What Second Best Scenarios Reveal About Ideals of Global Justice∗

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In this paper we explore the options available to egalitarians that confront tradeoffs between domestic and global equality, paying special attention to some of their respective benefits and costs. While there need be no conflict in theory between addressing global inequality (inequalities between people worldwide) and addressing domestic inequality (inequalities between people within a political community), there may be instances in which the feasible mechanisms for reducing global inequality risk aggravating domestic inequality. The burgeoning literature on global justice has tended to overlook this type of scenario, and theorists espousing global egalitarianism have consequently not engaged with cases that are important for evaluating and clarifying the content of their theories. Many who promote policies to ensure global equality are uncomfortable with the idea that by doing so they might undermine the living standards of disadvantaged people in their own societies. Thus, the tradeoff we raise is likely to be a fraught one for them. We note that disregarding the evaluation of difficult tradeoffs is not a sin unique to global egalitarians. Most justice theorists who endorse domestic egalitarianism but reject global egalitarianism posit a requirement—a duty of justice or of humanity—to promote the achievement of decent standards of living worldwide without considering how this requirement relates to their commitments to promote domestic equality.

1. Egalitarian Justice

Egalitarianism, broadly understood, has been a very influential doctrine in theorizing about domestic justice — justice within a political society — for a long time. With some notable exceptions (Nozick, 1974; Raz, 1986; Frankfurt, 1988), justice theorists have repeatedly

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affirmed that the evaluation of institutional arrangements in a society should be sensitive to inequalities in distributive shares that these tend to generate over time.

Egalitarians have, to put it mildly, often disagreed warmly over precisely which conception of social justice is desirable. Egalitarian conceptions can be distinguished in terms of which subjects, goods, and distributive standards they consider when assessing distributive shares. The subjects of a conception of egalitarian justice indicate among whom equality is to be sought. Egalitarian conceptions may, for example, take individual persons as subjects, maintaining that there are limits to how steep inequalities in wealth, political influence, or other natural and social resources should be between them. Alternatively, they may focus on inequalities in the distribution of valued resources amongst social groups (e.g. as defined by gender, race, ethnicity, and so on). The goods of a conception of egalitarian justice constitute, as Sen (1992, p. 73) has put it, the ‘evaluative space’ of that conception – they constitute the things to be distributed among subjects. Examples of such goods include: capabilities and functionings, opportunities, income and wealth, economic power, civil and political rights—these latter two goods putting the ‘liberal’ in liberal egalitarianism. Finally, egalitarian conceptions may differ in the distributive standards that they employ. An egalitarian conception might defend flat equality as its preferred distributive criterion, but few do so. Egalitarians need not be committed to viewing all inequalities in the relevant space as wrong or regrettable. Which inequalities stand in need of redress, and to what extent, depends on the particular justification invoked in support of these standards. For instance, some such justifications might appeal to considerations of responsibility, holding that only inequalities due to circumstances, not to subjects’ responsible choices, should be rectified. Or they may insist on equality with respect to certain goods, but sufficiency or some reasonably high level of other goods. Alternatively, egalitarians might follow Rawls (1999) and conclude that departures from equality are permissible so long as they can be justified to those who fare worst under them, thereby treating equality as a morally privileged benchmark, rather than a desired outcome. And of course one can be an egalitarian while also embracing other values, such as giving some form of priority concern for the less

1 The literature on these topics is vast. Leading early discussions of such goods can be found in the essays in Nussbaum and Sen (1993).
2 For a good overview of some of the options, see Arneson (2002).
4 See, for example, Nussbaum (2006, esp., pp. 292-295).
advantaged. One further question that has divided egalitarians has concerned what G.A. Cohen (1997) has referred to as the site of distributive justice. That is, should principles of egalitarian justice be used to evaluate only the basic ground rules of a social system (what Rawls referred to famously as a society’s “basic structure”) or should they be applied to the conduct of individuals, and a society’s social ethos.\

We’ll refer loosely to all theories that express concern with equality in some way among some subjects with respect to some goods as ‘egalitarian justice’.

The recent burgeoning literature on global justice has largely focused less on the content of egalitarian justice than on its scope. This ‘question of scope’, concerns whether conceptions of justice that are endorsed for the domestic sphere constitute appropriate standards on the global plane. Two broad camps have emerged in this debate. Global egalitarians (we’ll call them ‘Extenders’) support extending egalitarian justice to the global level; while opponents of various stripes (we’ll call them ‘Restricters’) reject any such extension of scope. The Restricters are not a cold-hearted lot. Many of them are egalitarians of some sort domestically, and nearly all of them advocate policies and institutional arrangements that would likely mitigate inequalities worldwide to at least some degree (Miller, 2005). Reforms with global inequality-reducing effects may be adopted, for instance, in pursuit of the humanitarian goal—widely affirmed by Restricters— of meeting peoples’ basic needs so as to improve the absolute position of the globally disadvantaged. But Restricters deny that inequalities qua inequalities are a reason for concern globally, even if they are so domestically.\

Many Restricters advocate egalitarian justice domestically, so they need to provide good reasons why considerations that ground concern with equality within political communities do not also ground it globally. On the one hand, they must provide a plausible account of the grounds of egalitarian justice. On the other, they must show that these features are either not present at all, or at least not present in the requisite degree and form on the global plane to justify concern with global equality. Consequently, the debate between Extenders and Restricters has typically followed a relatively standard script: Restricters assert that there is an

