

Reconceptualizing Equality: Equality of Standing and Real Freedom to Self-Determine

Tom Malleson, PhD

King's University College at Western University

In recent years two main approaches to conceptualizing equality have crystalized. The first approach, Luck Egalitarianism, aims to neutralize the effects of brute luck. It is advocated by a number of prominent theorists, including Arneson (ref), Roemer (ref), Cohen (ref), Knight (ref), and in certain respects Dworkin (ref)¹ and Sen (ref). Although such theorists share a concern with the distributional effects of brute luck, there is much disagreement about what it is exactly that should be distributed equally – with welfare, resources, and capabilities being the main contenders. The second approach is usually called Relational Equality; it rejects the focus on distribution, instead arguing that the true purpose of equality is to create equal standing between citizens. Advocates of this position include, among others, Anderson (ref), Scheffler (ref), and arguably Rawls.² These two positions are now deeply entrenched and oppositional, if not openly antagonistic.³

In this paper I seek to advance two claims. First, that it is a mistake to see Luck Egalitarianism and Relational Equality as incompatible. They are not; they are just concerned with different dimensions of our lives. In the social sphere of our lives what matters is one's social relationships *with* others. Here Relational Equality is crucial. Whereas in the individual sphere of our lives what matters is the opportunities that different individuals have *as compared to* others. Here Luck Egalitarianism is important. Equality, therefore, should be conceptualized as having two dimensions, corresponding to the two main facets of our lives. This means that Luck Egalitarianism and Relational Equality should be seen as complementary, not antagonistic, parts of an overarching theory of equality.

¹ Dworkin's (ref) seminal papers was very influential in the emergence of LE due to its emphasis on the importance of differentiating brute luck from choice. However, he repudiates the label of LE (ref).

² X thinks Rawls should be seen as an LE. Schwartzman (ref) disagrees.

³ Debate is at times quite heated. Anderson refers to LE as.... Knight counters that ...

The second claim is that the best way to conceptualize Luck Egalitarianism is in terms of the provision of Equal Real Freedoms, or, more precisely, equal freedom from the time and material pressures of work, so that everyone has the essential means to be able to devote themselves to their own conception of the good life.

In the first section we examine Elizabeth Anderson's critique of Luck Egalitarianism and her proposed replacement of Relational Equality. The second section critically reviews the different ways that Luck Egalitarianism has been framed, in terms of resources, welfare, and capabilities, before arguing in section three that a better formulation is in terms of Equal Real Freedoms. The fourth and final section considers some objections.

1. Luck Egalitarianism and Relational Equality

Luck Egalitarianism is the belief that an individual should not have less of the important things in life – such as resources, welfare, or capabilities – than others due to bad brute luck.⁴ Larry Temkin capture the core intuition well when he says, “it is bad – unjust and unfair – for some to be worse off than others through no fault [or choice] of their own” (ref qtd in arneson, addition from arneson too?). Along the same lines, GA Cohen has argued that “the primary egalitarian impulse is to extinguish the influence on distribution of ... brute luck (things one didn't choose)” (ref and verify).

In recent years, a number of objections to Luck Egalitarianism have been made (ref Anderson, Scheffler). Probably the most powerful is that it has the potential to be very harsh in allowing people to suffer severe deprivations if they result from bad choices.

The standard example here is of Bert, who likes the feel of the wind blowing in his hair and so chooses not to wear a helmet on his motorcycle (ref Fleurbaey 1995). Bert gets into an accident and is rushed to hospital with life threatening injuries, yet the luck egalitarian hospital refuses to save his life on the grounds that the accident was his own fault; he could have chosen to wear the helmet in which case he would have been fine.

⁴ Dworkin (ref) famously differentiated between “brute” luck, which one is not responsible for, and “option” luck, which one is responsible for because it's the result of a calculated gamble.

For another example, if Luck Egalitarianism is interpreted as a “starting gate” theory, where everyone is provided equal resources as they enter adulthood, but are then left to succeed or fail based on their own choices, it is very easy to imagine a large number of people making choices that lead them to fall into dire poverty or relations of dependence or domination, which luck egalitarians would have to approve of. So such theories would not only allow individuals to suffer immensely, but they would deny individuals the means that they need to recover from bad choices in order to restart their life in a different direction.

