-looking responsibility, respectively, and, in particular, when the two are in tension.

To see this problem more clearly, consider a wealthy, luck egalitarian society, Beverly Hills, in which everyone began with an equal and ample share of society's resources:

> **Hiking in Beverly Hills**: Semolina Pilchard decides to go hiking in
> the steep local hills, despite him having no health insurance and

---

[10] Note that these terrible disadvantages could be either in the form of insufficiencies or large inequalities (which might also create obstacles for moral agency). See Axelsen & Nielsen (2015) for thoughts about the intimate connections between obstacles created by inequalities and insufficiency.

[11] Dworkin (2011), 361. See also Parr (2015), 168-169.

despite wearing flip-flops. While climbing, Semolina has an accident, which brings him below what is needed for moral agency. Everyone else in society have been prudent and hard-working and has abundantly more than what is required to exercise their moral agency.

In the example, imposing the costs required to restore Semolina to the capacity required for moral agency on others would infringe on their *equal* shares. Consequently, doing so would be at odds with luck egalitarian justice. In the absence of redistribution, the distributive outcome reflects the past choices of Semolina and his co-citizens.

Imposing the costs required to restore Semolina to an adequate level on others would not, however, threaten their *absolute* capabilities for moral agency in a forward-looking sense—being very wealthy, his co-citizens have much more than enough already. Respect for moral agency in the forward-looking sense, it appears, gives us *no* reason *not* to redistribute from Semolina's fellow citizens who have much more than they need for their agential projects. Moreover, redistribution to save Semolina is required, in order to respect his continued moral agency, since without redistribution, in cases such as this, there will be no further agency to respect.

Hiking in Beverly Hills brings out an underlying issue regarding the significance of relative versus absolute shares. Luck egalitarians care about *comparative* exercises of responsible choice because this is necessary to determine the just-qua-responsibility-sensitive distribution of scarce resources. Respecting moral agency in a forward-looking sense, on the other hand, emphasizes ensuring that everyone has what is needed for the exercise of their agential capacities. Doing so, furthermore, does not require that everyone has an equal share of resources. Instead, it requires a *sufficient* share of society's resources. Moral agency is inherently a "threshold" concept (Raz 1986, chapter 7).[12] Here, then, is a genuine tension; luck egalitarianism prioritizes a *backward-looking* concern with *equal* shares over ensuring the *absolute forward-looking* capacities for moral agency. And luck egalitarians do so *even when* ensuring such capacities would not imperil anyone else's capacities for moral agency.

This way of understanding the harshness objection, furthermore, sheds new light on how the harshness objection has sometimes been framed by its originators. In another luck egalitarian critique, Elizabeth Anderson writes, that "it is no great insult for a state to pass laws requiring the use of seat belts" because, she continues, "self-respecting people can endorse some paternalistic laws as simply

---

[12] See also Huseby (2017); Nielsen (2016); Parr & Slavny (2019); and Shields (2016), chapter 3.

protecting themselves from their own thoughtlessness" (Anderson 1999: 301). Compared to the harshness-objection to the reckless driver case, the difference seems to be about the degree of infringement on moral agency. Seat belt laws are justifiable, despite being to some extent freedom-reducing, because they protect future exercises of moral agency, while not bringing persons below the threshold of the capacity for such exercises. Leaving people to die on the roadside, on the other hand, leaves no space at all for continuing agency.

Importantly, however, luck egalitarians can agree with Stemplowska's claim that harsh outcomes must be accepted at some point, without accepting that they should be accepted in Semolina's case. They can incorporate this idea in different ways. One way of doing so is to agree that the objection does, indeed, target an important issue but one that has to do with *other* values than justice such as sufficiency, basic need fulfilment, community, etc. (Cohen 2009, 37; Segall 2007). What we may call *the externalizing strategy* entails deemphasizing the significance of the value of justice in determining *what is important* and *what to do* (Axelsen & Bidadanure 2019). The externalizing strategy enables luck egalitarians to insist that imposing costs on others for the sake of saving Semolina is a violation of *justice* while still recognizing that Semolina should nonetheless be saved, all things considered (Temkin 2017).