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5 For discussion, see Estlund (1998), Murphy (1999), and Pogge (2000).
6 Classic early defenses of the Extender position are Pogge (1989) and Beitz (1999), both of whom adopted a broadly Rawlsian approach. More recent statements are offered by Moellendorf (2002), Tan (2004), and Caney (2005).
7 Influential expressions of the Restricter view are Miller (1998), Blake (2002), Nagel (2005), and Miller (2007).
empirical dis-analogy between the global and the domestic spheres and argue that, in virtue of this dis-analogy, restricting the scope of egalitarian principles of justice to the domestic sphere is justified. On the Restricter view, everyone has certain “general duties,” owed identically to everyone in the world. Over and above those, though, people also have “special duties” to particular others. Among those are often said to be “associative duties”: people who are members of the same association (paradigmatically, family or country) owe things to one another that they do not owe to people who are not members of the association (Dworkin, 1986, pp. 195-206; Scheffler, 2001). One of the things that members of some associations owe to each other but not to non-associates, Restricters claim, is concern for equality.

What are the relevant features that associations must have for concern with equality to become a requirement of justice? Restricters have focused mainly on two, cooperation and coercion:

- On the Cooperation Account, concern with distributive equality among some group of people is rooted in the fact that members of the group are cooperating in some joint venture.
- On the Coercion Account, concern with distributive equality among some group of people is rooted in the fact that members of the group are all subject to the same coercive authority.

One can of course draw on both accounts in developing a conception of the scope of egalitarian justice, treating the existence of each or both Coercion and Cooperation as necessary and/or sufficient conditions for its application. Each of these accounts consists of a moral and an empirical claim. Take the Coercion Account. The moral claim here is that egalitarian justice only applies in the presence of some form of coercion. The empirical claim is that coercion of the requisite sort is absent at the international level. Extenders typically

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8 “We are required to accord equal status to anyone with whom we are joined in a strong and coercively imposed political community. ... There is a difference between voluntary association, however strongly motivated, and coercively imposed collective authority.... Political institutions are different, because adherence to them is not voluntary.... An institution that one has no choice about joining must offer terms of membership that meet a higher standard.... [O]nce the state exists, we are in a new moral situation where the value of equality has purchase” (Nagel, 2005, pp. 133, 140).

9 See, for example, Risse (2006).
respond by trying to show either that this alleged empirical dis-analogy between domestic and global with respect to the exercise of coercion does not obtain—pointing to the many ways in which coercion of the requisite sort is exercised on the global plane\textsuperscript{10}— or that the empirical dis-analogy is not morally relevant in the way that Restricters suppose it to be, since coercion is not a necessary condition for the demands of egalitarian justice to apply.\textsuperscript{11}

Two types of Extenders can be distinguished by the form of argument they emphasise in responding to the Restricters. The first group shares with Restricters the view that the scope of egalitarian justice is limited to those who stand in some particular kind of social relation with one another (e.g. as set out in the Coercion or Cooperation Accounts, or in some other way). These “Associative Duty” Extenders, like Restricters, treat duties to promote equality within some group as based on special duties that members of that group have to one another. However, Associative Duty Extenders deny that those social relations that trigger these special associative duties are absent on the global plane. The second group of Extenders rejects this picture. These “General Duty” Extenders deny that the social relations emphasised by Restricters and Extenders of the first type really are necessary for egalitarian justice requirements to apply. Extenders of this latter sort treat concern with equality as based on general duties held to all, rather than special associative duties held only to some.

2. The Importance of Trade-offs in Second Best Scenarios

The ongoing debates between Extenders and Restricters on coercion, cooperation and other purported conditions that set the scope of egalitarian justice have been valuable. Indeed, these debates have enriched thinking about the grounds for concern with equality more generally, and have led to deeper exploration of the nature of global institutional arrangements. We’ve contributed to these debates in the past.\textsuperscript{12} Our aim here, however, is to draw attention to some of the important territory that they have left unexplored.

\textsuperscript{10} See, for example, Abizadeh (2007, pp. 248-50), Barry and Valentini (2009, pp. 495-7), and Ypi, Goodin, and Barry (2009). Although his interest is not in justifying global egalitarianism, Thomas Pogge (2008, \textit{esp.}, ch. 4) has argued that the global economic order is coercively imposed by the world’s wealthy and privileged on the world’s poor.

\textsuperscript{11} See, for example, Arneson (2005, \textit{esp.}, pp. 136-142) and Julius (2006, pp. 179-80).

As one example, few Extenders have discussed whether or not *any* measure a state might adopt to bring about a decrease in global inequality would be justified were it to exacerbate domestic inequality *within* that state.\(^{13}\) One can surely argue that global inequality is an important normative concern in its own right, yet maintain that states that wish to participate in schemes to reduce global inequality should take special care to avoid measures that aggravate inequality within it.\(^{14}\) Such neglect is related to the fact that Extenders typically have in view the desirability of a specific kind of trade-off, namely, that between the global rich and the global poor. That is, their advocacy of global egalitarianism typically begins by drawing attention to disturbing disparities in shares of global income among different quintiles or deciles before considering institutional reforms that would increase the life prospects of those in the bottom categories at the cost of decreasing (somewhat) the advantages of those in the top categories (Pogge, 2008; Brock, 2009; Hassoun, 2012). It is easy to see why Extenders take this route. It is very difficult to take in these sorts of facts and not consider it to be a justice-gain were the global rich to have less and the global poor to have more. Indeed, many Restricters also would view this distributive trade-off as a justice gain (Miller, 1998; Miller, 2005). However, by concentrating on these ideal distributive trade-offs, Extenders have generally neglected ways in which attempts to achieve egalitarian justice demands could lead to trade-offs that seem much more worrisome, morally speaking.