Note also, that Luck Egalitarianism would allow people to suffer deprivation when they make choices that are not “bad” choices in any usual sense, but are simply choices to do things that are not well-remunerated by markets, perhaps because they represent public goods. Caregiving is an important example here (ref Anderson). Women who are poor because they have chosen to be primary caregivers can be dismissed by luck egalitarians as simply individuals who have freely chosen expensive pursuits (analogous to those who are poor because they frivolously spent all their money on expensive cars or clothes) and so should not be compensated by others.

The most influential critique of Luck Egalitarianism comes from Elizabeth Anderson (ref), who argues that the point of equality is not eliminating the impact of brute luck, but ending oppressive social relationships. She argues that inequality is essentially about a social order rooted in a hierarchy of human beings. Egalitarian political movements, she says, oppose such hierarchies. “Negatively, egalitarians seek to abolish oppression – that is, forms of social relationship by which some people dominate, exploit, marginalize, demean, and inflict violence upon others.... Positively, egalitarians seek a social order in which persons stand in relations of equality. They seek to live together in a democratic community, as opposed to a hierarchical one.”⁵

In order to get a good handle on what Relational Equality really means, we should ask what a basic structure would look like that takes relational equality to heart. To her credit, Anderson goes further than most egalitarians in spelling out some concrete institutional requirements. “Negatively, people are entitled to whatever capabilities are necessary to enable them to avoid or escape entanglement in oppressive social relationships. Positively, they are

⁵ "What Is the Point of Equality?," 313.

entitled to the capabilities necessary for functioning as an equal citizen in a democratic state.”⁶ A close reading of the text shows that Relational Equality presupposes the following institutions:

- A democratic political system
- A basic welfare safety net (that is means-tested)
- Public healthcare
- Public elementary and highschool education
- Cheap university
- A qualified entitlement to work
- Non-discrimination in the labour market
- Civil rights
- Public spaces that are accessible for disabled people
- Private spaces for the homeless
- A right of caregivers to a share in their partner’s income so as not to be vulnerable
- A childcare subsidy

With this background, what can be said about Relational Equality? The first thing to say is that Anderson has correctly identified, in a powerful and passionate way, one crucial dimension of equality. The fact that social and associational relationships can either be unequal because they are *hierarchical*, involving an unaccountable institutionalization of power and status differentials, or they can be equal because they are based on a *democratic* equality of status and rights.⁷ The contrast between hierarchy and democracy is fundamentally important, and Anderson deserves much credit for highlighting it. Any comprehensive account of equality must, I submit, include this dimension.

There are, however, a number of problems with Relational Equality. The first problem, which I will point to but not explore, is that I am doubtful that the institutions that Anderson

⁶ Ibid., 316.

⁷ Both hierarchies (like dictatorships and capitalist firms) and democracies (like parliamentary governments and cooperative firms) can involve pyramidal top-down chains-of-command. The fundamental difference is that in a democracy the authority at the top is always accountable to those at the bottom. Democracy does not require equal power, it means equal accountability and ultimately equal status.

describes could adequately provide the relational equality that she seeks. In particular, I do not see how her institutions would allow for equality for indigenous peoples in settler states (no mention is made of the necessary structures of sovereignty and self-governance); there is no recognition of the problem of workplace hierarchy or provision for workplace democracy (ref voice paper);⁸ nor is there recognition of the ways that democracy is undermined by the privileged position of business (ref lindblom).

For our purposes, the more significant problem is that Relational Equality ignores the individual dimension of equality, that is, it ignores the differential opportunities that individuals have to self-determine. Note that with the possible exception of the ambiguously-phrased “qualified entitlement to work,”⁹ which we discuss below, the institutions that Anderson points to are already provided by Canada, the UK, and all the European welfare states. There is a deep irony here. Part of what is so powerful and persuasive in Anderson’s essay is her stirring call to make egalitarian philosophy respond to the pressing needs of oppressed people. And yet despite her rousing rhetoric her final inspiring vision of full and robust equality is... a state like Canada.¹⁰

To see the problem here, recall that Anderson is adamant that bad luck is not an egalitarian concern. “According to ... [relational] equality the distribution of nature’s good or bad fortune is neither just nor unjust. Considered in itself, nothing in this distribution calls for any correction by society. No claims to compensation can be generated by nature’s effects alone.”¹¹ But can this really be right?

Consider first a naturally gifted athlete (such as LeBron James) compared to a disabled person, perhaps someone who is deaf (call her Mika). LeBron made \$72,000,000 in 2014.¹² He therefore has enormous opportunities to live a range of good lives. If he decides he wants to live

⁸ To her credit, Anderson has recognized the importance of this issue in a later paper...