This strategy, of course, is only open to luck egalitarians such as Cohen who deliberately sidestep the question of the value upon which justice is grounded. In some ways, it is a promising reply in that it recognizes the force of the harshness objection and the threat to moral agency it constitutes. But, in not specifying a grounding value, luck egalitarians end up being unreasonably indeterminate about what we should actually do because they fail to provide a way to *choose between* and *weigh* these different values (Meijers & Vandamme 2019). When emphasizing backward-looking responsibility is in tension with respecting forward-looking moral agency, as in the case of Semolina, how does one determine what to do? More concerning, from the point of view of this article, how does one determine what to do *if not* by looking to moral agency?

In the absence of clear reasons to ground the idea of why persons have claims of justice (or fairness), the externalizing strategy looks unconvincing—or, at least, severely incomplete. And this is because the strategy fails to deliver a reason for why backward-looking responsibility should be respected when doing so is in tension with other values; it is unclear *to what extent* and even *why* imposing costs on those that have enough for exercising moral agency in order to help those that have too little is problematic in any way. Thus, it fails to provide grounds for why we should concern ourselves with preserving the equal, but abundant shares of Semolina's co-citizens, and let this concern override—or even be weighed

against—preserving Semolina's opportunities to exercise moral agency going forward.

More promisingly, we could embrace the responsibility-sensitive intuitions in another way. Setting aside the luck egalitarian inclination to align distributive outcomes with past choices, we could still accept that holding people responsible for their choices is *one way* of respecting moral agency—namely, by treating their *past choices* as reflections of such. It is showing respect for Semolina's moral agency, on this view, to let him suffer the consequences of his uninsured hiking. But in taking this route, we should admit, additionally, that other dimensions of moral agency must be incorporated into the policies of a just society—in particular, the importance of ensuring the future exercise of moral agency (Brown 2005) or other valuable egalitarian practices and relations (McTernan 2015, 3).

Such an alternative responsibility-sensitive view would hold that forward-looking responsibility should take priority when clashing with the desire to uphold a distribution on the basis of backward-looking responsibility. *Moral agency egalitarianism*, as we might call this view, would reach the right verdict in Hiking in Beverly Hills case and opt for redistribution to Semolina from her prudent, but opulent, co-citizens. This modified view has a further advantage: it gives a straightforward and intuitive reply to cases of harshness. It says that we should avoid harsh outcomes because these constitute clear and immediate threats to people's plans and intentions and, thus, their ability to act as a moral agent.[13] In other words, it does not only give us the right verdict; that we should not abandon Semolina – which some luck egalitarian replies also reach – but it does so for the *right reasons*; because we want to guarantee people's capacities for exercising moral agency.

To see how this view retains its responsibility-sensitive core, consider a situation similar to Hiking in Beverly Hills, in which Semolina, again, goes hiking and suffers an accident. This time, however, his many careless accidents have, over time, depleted the resources of his co-citizens and, thus, restoring Semolina's capacity to a level adequate for exercising moral agency would hinder not only the equal, but the *absolute* capabilities for moral agency of others.[14] Rescuing Semolina, in other words, would involve such exorbitant costs that it could not be covered without imposing costs on the rest of society that would leave these others without the required agential capacities. Here, standard luck egalitarianism and moral agency egalitarianism agree that it would be too costly

---

[13] Meijers & Vandamme (2019), 327, express related worries about Lippert-Rasmussen's version of luck egalitarianism.

[14] Gheaus (2016), 10-11, makes a similar point about systematic Alpine hikers in flip-flops. See also Albertsen (2016a) for a discussion of this problem in relation to organ transplants.

to save Semolina but disagree on why this is the case. Moral agency egalitarianism would draw this conclusion, not because the rescue imposes costs which threaten the equal shares of Semolina's co-citizens, but because it generates a tension between upholding the moral agency of *one* (imprudent) person and the moral agency of *other members* of society. Here, harshness would be a necessary response to protect the forward-looking moral agency of others.