These worries are not merely academic; they concern many of the policy instruments that economists have discussed when they consider such matters. For example, some economists claim that the best ways to do something about poverty and inequality is not to engage in redistributive transfers from affluent countries to developing countries — this might be counterproductive (at least if provided in the form of intergovernmental aid\(^{15}\) and would probably be politically infeasible in any case — but to liberalise trade and immigration

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\(^{13}\) Two scenarios are worth considering. In the first (discussed by Glen Weyl in his contribution to this issue) domestic inequality is increased *mechanically*, since the society has more poor people in it. A policy of immigration liberalization (L) might increase the number of poorer people in some affluent country (N). This could be consistent with it being the case that those who were less advantaged in N prior to the adoption of L are not made worse off by the policy (or may even be made better off by it.) In this case global inequality could be reduced and everyone would be made better off than they were prior to the adoption of L. In the second, the increase in domestic inequality is not merely mechanical, but is increased by an increase in the wealth of the more advantaged or a decrease in wealth of the less advantaged in N. [The first type of case exposes some interesting fault lines in views on global justice, but we’ll set aside discussion of such cases here and return to it in our discussion of tradeoffs faced by Restrictors in the last section of this paper].

\(^{14}\) This position is hard, if not impossible, to sustain if one is a General Duty Extender.

\(^{15}\) As argued in Eastery (2006).
from poorer developing countries to affluent ones. Perhaps they are right. But trade and immigration liberalization are, as policy tools, too blunt to precisely limit the resultant distributive transfers to those that Extenders typically target; namely, aggregate transfers from those with extremely high standards of living to those with very low standards of living. Such measures may engender aggregate transfers from the disadvantaged in affluent countries to the poor (and not so poor) who now reside in developing countries.

One might lodge two sorts of objections here: either that these policy prescriptions are misguided — immigration and trade liberalization might do little to address global inequality — or that the trade-offs that we have suggested such policies might engender would not in fact obtain (e.g. liberalization of both sorts might both help address global inequality and promote the well-being of the disadvantaged in developed countries.16) Suffice it to say that the specific empirical questions at issue here are hotly contested.17 Yet, it would be surprising if some of the general kinds of trade-offs we have raised — between protecting the interests of the domestic poor and promoting global equality, for example — would never arise in considering the different policy instruments we might utilise to address global justice goals.18 And there are good political economic reasons to think that they will indeed arise. The well-off in affluent societies typically wield very significant political power, while disadvantaged groups in these societies do not. In light of these disparities in political power, it seems reasonable to expect that wealthy elites will use their power to resist policy reforms that could advance the interests of the domestic and global poor at the expense of their own advantage. Even supposing wealthy elites are unable to prevent ostensibly pro-poor policy reforms, it seems reasonable to expect that they will use their power to manage these reforms so as to capture a sizable portion of the aggregate gains, often at the expense of the position of their less advantaged compatriots. This is not to say that policies that leave the very affluent to bear most of the costs of increasing the prospects of the global poor are altogether infeasible. We simply note that there is reason to expect that attempts to close global inequality gaps will lead to trade-offs of the kind we’ve raised here.

16 See, for example, Pritchett (2006).
18 Many studies which argue that the effects of immigration liberalisation on wages of domestic workers are slight focus, reasonably enough, on immigration at historically observed levels. We note that when considering the potential effects of very large-scale immigration liberalization from affluent to developing countries at present, such studies do not necessarily provide a very trustworthy guide, and thus do not obviously support open borders policies in the way that some of their advocates seem to suppose. 
Even if they do not think they will arise frequently, Extenders should in any case have something to say about the kinds of trade-offs that would arise in second best situations. As we show below, how Extenders address these second best scenarios reveals important aspects of their egalitarian ideals.

Restricters, too, have also overlooked the importance of addressing the kinds of trade-offs that arise in second best scenarios — their primary concern has been with making the case for restricting the scope of egalitarian duties against the Extenders. Yet how Restricters negotiate such trade-offs significantly affects the overall complexion of their views. Suppose, for example that some small sacrifice in domestic equality (among those who sit well above the sufficiency line) could lead to improvements in the achievement of sufficiency abroad. In that case, the demand to promote sufficiency abroad and the demand to promote and protect equality at home will be at odds. Restricters can handle this tension in several ways, each of which reveals key aspects of their ideals. For example, some might propose that duties to assist others in reaching a sufficiency threshold are humanitarian duties, while duties to promote compatriot equality are duties of justice; and, further, that duties of justice categorically override humanitarian duties. This resolution implies that no gain (however large) in the achievement of global sufficiency — which is recognised by these theorists to be a morally important goal — could compete with any gain (however small) in the achievement of domestic equality. Put this way, the Restricter ideal may be more difficult to sustain. Insisting on the importance of the distinction between humanitarian duties and duties of justice does not establish that the latter always override the former.\(^\text{19}\) While duties of humanity may be less stringent, in that they demand less of agents who have them, they may also be more urgent than (and therefore take moral priority over) duties of justice. Hence, Restricters who adopt the proposed resolution must marshal theoretical resources to support what turns out to be an important plank of their ideal, namely, that more stringent demands have categorical priority over more urgent demands.

In any case, Restricters that take this route must nevertheless consider a different way in which the demands comprised by their ideal can compete with one another. How does the humanitarian duty to promote sufficiency abroad relate to the absolute level of living standards within their society? One can coherently maintain that equality should be maintained at home and sufficiency achieved abroad, while also maintaining that the overall

\(^{19}\) See, for example, Campbell (1974) and Barry (1991, pp. 182-210).
level of affluence within the home country should be reduced quite dramatically if this is necessary to promote sufficiency abroad. As it stands, the Coercion Account of restriction, for example, does not obviously include the resources to address this issue. Perhaps adequate respect for the autonomy of all requires rough distributive equality of some sort. But does it require any particular standard of living? Restricters have given little attention to this issue too. Perhaps they believe that achieving sufficiency abroad would be relatively inexpensive—a questionable assumption shared by many Extenders; certainly, that would be the case in an ideal world. The result, though, is that Restricters have posited a duty to promote sufficiency without considering in detail its stringency or its limits. These details are likely to affect the redistributive implications of different Restricter ideals, depending on the criteria they adopt to distinguish the normative requirements that apply in domestic and international domains. To resolve this tension one way or another, Restricters will need to be clearer about the manner in which they ground their duties to promote a decent standard of living. To provide the requisite clarity, Restricters must consider the sorts of tradeoffs that are likely to occur in second best scenarios.

To sum up then, both Extenders and Restricters have typically specified their views in light of their implications for ideal contexts, have largely ignored the implications of their view in non-ideal contexts, and have side-stepped what appear to be important test cases for their ideal theories by focusing nearly exclusively on the question of scope. This is not just a problem insofar as it concerns the application of these conceptions of justice to the real world — it undermines a core objective of these conceptions. Ideal theories are often said to illuminate the complexion of basic moral and social values (e.g., liberty, equality, community, efficiency, and so on) and the relationships among them — as well as to provide guidance in our decidedly nonideal world (Robeyns, 2008; Stemplowska, 2008; Swift, 2008; Simmons, 2010; Gilabert, 2012; Hamlin and Stemplowska, 2012). Yet restricting our analysis to a narrow range of ideal scenarios — in which only a very limited set of trade-offs arise, if at all — leaves us with an impoverished understanding of basic values. To deeply understand the contours of a commitment to certain basic values, we must explore the implications of such

20 Richard Miller (2010, pp. 53-54) claims “at the point at which policies further opening the borders would pose a significant risk of worsening the lives of those who are now compatriots, the current citizenry may express their responsibilities to one another by refusing to open the borders more” but it is hard to see how the resources he employs to justify restriction (the Coercion Account) support this view. Further, by saying that they may express their responsibilities in this way, he leaves open whether or not they should do so.
a commitment across a broad range of scenarios, including those in which a host of desirable policy instruments for jointly realizing basic values will be unavailable. Political ideals remain indeterminate to the extent that we fail to consider the trade-offs that arise in such nonideal situations.

3. Competing Claims for Equality

To drive home the point of the preceding section, we now turn to exploring the trade-offs that arise in one second best scenario that Extenders should consider — namely, the scenario where global equality can be achieved only through measures that undermine the position of less advantaged people in affluent societies. Our aim is programmatic: to map certain types of trade-offs among moral and social values that might arise in this sort of scenario and the kinds of ideal moral considerations these types of trade-offs raise. That is, we identify “choice points” for theorizing about broadly egalitarian approaches to global justice by revealing the normative commitments that are involved in saying one thing rather than another about how to act in the face of different types of trade-offs. The result will be a more detailed understanding of the range of views one might hold about global distributive justice that are egalitarian in spirit, not just for the non-ideal case, but for the ideal case too.

As we introduce these views, we will also note some of the justificatory challenges they face.

Consider a world that includes an affluent country (denoted N) and an underdeveloped country (denoted S). N is marked by nontrivial domestic inequality: the average income of N’s elites (denoted Y_E) is notably higher than the average income of N’s poorest residents (denoted Y_P). Let G_N = Y_P / Y_E denote the level of inequality within N. We assume that the institutional arrangements engendering this level of inequality cannot be justified in ways that are congenial to egalitarians — e.g. they do not optimise the position of the least advantaged in society and are not necessary to sustain relatively high standards of living. This world is also marked by unjustifiable global inequality: even Y_P is higher than Y_S, the income of typical residents of S. Let G_W = Y_S / Y_E denote the level of global inequality. Given our assumptions, G_W < G_N.

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21 We will discuss the case in terms of income, but one could replace income for any favored metric (wealth, opportunities, capabilities, human rights, and so on).
The status quo institutional scheme in this world, denoted Q, is such that N maintains some significant restrictions on cross-border economic interactions (trade, investment, etc.) with S. In contrast, consider an alternative institutional scheme, denoted L, that liberalises such cross-border interactions with S. We assume that, if implemented, L would greatly increase \( Y_S \) (by the familiar textbook mechanisms). We also assume that implementing L does not decrease N’s aggregate income (so L is Pareto efficient at the country level). However, L does diminish domestic equality (i.e., decrease \( G_N \)). To ensure that shifting from Q to L improves global equality (i.e., increases \( G_W \)), we assume that \( Y_S \) increases at a greater rate than \( Y_E \).

Given this scenario, should the egalitarian ideal imply that L is preferable to Q from the standpoint of justice?