Another way of arriving at this conclusion is to note, as Andrew Williams helpfully does, that luck egalitarianism is open to a spectrum of interpretations about what weight should be given to responsibility-sensitivity. And the most plausible versions of luck egalitarianism (and this includes Dworkin's version) place limits on the choices people can make to impose costs on themselves and others (Williams 2013, 68-69). Even if luck egalitarians must, by definition, hold people accountable for their choices in a backward-looking sense, a luck egalitarian society could (and should) be structured in a way so as to avoid that some people face terrible pay-offs if they engage in gambles such as reckless driving or BASE jumping (Stemplowska 2009, 246-247).[15] Specifically, we would add, the limits and the pay-offs should be structured so that people's forward-looking moral agency is ensured (as long as it does not impose on that of others).

Luck egalitarianism, modified along the lines suggested by Stemplowska and Williams, and coming closer to what we might call moral agency egalitarianism, admits that if luck egalitarianism is about treating moral agents equally (or fairly) as responsible choosers, it should not allow actions which have the kind of harsh outcomes that would impede moral agency . At least not when such outcomes can be avoided without compromising moral agency in other ways. This leaves room for the notion that harsh outcomes must be accepted in some cases—out of respect for past exercises of choice—but that they should not be accepted when they threaten forward-looking responsibility—out of respect for future exercises of choice.

When viewed as a tension between the backward-looking dimensions of the luck/choice distinction and moral agency, the harshness critique comes more sharply into focus. Viewing the tension like this also makes it clearer that while standard luck egalitarianism fixated on backward-looking responsibility has no satisfactory reply, what we have called moral agency egalitarianism, is immune to the deeper point of the harshness objection. This version of egalitarianism is built around a notion of moral agency that is broader than its purely backward-

---

[15] See also Stemplowska (2019), 279-280, for a particularly clear exposition of the indeterminacy of luck egalitarian theories with respect to costs. See also Lippert-Rasmussen (2016), 198-199.

looking form, prioritizing its forward-looking dimension when the two are in tension.

III. Disrespect

A second iteration of the unity thesis criticizes luck egalitarians for overlooking the disrespectful intrusiveness into people's personal choices which accompanies their emphasis on backward-looking responsibility. This occurs, according to the critique, in the process of evaluating the degree to which people are responsible for their situation, leading to situations where people have to reveal their failings—so-called "shameful revelations" (Wolff 1998). And asking people to disclose their failings in important areas of life is disrespectful and is likely to cause them shame (Anderson 1999). As Jonathan Wolff puts it, considering the case of unemployed citizens, revealing their inability to obtain a job in seeking to qualify for unemployment benefits; "But think of how it must feel—how demeaning it must be – to have to admit to oneself and then convince others that one has not been able to secure a job, despite one's best efforts, at a time when others appear to obtain employment with ease" (Wolff 1998, 114).

The emphasis on backward-looking responsibility, in the sense of determining people's distributive entitlements based on their past exercises of individual choice, according to Wolff, leads to a conflict between *fairness* and *respect* because holding people responsible entails measuring the degree to which they are accountable.[16] Anderson echoes the same critique, when she argues that luck egalitarianism, "makes demeaning and intrusive judgments of people's capacities to exercise responsibility and effectively dictates to them the appropriate uses of their freedom" (Anderson 1999, 289).

The disrespect objection has often been comparatively downplayed and most critics as well as defenders of luck egalitarianism have headlined the harshness critique.[17] This is understandable, in a sense, because the accusation of disrespect seems to be directed, not against the responsibility-sensitive distributive pattern recommended by luck egalitarians, but the disrespectful treatment that accompanies its unconditional institutionalization.

On further reflection, however, the tension arises due to a need to evaluate whether people *are* in fact moral agents, when this, in itself, constitutes a failure to *treat* them as moral agents (Carter 2011). As Ian Carter notes, following a similar line of argument as Wolff; "Respect, on this alternative interpretation, is

---

[16] Wolff (1998), 103, refers to the claim under attack here as the "Lexical Priority of Fairness Thesis".
[17] See Albertsen (2016a); Knight 2005; Lippert-Rasmussen (2016), 192-194; and Firth (2013) for notable exceptions.

a substantive moral attitude that involves abstaining from looking behind the exteriors people present to us as moral agents" (Carter 2011, 551). That persons exercise moral agency compels a certain treatment from others; of courtesy—out of respect for this capacity—and trust—out of respect for how this capacity is presented. The intrusive policies, to which Wolff and Anderson point, are disrespectful in both these ways, expressing both a lack of common courtesy and a lack of trust.

There are two dimensions to this objection. First, the disrespectful intrusion occurs in an area concerning the very capacities that makes someone an agent. The treatment, then, fails to protect "that agent from exposure to empirical assessments of the very capacities in which that agent consists" (Carter 2011, 558). In Wolff's example, our unemployed citizen is forced to reveal the lack of marketable talents—and in a society, in which employment is central to self-sustainment and self-respect (which, arguably, it is in most societies), this is a major threat to one's agency. This is because having a reasonable level of self-respect and social standing are both necessary components in being able to act as a moral agent in a society. It is not the mere having to reveal one's bad luck, then, but having to reveal one's unfortunate inadequacies in areas that are intimately tied to being, and being regarded as, an agent with plans and purposes and capacities for pursuing these. Call this *The Agency Erosion Problem*.

Carter claims that this places limits on what can count as proper *equalisanda* of egalitarian justice—i.e. it limits what can count as an appropriate currency to be distributed (Carter 2011, 562). Specifically, it precludes those currencies that require determining people's relative level of agential capacities in a manner that erodes their status as an agent. Carter argues that luck egalitarians exhibit this problem and cannot compensate people for being worse off through no fault of their own when it comes to agential capacities without violating "opacity respect" because determining levels of individual responsibility often involves such violations (ibid, 568). The Agency Erosion Problem, then, is concerned with distributive outcomes of a particular kind - namely, ones that are tied to the exercise of moral agency.

In response to this objection, luck egalitarians have attempted to *internalize* the value of respect to which Wolff points (Axelsen & Bidadanure 2019). Luck egalitarians, after all, are concerned with equalizing *something* that they deem valuable; be it resources, concern, or opportunity for welfare (Dworkin 2000, Lippert-Rasmussen 2016, or Arneson 1989). Following this route, luck egalitarians can argue that self-respect, privacy, and not feeling shamed, humiliated, and intruded upon are, indeed, important values subject for potential inclusion within the *equalisandum* of justice—that which is to be equalized in a just society.

In this vein, some argue that prominent luck egalitarians, such as Cohen, *already* include this in their currency of egalitarian justice (Lippert-Rasmussen 2012, 127-128); that they *could* incorporate relational goods like respect within their framework (Lippert-Rasmussen 2016, 195); or that they *should* do so (Cordelli 2014; Gheaus 2016).[18] On this broader view of luck egalitarianism, Wolff's unemployed citizen who is forced to reveal shameful information about herself might be considered worse off than others in a morally relevant manner through no fault of her own—thus, because she cannot get a job, she is worse off *both* because she has no job and because this situation forces her to submit to shamefully revealing her inadequacies.

Including "respect-standing" and other relational goods within what is to be equalized *does* seem to lessen the sting of the disrespect critique, since it decreases the degree to which people's moral agency is threatened by determinations of choice and luck. If intrusive policies can *only* be pursued when they do not make people worse off in terms of our chosen currency of justice and this includes considerations of self-respect and not feeling ashamed or humiliated, the tension seems to be defused.[19] We think that this is a promising strategy for luck egalitarians and that respect for moral agency requires such an internalization of the distributive outcomes of disrespectful treatment into the equalisandum – and, building on the lessons drawn from the harshness objection, such internalization should focus on the forward-looking elements of avoiding agency-undermining disrespect.

However, there is a second dimension to this objection. Thus, the threat to moral agency from the unemployment officer in Wolff's example, comes not only from the impact on citizen self-respect. Rather, in departing from a position of doubt and mistrust, the unemployment officer fails to treat the unemployed citizen as a moral agent in virtue of this treatment alone. In asking the jobless citizen to justify herself and her claims, casting doubt on her legitimacy, the state agent is treating the citizen as though her agential status and sense of justice are in doubt. Here, then, the tension arises because emphasizing the luck/choice distinction involves treating people with disrespect that is inappropriate for moral agents— by forcing them to expose deficiencies in their agential capacities and by treating their claims with distrust. Like the Agency Erosion Problem, this issue concerns a failure of respect for moral agency. But whereas the previous problem focused on the agency-threatening outcome, this one is not tied to distributive outcomes.