4. Boundless and Bounded Global Egalitarianism

Ideally, from an egalitarian standpoint, N would implement a tax and transfer policy T to offset the losses incurred by N’s less advantaged residents from implementing L. (Remember that L does not decrease N’s aggregate income.) Any broadly egalitarian view affirms that N’s less advantaged residents have a reasonable complaint against those who stand in the way of implementing T if L is implemented. At a minimum, \((L,T)\) would promote global equality without sacrificing domestic equality. Egalitarians agree in the ideal case — \((L,T)\) is preferable to \((L,\text{not-}T)\) from the standpoint of justice. But suppose \((L,T)\) is not feasible (because, e.g., there’s insufficient political will, N’s elites use their political power to resist, or the technology required to implement the tax and transfer scheme is absent, and so on). According to the egalitarian ideal, is \((L,\text{not-}T)\) preferable to \(Q = (\text{not-L},\text{not-}T)\) from the standpoint of justice?

\[ \text{We exclude cross-border migration so as to avoid the complication of dynamic population shifts. We also note that our specification of the status quo is consistent with the existence of a network of cross-border interactions that is sufficiently dense to trigger normative concern for the global inequality in our model among Associative Duty Extenders. L does not represent a shift from no cross-border interaction to some interaction, but simply a shift to more intense or to different kinds of interaction than are present in the status quo. Hence, Associative Duty Extenders should assume that the relevant social or institutional features obtain. We wish to explore issues that are in some ways distinct from those that divide Associative and General Duty Extenders.} \]

\[ \text{For now, we leave open which possibility consistent with this assumption obtains. As two examples, it could be that N's aggregate income is held fixed but some portion of it is transferred from the poor to elites; or it could be because the average income of N's less advantaged residents is held fixed and elites capture all the aggregate gains.} \]
Global egalitarians encounter two broad options here. One response says that borders are simply irrelevant for settling the requirements of justice. Suppose justice requires us to mitigate inequality among a set of individuals, denoted I. Then the fact that reducing inequality among the members of I would lead to greater inequality among a proper subset of I is irrelevant — that fact does not provide a reason against reducing inequality among the members of I. Let’s call this view “Boundless Egalitarianism”. To provide some contrast, “Bounded Egalitarianism” allows that borders may constitute salient fault lines in the normative landscape. In other words, borders represent a salient partition on I, such that justice requires us to (in some sense) prioritise equality within partitions before turning our attention to inequality within the superset I. According to Boundless Egalitarianism, \((L,\text{not-}T)\) is preferable to Q; according to Bounded Egalitarianism, Q is preferable to \((L,\text{not-}T)\).

Boundless Egalitarianism has the advantage of cleanly capturing one of the motivating intuitions of global egalitarianism, namely, that all people everywhere are worthy of equal concern and respect and that people’s life-prospects should not be influenced — or at least not influenced unduly — by morally arbitrary factors, such as race, gender and place of birth. It is hard to see how General Duty Extenders can avoid this position. Boundless Egalitarianism must say that, under the specified circumstances, N’s less advantaged residents have no reasonable grounds to block the transition from Q to \((L,\text{not-}T)\). This implies that the Boundless Egalitarian ideal is ultimately undiscriminating when it comes to allocating the costs of increasing equality among the members of I. The magnitudes in losses to the disadvantaged in N would not matter, just so long as the \((L,\text{not-}T)\) yields a net gain for global equality. This may be welcome news to General Duty Extenders, but it may also chase a fair few from the Boundless Egalitarian camp.

No doubt, Boundless Egalitarians can agree that, insofar as possible, it is preferable from the standpoint of justice to allocate these costs to those who are best positioned to bear them — namely, the more advantaged members of I. But the scenario under consideration reveals an as-yet neglected point: Boundless Egalitarians are committed to an egalitarian ideal

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Moellendorf (2002, p. 63) seems to take this position. He argues (among other things) that if market competition for jobs is justified among compatriots, then “it is hard to find a reason” why it would not be justified between compatriots and non-compatriots, even if it is true that immigration negatively impacts domestic workers (though expresses doubts about the veracity of the latter empirical claim).
that, in principle, places no limits on the subset of individuals who can be required to bear the costs of pursuing greater equality among the members of I.

Those who retreat from Boundless Egalitarianism at this point are left to consider Bounded Egalitarianism. Given a set of individuals I and a normatively salient partition on I, Bounded Egalitarians say that, all else being equal, inequalities within certain parts of I are more worrisome than inequalities within the superset I. Thus, Bounded Egalitarianism offers the prospect of reconciling a commitment to weighing domestic inequalities more heavily than global inequalities in the scales of justice with the view that (pace the Restricters) global inequalities are nonetheless important (qua inequalities).

This raises the question of how to weight within-group inequalities relative to across-group inequalities. Bounded Egalitarians have a variety of options here. At one extreme, they might assert a lexical ordering of these requirements. In a weaker form, this lexical ordering could demand that policies addressing global inequality be adopted only insofar as they do not undermine domestic equality. This would rule out the adoption of (L,not-T) over Q, but might permit global equality-promoting policies that would leave the extent of domestic inequality unchanged, even if alternative (and incompatible) policies would increase domestic equality without commensurate gains in promoting global equality. In a stronger form, this lexical ordering demands that domestic egalitarian goals always take precedence over global egalitarian goals. This sort of view would not only rule out (L,not-T), but also any other set of policies that would fail to increase domestic equality, no matter how large the resultant gains in global equality. Alternatively, a Bounded Egalitarian view might eschew any form of lexical priority yet still give extra weight to preventing or addressing domestic inequality gaps, all else being equal. Whether this sort of Bounded Egalitarian view would condemn or endorse (L,not-T) would depend on the magnitudes of gains and losses to the achievement of domestic and global egalitarian goals, and the weight that it attaches to each.25

A main advantage of Bounded Egalitarian views is that they seem to capture a conviction, shared by many, that there is something objectionable about radically unequal distributive shares globally (in addition to the fact that those with less have so little), while at

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25 The relative weight one gives to domestic equality might depend on the absolute levels of income of both the poorest domestic persons and the global poor. For example, one might treat income sufficiency as a more urgent concern than equality; hence, if (L,not-T) raises the global poor above sufficiency, that’s a reason to favor (L,not-T) over Q, despite the fact that the former decreases domestic equality. We treat equality-sufficiency trade-offs in more detail below.
the same time permitting (or requiring) that agents regard unequal distributive shares within their societies as particularly urgent concerns — to combine a kind of universalism with associative duties. Additionally, unlike Boundless Egalitarianism, Bounded Egalitarian views can accommodate limits on the set of people who can be required to bear the costs of pursuing greater global equality, reserving the heaviest burden for the most affluent.