---

[18] See also Barry (2006), 93-97.
[19] On the other hand, one might argue that this solution merely pushes back the question – since we would still need to know whether people's feeling of shame was due to luck or choice.

Instead, this problem concerns how a moral agent must, deontically, be treated. Call this *The Disrespectful Treatment Problem*.

Note, further, that the solution noted above of internalizing the distributive outcomes of disrespectful treatment into the equalisandum only targets the Agency Erosion Problem and does not address the Disrespectful Treatment Problem. In order to see this, consider the following example, in which the Disrespectful Treatment Problem is isolated from its potential, agency-eroding outcome:

> **Betting on Failure**: in a government-run unemployment agency, a group of employees have started a monthly sweepstake in which they attempt to guess which newly-unemployed citizens will fail to get a job before the end of the month. They scrutinize their qualifications and backgrounds, each betting on one jobless person whom they deem least likely to succeed. The group of employees has no direct contact with the relevant unemployed citizens, so the sweepstake has no effect on them.

Now, clearly Betting on Failure would be more problematic if the unemployed citizens knew about the sweepstake and felt ashamed and suffered losses of self-respect as a result or if the employees could seek to jeopardize the employment possibilities of the citizens to increase their chances of winning the bet—that is, if the Agency Erosion Problem remained.

But the Disrespectful Treatment Problem targets the failure to *treat* someone as a moral agent, as a chooser. And this is distinct from the consequences of such treatment. That is, what is unjust about a society in which some are treated disrespectfully, cannot be captured by focusing only on the obstacles to their abilities to choose and act as moral agents it may create (Schemmel 2012). Rather, this society is permeated by unjust ways of relating to or the wrong attitudes towards moral agents. Betting on Failure highlights the non-distributive dimensions of political morality that the luck egalitarian focus on outcomes overlooks.[20] The government employees in our example are acting wrongly, and indeed the institution is unjust, *regardless* of whether it affects the unemployed citizens. And this is because their actions fail to express the appropriate respect for the moral agency of the unemployed citizens—specifically, in their efforts to secure a job.

If moral agency is the value upon which a just society is built as we claim, citizens of such a society must not merely have a share of resources that adequately

---

[20] See Tomlin (2015) and Moles & Parr (2018) for illuminating thoughts on this distinction.

reflects their agential status, but also be treated as moral agents by the state and in society's other primary institutions. A respect for moral agency, then, should not *merely* constrain the currency of the distribution, as Carter believes, but also the way in which citizens relate to each other (and how the state relates to its citizens). This is the second central implication of the unity thesis.

Luck egalitarians might object that the problem is due to the injustice of societies of our present world—not to luck egalitarianism. Thus, as Joanna Firth (2013) argues, distributive justice theorists of a luck egalitarian inclination might admit that conditional benefits would involve disrespectful treatment and lead to shameful revelations in current societies, but that this would not be the case in an *ideal* society governed by luck egalitarian principles.[21] In such a society, she argues, citizens would not be ashamed of revealing their inability to get a job since they will hold luck egalitarian beliefs, which entails that "[a] person's deep value does not depend on her level of marketable natural talents" (Firth 2013, 38).[22] In a society, in which people were shaped by luck egalitarian institutions that embody the value that one should not be worse-off due to bad luck, it seems reasonable, in other words, to assume that they would feel less ashamed about revealing their unlucky inadequacies and, indeed, that evaluating their degree of past responsibility would be less disrespectful.

We can imagine Firth's stipulated luck egalitarian ideal in two different ways. In one version, evaluations of responsibility and moral agency are omnipresent in society. Because people are so accustomed to this process and hold luck egalitarian beliefs, they do not feel ashamed or disrespected even when these evaluations are performed with a lack of common courtesy or trust. It should be clear that such a society would not avoid the Disrespectful Treatment Problem and would not, on our account, show proper respect for moral agency—or, as Firth puts it, for a person's deep value.

In another version of the ideal society, however, the luck egalitarian ethos prevents not only feelings of shame but also *intentions* and *attitudes* of disrespect. Evaluations of responsibility and moral agency are constrained by trust in and respect for people's capacities. In incorporating a concern for non-distributive dimensions of justice, this version of a luck egalitarian society *would* show appropriate respect for moral agency and would preclude, for example, the situation imagined in Betting on Failure. The upshot is that the disrespect objection does not preclude the luck egalitarian use of the luck/choice distinction. But, like with the harshness objection, it constrains its use.

---

[21] See also Knight (2005), 65, and Wolff (2010), section 3.5.
[22] See also Lippert-Rasmussen (2016), 192.

Accommodating the disrespect objection, then, means reaching for non-distributive elements of morality. And indeed, Cohen, advocates both the importance of *community* and the establishment of an egalitarian *ethos*, which sees citizens internalizing concern for the plight of their fellow citizens, in his ideal egalitarian society (2008; 2009). Similarly, Dworkin's central claim that the state must treat its citizens with "equal concern and respect" (2000) looks as though it could contain non-distributive, interpersonal elements besides its distributive recommendation of equality of resources. There is a foundation, then, in the luck egalitarian canon on which an expansion of the conception of a just society to include non-distributive elements of respect for moral agency *could* be constructed.[23] Both Cohen's ethos and Dworkin's concern and respect could, when appreciated in the light of the full force of the disrespect objection, be reconceived to ensure that the treatment to which our unemployed citizens were subjected in Betting on Failure was prevented. We argue that there are good reasons for such a re-conception and that doing so would, once again, move us towards an egalitarianism more firmly anchored in moral agency—what we have called moral agency egalitarianism.

But, doing so would also involve stepping beyond the outcome-oriented elements of the luck/choice distinction and onto the deeper ground of moral agency—and luck egalitarians have not been sufficiently explicit about the importance of doing so, thus far. The second instantiation of the unity thesis suggests that justice has both distributive and treatment-related elements—and the luck/choice distinction, as it is standardly used in luck egalitarianism, gives us poor guidance about the latter.[24] This is because, as we saw, treatment flowing from the luck/choice distinction may erode moral agency and disrespect moral agents. This casts doubt, once again, on the claim that the backward-looking, distributive dimensions of this distinction fully capture the justice-relevant concerns that arise between moral agents.

IV. Conclusion

This article is not an argument against responsibility-sensitive distributive justice. On the contrary, we acknowledge that justice demands holding persons responsible for their individual choices when and because this is one way of respecting their moral agency. The argument can be summed up in the following way. The basic entities of justice are moral agents. Therefore, the moral bedrock

---

[23] Something similar could be said of Larry Temkin's claim that "sentient individuals are not merely the *objects* of moral concern but also the *source* of moral concern and values" (2003a, 778).
[24] See Bidadanure (2016); Elford (2017); Lippert-Rasmussen (2018); and Moles & Parr (2018) for thoughts about how political morality may contain both elements.

of justice is respect for moral agents. It follows that any avoidable situation that fails to respect moral agency—such as allowing distributive outcomes that leave persons without the means to exercise moral agency or failing to treat persons with the respect appropriate for moral agents—involves an injustice.

The objections levelled against luck egalitarianism are not separate and scattered stones but stem from the same ground of the unity thesis. This realization allows us to appreciate their force more clearly. The emphasis on the luck/choice distinction and the luck egalitarian fixation with backward-looking responsibility-sensitive distributive justice is sometimes in tension with more fundamental commitments to moral agency. Luck egalitarians could, in reply to the unity thesis, give up the commitment to moral agency. But many would, we take it, be dissatisfied with that result. Instead, we argue, the narrow focus on backward-looking responsibility of luck egalitarianism should be discarded, and responsibility-sensitive justice should be broadened to include and emphasize *forward-looking* opportunities for moral agency and the respectful *treatment* of moral agents. By reflecting and emphasizing a broader vision of moral agency in this way, a society committed to justice more coherently embodies its grounding value.[25]

David V. Axelsen,
University of Essex,
d.v.axelsen@essex.ac.uk

Lasse Nielsen,
University of Southern Denmark,
lasseni@sdu.dk

References

Albertsen, Andreas. 2016a. "Drinking in the Last Chance Saloon: Luck Egalitarianism, Alcohol Consumption, and the Organ Transplant Waiting List." *Medicine, Health Care, and Philosophy* 19: 325-338.