Bounded Egalitarians face two justificatory challenges: they must provide some rationale for treating a partition on I as normatively salient; and they must provide some rationale for treating within-partition inequalities as normatively weightier than inequalities within the superset I. Associative Duty Extenders seem best positioned to address the second of these challenges.\(^{26}\) It is hard to see what could motivate differential concern with domestic and global inequality unless the conditions that fix the scope of egalitarian justice admit of degrees. For example, if the conditions of egalitarian justice are those set out in the Coercion or Cooperation Accounts, then Associative Duty Extenders might hold that the domestic sphere features more thoroughgoing coercion or cooperation than the global sphere, and that this provides us with a reason to give greater weight to domestic inequality.\(^{27}\)

At the same time, however, attempts to meet the first challenge might leave Bounded Egalitarianism at risk of instability. Many of the reasons that theorists have invoked to justify concern with global equality may seem to be reasons that steer us towards Boundless Egalitarianism in particular.\(^{28}\) If concern with global inequality derives from the conviction that people’s life prospects should not be influenced by morally arbitrary factors, then it is hard to see why we shouldn’t treat misfortunes due to one type of purportedly arbitrary factor (place of birth) to be as of as much concern as other such factors (race, gender, etc.) (Gilabert, 2011). And if the conditions fixing the scope of egalitarian justice (e.g., coercion, cooperation, and so on) are thought of as thresholds, rather than a continuum, then this too would drive even Associative Duty Extenders toward Boundless Egalitarianism.

Putting the point differently, Bounded Egalitarians must provide reasons for departing from Boundless Egalitarianism that are consistent with their rationale for extending egalitarian justice from the domestic to the global plane in the first place. As noted, the most promising attempts to justify departures from Boundless Egalitarianism likely appeal to the

\(^{26}\) Although we note that Bounded Egalitarianism neither entails nor is entailed by the views of Associative Duty Extenders.

\(^{27}\) Cf. Valentini (2012).

\(^{28}\) Cf. Caney (2005, ch. 5)
kinds of factors to which Restricters have appealed in arguing against extension (coercion, cooperation, reciprocity, and so on). However, whereas Restricters appeal to these factors to restrict the scope of egalitarian justice to the domestic sphere, Bounded Egalitarians must deploy them in a way that renders differential concern for domestic inequalities consistent with extending the scope of egalitarian justice to the global sphere. Bounded Egalitarians bear a different argumentative burden than that borne by Restricters. The latter must show that the conditions that fix the scope of egalitarian justice are not present across the full set of individuals I, or that they are not present to a sufficient degree. Bounded Egalitarians must demonstrate something more subtle: namely, that the conditions that fix the scope of egalitarian justice are satisfied across I but that they are satisfied to a greater degree within certain subsets of I and that this differential degree of satisfaction warrants differential concern for the cause of equality. This is why the threat of instability looms for Bounded Egalitarians but not Restricters. To avoid sliding toward a Restricter position, the Bounded Egalitarian must prop up a concern for global equality. But the most promising attempts to do so threaten to push the Bounded Egalitarian toward Boundless Egalitarianism.

To conclude this section, we note that our discussion focuses on tradeoffs between competing claims to equality “all else being equal”. All else is unlikely to be equal though — the less advantaged residents of N might bear a normatively significant relationship to the poverty of S’s residents. Here, we simply sketch two such relationships, only to set them aside. First, the less advantaged residents of N might have contributed to the vulnerability of disadvantaged foreigners, for example by supporting policies that harm their environment, or undermine their prospects for export-led growth.\(^{29}\) Second, without themselves engaging in any wrongdoing, the less advantaged residents of N might have been unjustly enriched from wrongs that had led to the disadvantages of members of S, for example if N and S stood in a colonial relation of some sort, or if N had engaged in unjust war against S in the past.\(^{30}\) In either of these cases (although the second is perhaps more controversial), the relationship borne by the less advantaged residents of N to the disadvantages to be addressed by L might serve to diminish the former’s claim against implementing (L, not -T).

\(^{29}\) The notion of “contribution” is a relatively elastic one, encompassing clear-cut cases of doing harm to more complex cases of enabling harm, and these different kinds of contributions might be relevant to such discounting to different extents. See, for example the discussion in Barry and Overland (2012).

\(^{30}\) See, for example, Thomson (1973), Butt (2007), Goodin (2013), and Barry and Wiens (forthcoming).
5. Equality versus Sufficiency

In the last section, we considered various ways in which an Extender might handle trade-offs between competing concerns for distributive equality. Our aim was not to advocate any particular resolution, but to expose the fact that our assessment of Extenders’ egalitarian ideals turns on the resolution of these nonideal trade-offs, something that has been little noticed among global justice theorists to this point. In this section, we show that our assessment of both Extenders’ and Restricters’ ideals is sensitive to the ways in which they might handle nonideal trade-offs between distributive equality and distributive sufficiency.

To expose the relevant type of trade-off, we consider several modifications of our base model (above). Recall that there is unjustifiable inequality both within N and between N and S. The policy choice continues to be between Q and (L,not-T), with L promising to raise YS, the income of the typical residents of S. Let H denote an income sufficiency threshold. We assume that the status quo is such that YP > H and YS < H. The question of interest remains whether (L,not-T) is preferable to Q from the standpoint of justice.