Albertsen, Andreas 2016b. "Fresh Starts for Poor Health Choices: Should We Provide Them and Who Should Pay?" *Public Health Ethics* 9(1):55-64.

Albertsen, Andreas B. & Søren F. Midtgaard 2014. "Unjust Equalities." *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice* 17, 2: 335-346.

Anderson, Elizabeth 1999. "What is the Point of Equality?" *Ethics* 109: 287-337.

Arneson, Richard 1989. "Equality and Equal Opportunity for Welfare." *Philosophical Studies* 56, 1: 77-93.

Arneson, Richard 1999. "What, if Anything, Renders All Humans Morally Equal?", In D. Jamieson (ed.), *Singer and his Critics*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Arneson, Richard 2000. "Luck Egalitarianism and Prioritarianism." *Ethics* 110, 2: 339-349.

Axelsen, D. V., & Bidadanure, J. (2019). Unequally egalitarian? Defending the credentials of social egalitarianism. *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy*, 22(3), 335-351.

Axelsen, D. V., & Nielsen, L. (2015). Sufficiency as freedom from duress. *Journal of Political Philosophy*, 23(4), 406-426.

Barry, Nicholas 2006. "Defending Luck Egalitarianism." *Journal of Applied Philosophy* 23(1): 89-107.

Bidadanure, Juliana. 2016. "Making sense of age-group justice: a time for relational equality?" *Politics, Philosophy, and Economics* 15(3):234-260.

Brown, Alexander 2005. "If We Value Individual Responsibility, Which Policies Should We Favour?" *Journal of Applied Philosophy* 22(1): 23-44.

Carter, Ian 2011. "Respect and the Basis of Equality." *Ethics* 121, 538-571.

Clayton, Matthew. 2016. "Liberal equality: political not erinaceous." *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy* 19:4.

Cohen, G.A. 1989. "On the Currency of Egalitarian Justice." *Ethics* 99, 4: 906-944.

Cohen, G.A. 2006. "Luck and Equality: A Reply to Hurley." *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 72:2 (2006).

Cohen, G.A. 2008. *Rescuing Justice and Equality*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Cohen, G.A. 2009. *Why Not Socialism?* Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Cordelli, Chiara. 2014. "Justice as Fairness and Relational Resources". *Journal of Political Philosophy* 23(1): 86-110.

Dworkin, Ronald 1982. "Equality of What? Part 2: Equality of Resources." *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 10, 4: 283-345.

Dworkin, Ronald 2000. *Sovereign Virtue*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Elford, Gideon 2017. "Survey Article: Relational Equality and Distribution." *Journal of Political Philosophy* 25(4): e80-e99.

Feiring, Eli 2008. "Lifestyle, Responsibility, and Justice." *Journal of Medical Ethics* 34: 33-36.

Firth, Joanna 2013. "What's so shameful about shameful revelations?", *Law, Ethics, and Philosophy* 1: 31-51.

Fleurbaey, Marc 1995. "Equality and Responsibility". *European Economic Review* 39(3-4): 683-689.

Gheaus, Anca 2016. "Hikers in Flip-Flops: Luck Egalitarianism, Democratic Equality and the Distribuenda of Justice." *Journal of Applied Philosophy* 35(1): 54-69.

Huseby, R. (2017). Sufficient Autonomy and Satiable Reasons. *Law, Ethics and Philosophy*, 5, 154-163.

Knight, Carl 2005. "In Defense of Luck Egalitarianism". *Res Publica* 11 (1): 55-73.

Knight, Carl 2009. "Egalitarian Justice and Valuational Judgement". *Journal of Moral Philosophy* 6(4): 482-498.

Knight, Carl. 2015. "Abandoning the Abandonment Objection: Luck Egalitarian Arguments for Public Insurance." *Res Publica* 21 (2): 119-135.

Lippert-Rasmussen, Kasper 2001. "Egalitarianism, Option Luck, and Responsibility." *Ethics* 111(3): 548-579.

Lippert-Rasmussen, Kasper 2012. "Democratic Egalitarianism versus Luck Egalitarianism: What is at Stake?" *Philosophical Topics* 40 (1): 117-134.

Lippert-Rasmussen, Kasper 2016. *Luck Egalitarianism*. London: Bloomsbury.

Lippert-Rasmussen, K. 2018. *Relational egalitarianism: Living as equals*. Cambridge University Press.

McTernan, Emily 2015. "How to be a Responsibility-Sensitive Egalitarian: From Metaphysics to Social Practice." *Political Studies* 64(3): 748-764.

Meijers, T., & Vandamme, P. E. 2019. Equality, value pluralism and relevance: Is luck egalitarianism in one way good, but not all things considered?. *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy*, 22(3), 318-334.

Moles, A. & Parr, T. 2018. "Distributions and Relations: A Hybrid Account". *Political Studies* 67(1): 132-148.

Nielsen, L. 2016. Sufficiency grounded as sufficiently free: A reply to Shlomi Segall. *Journal of Applied Philosophy*, 33(2), 202-216.

Otsuka, M. 2002. "Luck, Insurance, and Equality." *Ethics* 113: 40-54.

Parr, T. 2015. *On the Job* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Warwick).

Parr, T., & Slavny, A. 2019. Rescuing Basic Equality. *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly*, 100(3), 837-857.

Rawls, John 1971. *A Theory of Justice*. London: Oxford University Press.

Raz, Joseph 1986. *The Morality of Freedom*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Segall, Shlomi 2007. "In Solidarity with the Imprudent." *Social Theory and Practice* 33(2):177-198.

Schemmel, C. 2012. Distributive and relational equality. *Politics, philosophy & economics*, 11(2), 123-148.

Shields, L. 2016. *Just Enough*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Stemplowska, Z. 2008. "Holding People Responsible for What They Do Not Control." *Politics, Philosophy, and Economics* 7: 355-377.

Stemplowska, Z. 2009. "Making Justice Sensitive to Responsibility." *Political Studies* 57, 237-259

Stemplowska, Z. 2017. "Rarely Harsh and Always Fair: Luck Egalitarianism and Unhealthy Choices" in Liao, S. Matthew and O'Neill, Collin (eds.), *Current Controversies in Bioethics*, New York: Routledge.

Stemplowska, Z. 2019. "How Generous Should Egalitarians Be?", *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy* 22(3): 269-283.

Temkin, L. 2003a. "Egalitarianism Defended." *Ethics* 113 (4): 764-782.

Temkin, L. 2003b. "Equality, Priority or What?" *Economics and Philosophy* 19(1): 61-87.

Temkin, L. 2017. "Equality as Comparative Fairness." *Journal of Applied Philosophy* 34(1): 43-60.

Tomlin, P. 2015. "What is the Point of Egalitarian Social Relationships?" in: Alexander Kaufman ed., *Distributive Justice and Access to Advantage: G.A. Cohen's Egalitarianism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press)

Van de Poel, I. 2011. "The Relation Between Forward-Looking and Backward-Looking Responsibility", In Vincent, N., van de Poel, I., & van den Hoven, J. (eds.), *Moral Responsibility: Beyond Free Will and Determinism*, Dordrecht: Springer.

Voigt, K. 2007. "The Harshness Objection: Is Luck Egalitarianism Too Harsh on the Victims of Option Luck?" *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice* 10(4):389-407.

Williams, A. 2013. "How Gifts and Gambles Preserve Justice." *Economics and Philosophy* 29(1): 65-85.

Williams, B. 2005. *In the Beginning Was the Deed: Realism and Moralism in Political Argument*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Wolff, J. 1998. "Fairness, Respect, and the Egalitarian Ethos." *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 27(2): 97-122.

Wolff, J. 2010. "Fairness, Respect, and the Egalitarian *Ethos* Revisited." *Journal of Ethics* 14: 335-350.