*Modification:* Suppose that implementing (L,not-T) holds N’s aggregate income fixed and transfers income from N’s poor to N’s rich (again, so L is Pareto efficient at the aggregate level). Hence, adopting (L,not-T) increases GN = YP/YE (the degree of domestic inequality). While adopting (L,not-T) increases YS, we assume that YE increases at greater rate than YS, so GW = YS/YE (the degree of global inequality) increases too. We assume that the end result is such that (L,not-T) yields an outcome in which everyone achieves at least a sufficient share; hence, H ≤ YS ≤ YP ≤ YE’.

In other words, this case raises the following tradeoff. On the one hand, (L,not-T) raises the absolute number of the global poor above sufficiency. On the other hand, these sufficiency gains come at the expense of both domestic and global equality; indeed, the less advantaged residents of N bear the burden of bringing the global poor above sufficiency.

This case raises questions for Extenders and Restricters alike.
For Extenders: how important is global distributive equality relative to other values, distributive sufficiency in this case?\footnote{For now, we set aside the complication – raised by our introduction of Bounded Egalitarianism – in which concerns for global and domestic equality are weighted differently. This possibility permits concerns for equality in different spheres to be traded-off against global sufficiency in different ways. We take up trade-offs between domestic equality and global sufficiency in more detail below.} There is a rough consensus among Extenders that claims to sufficiency are more urgent than claims to equality. This judgment is typically meant to convey that a duty to realise global sufficiency is more \textit{stringent} than a duty to realise global equality, where stringency is understood in terms of the costs one can be required to bear to satisfy the duty in question. This judgment is typically made in view of the ideal case, in which the global rich are (often tacitly) assumed to bear most of the costs of bringing the global poor to sufficiency. The implicit proposal, then, is that the global rich can be required, as a matter of justice, to bear quite heavy costs to realise sufficiency, which are greater than the marginal costs the rich can be required to bear to move from sufficiency to equality.

Our nonideal case presses Extenders to refine their judgment that global sufficiency is more urgent than global equality, perhaps in ways that are surprisingly difficult to reconcile with their core theoretical commitments. Does the relative urgency of sufficiency imply that \((L,\text{not}-T)\) is preferable to \(Q\) from the standpoint of justice? Extenders can go either way. Perhaps the more straightforward reply is to judge that \((L,\text{not}-T)\) is preferable to \(Q\) — global sufficiency is, after all, more urgent than global equality. Notice, first, that this reply is consistent with driving \(Y_P\) down to \(H\); conditions might be such that, to raise \(Y_S\) to sufficiency, \((L,\text{not}-T)\) yields \(Y_S = Y_P = H\). We conjecture that any justification for judging \((L,\text{not}-T)\) preferable to \(Q\) in view of this possibility is likely to be at odds with the egalitarian commitments at the core of the Extender position. In \textit{Modification}, \((L,\text{not}-T)\) has a deeply inequalitarian implication: it accepts a \textit{highly regressive} distribution of the costs required to realise sufficiency. The issue, then, is whether Extenders can square acceptance of a regressive distribution of costs with the extension of egalitarian justice to the global plane. It’s no answer, at this point, to simply reiterate the moral urgency of relieving the global poor from their desperate plight. The question, after all, is whether Extenders’ ideal of justice requires acceptance of a highly regressive distribution of costs \textit{in exchange for} a state of affairs in which the global poor achieve distributive sufficiency.

Extenders might go the other way and judge that \(Q\) is preferable to \((L,\text{not}-T)\) from the standpoint of justice, for at least a couple of reasons. Perhaps the costs borne by the
domestic poor are more than justice requires in this case. Alternatively, perhaps there is some income threshold in the open interval $(Y_p, Y_e)$, denoted $Y^*$, such that justice does not require individuals with incomes below $Y^*$ to bear costs for the sake of realizing sufficiency. Notice, though, that both of these answers require Extenders to say something more nuanced about the relative urgency of realizing global sufficiency than they have said to this point.

Taking the second rationale first, what is the principle that picks out $Y^*$ from among infinitely many options? We are skeptical that any particular $Y^*$ can be given a principled rationale. But, setting that aside, we note that $Y^*$ cannot be justified by appeal to the relative urgency of ensuring distributive sufficiency for the domestic poor — implementing $(L, not-T)$ leaves $H \leq Y_p$ by assumption. Thus, any principle deployed to justify $Y^*$ compels Extenders to identify conditions under which equality takes precedence over sufficiency or to introduce some additional consideration (e.g., reciprocity, liberty, and so on). Either way risks upsetting the Extender’s rather simplistic normative landscape. (What if the most plausible justifications for imposing $Y^*$ are in tension with extending the scope of egalitarian justice to the global plane?)

Regarding the first rationale, the domestic poor’s income losses in our nonideal case are likely to be far less, in absolute terms, than the income losses Extenders seem prepared to impose on the rich in their ideal case. Given this, Extenders might reconcile a preference for $Q$ over $(L, not-T)$ with the judgment that justice can require the rich to bear quite heavy income losses for the sake of realizing sufficiency in one of two ways. First, they might conceptualise costs in terms of some quantity that has diminishing marginal value in money — utility or well-being perhaps. Second, they might conceptualise the limit on the costs an individual can be required to bear in a way that is sensitive to her income — for instance, that one can only be required to give up a certain percentage of one’s income. Both routes seem tenable to us, so our point is not to indicate that trouble awaits the Extender who seeks to impose a principled limit on the costs that the domestic poor can be required to bear for the sake of realizing global sufficiency. Rather, our point is that Extenders have yet to address the issues raised by our nonideal case and that neglecting to do so leaves us with a rather an underspecified account of the relationship between basic distributive values.

For Restricters, Modification raises questions, not about the relative importance of global sufficiency versus global equality, but about the relative importance of global sufficiency
versus domestic equality. Recall that Restricters usually insist that, while we should not be concerned with distributive equality globally, we have a general duty to ensure that all people throughout the world achieve a decent standard of living. The question is how this goal fits with Restricters’ concern for domestic egalitarian justice. Two types of trade-offs are relevant here. One is that between making some incremental change — lessening or increasing equality — in their own society and helping people abroad to achieve the decency threshold. We can imagine, for example, that there is a choice between two tax policies. One tax policy would tax very wealthy individuals in the domestic society much more heavily, and subsequently redistribute income towards those who are presently less advantaged in their societies (assuming again for the moment that all such people enjoy at least decent standards of living). The other tax policy could leave more money in the hands of very wealthy individuals. Predictably, this would lead to less redistribution for domestic purposes, but would free up more money for philanthropic use, and at least some of this philanthropic use of funds would be directed to addressing the needs of the global poor (by hypothesis more than would be spent were the same monies to be claimed by the government and put to uses determined by the domestic political process.) [We note that this is not an unrealistic trade-off. It seems prima facie unlikely that Warren Buffett would have done as much to help protect the poor abroad had he been subject to much higher levels of taxation domestically.] Some Restricters consider the demand to help people achieve a decent standard of living abroad to be a requirement of justice, while others consider it to be a humanitarian requirement. This doesn't really matter all that much for the purpose at hand. If it is a requirement of justice, then the question is how these two justice requirements relate to one another. If it is humanitarian requirement, then the question is how requirements of justice and humanity relate to one another. What matters morally is the importance that is attached these different moral demands, rather than how they are categorised. One view here would be to claim that strict priority be given to domestic egalitarian justice gains. This might be quite extreme view — imagine the feasible set allows for the adoption of policies that would make some minimal contribution to domestic justice, or make no contribution to domestic justice but make a very significant contribution to the achievement of humanitarian aims. Another option would be to attach different weights to the achievement of these two requirements. Aggregation of some sort presumably matters — it would be odd if we treated

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32 We owe this example to Glen Weyl.
the size of the gains in either category as matters of indifference. It also may seem to make a
difference just how unjust the domestic society is — if it is only a little bit unjust, and the
justice gains be modest, while the level of deprivation is high and the degree to which we
could reduce it significant, this would presumably count in favor of adopting a policy that
would promote achievement of the threshold rather than domestic justice gains. Another
puzzle relates to whether domestic sacrifices in affluence, rather than in equality, would be
permitted or required for the purpose of promoting the achievement of a decent standard of
living, and if so to what extent. Defenses of the requirement for distributive equality
domestically do not appear to defend the maintenance of very high standards of living
domestically. They defend the importance of ensuring that people who are coerced by
thoroughgoing state institutions, or who are involved in thoroughgoing forms of social
cooperation do not suffer certain forms of disadvantage relative to their compatriots. Not
suffering relative disadvantage to compatriots is consistent with varying living standards —
we may be roughly equal and well off, or roughly equal and not so well off. Restricters
haven’t focused on this issue because, they have either been primarily concerned in marking
the difference between the domestic and the global spheres, and thereby cordoning off the
area where we should be concerned with equality from the area where we need not be so
concerned (and only secondarily adding the requirement regarding the importance of
promoting decent standard of living), or because they simply assume that promoting a
decent standard of living for people throughout the world is consistent with maintaining
very high standards of living domestically. It may or may not be. If ensuring adequate
standards of living worldwide and domestic affluence is corealizable, then this trade-off may
turn out not to be particularly worrisome. But if turns out that simple redistributive
measures, for instance, or trade liberalization, do not further the achievement of decent
standards of living to a significant extent, one natural substitute would be immigration. And
here Restrictors would probably be faced with the sorts of tradeoffs we discussed in the
context of exploring the views of Extenders, even if the demands in conflict are somewhat
different.
6. Conclusion

When trying to formulate more general principles of global justice, we rely in large measure on particular intuitive judgements. For example, if a theory you are considering implies that bonded or slave labour is permissible when it reduces economic inequality, but you find such a practice to be obviously objectionable, this gives you reason to reject the theory. Whether this reason is decisive depends on many other factors, including the availability of alternative theories that avoid this particular implication without having other implications that are more worrisome. Intuitive judgements, such that a society that permits bonded labour is seriously unjust, are spontaneous, but they are also objects of reflection and thought. It is in large measure because the general principles of global justice coincide with judgments of these kinds about particular cases that we are inclined to affirm them in the first place.

Of course one could claim that moral principles do not need to be adjusted to our responses to particular cases. One could maintain that although our intuitive judgements about some particular cases conflict with what would be the right thing to do according to certain principles, the justification or truth of the latter are so obvious that we have no need to doubt them. But most philosophers working in this area have rejected this picture of justification and endorsed some version of John Rawls’ reflective equilibrium (though often without the device of the original position.) Equilibrium is supposed to obtain between the theory and our intuitions. The aim is to establish a theory but, at the same time, to save firm intuitive judgments insofar as possible. If this is the desired manner for developing theory, it is important to consider as many cases as possible, since a theory that is consistent with firm intuitions in some instances may conflict with them in others. Our aim in this article has been to introduce cases that have not been hitherto explored in detail as an aid to theory evaluation and construction in the area of global justice.

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33 See Rawls (1971).
References