⁹ Ibid., 325.

¹⁰ It should go without saying that Canada is, in fact, very far from being equal or just. Brian Murphy, Paul Roberts, and Michael Wolfson, "High-Income Canadians," *Perspectives on Labour and Income* 19, no. 4 (2007); Maria A. Wallis and Siu-ming Kwok, eds., *Daily Struggles* (Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press, 2008).

¹¹ "What Is the Point of Equality?," 331.

¹² Kurt Badenhausen, "How LeBron James Has Earned \$450m During His Nba Career," *Forbes*, <http://www.forbes.com/sites/kurtbadenhausen/2014/07/09/how-lebron-james-earned-450-million-during-his-nba-career/#4317fd601380>.

in a mansion, he can. If he decides he wants to travel, he can. If he decides he wants to quit and create art, he can. If he decides he wants to devote his life to social justice, he can. The only job Mika can find, on the other hand, is a precarious one – a temporary contract stacking shelves at a grocery store. This is a very real scenario. The average disabled person in the US in 2010 made \$23,500 dollars.¹³ Mika is not starving – she can afford lentils and rice and other basic foods, a one-room apartment in a dangerous neighborhood, second hand clothes, a rundown second-hand car (which she has to buy as Relational Equality does not provide public transit). Her basic capabilities are met, but she is poor and deprived relative to others around her. She is also insecure, living in fear that her temporary contract will not be renewed, and she will be forced onto welfare, and perhaps onto the street.

Anderson is vague about the level of economic security that Relational Equality would provide. She calls for a “qualified entitlement to work,” but does not elaborate. An “entitlement” to work, as opposed to a mere right to work, sounds like a guarantee – perhaps meaning that the government must take on the responsibility of being an employer of last resort, so that everyone who wants a job can acquire one. If so, then Mika’s security would indeed be increased. But the qualifier “qualified” undermines any certainty here. Why is it qualified? What are the qualifications? There are simply no details provided. So we must remain agnostic for now about judging Relational Equality on this point except to note that “economic security” cannot rank particularly high as a concern given the lack of attention paid to it (it is, shockingly, not mentioned a single time in the 50-page article).

Beyond this, and perhaps most importantly, Mika’s opportunities, her real freedom to self-determine is significantly constrained. She cannot live in a nice house and eat at expensive restaurants. Her hopes and plans to go back to school or start a family or spend more time with friends are constantly put on hold as she is endlessly preoccupied with where her next contract can come from. If the only other job available is across town, will she have to move? She returns home from work exhausted and drained with no time or energy to paint, even though that is the one activity that feels most authentically meaningful to her. She would like to join the local environmental group, and feels guilty that she is not contributing to struggles for justice, but feels too tired and overwhelmed to do so. The range of good lives open to her is pitifully small

¹³ Matthew W. Brault, "Americans with Disabilities: 2010," U.S. Census Bureau, <http://www.census.gov/prod/2012pubs/p70-131.pdf>.

compared to others in her society.

Yet Relational Equality is unable to see that anything is wrong here. As long as work roles do not “amount to peonage or servitude” nor pay one less than necessary to acquire basic capabilities, Anderson claims that there is no injustice done.¹⁴ But surely this is ludicrous. Mika’s opportunities, her real freedom to self-determine are significantly less than LeBron’s, and for no reason other than brute luck. He was simply lucky to be born with specific natural talents that just happen to be highly valued, while she was not. How can it be just for Mika to suffer such relative deprivation due to brute luck?

Next, consider the case of the global poor. Nine hundred million people live on less than the World Bank’s poverty level of \$1.90 per day.¹⁵ These people often lack clean water, food, shelter, or even the most basic education. Indeed, 30,000 children die every day from poverty-related illness.¹⁶ The poor in India, China, Brazil, sub-Saharan Africa and elsewhere have miniscule opportunities to live the good lives that they desire. Their deprivation compared to the rest of the world is arguably the single greatest injustice in the world today, and yet the people who suffer from it (and the people who don’t) do so for no reason other than brute luck – the luck of being born in a poor or a rich country. But as long as the relations among the poor are not hierarchal, Relational Equality is unable to see any injustice here: “the distribution of nature’s good or bad fortune is neither just nor unjust.” This is a significant failure. A theory of equality that turns its back on the greatest injustice in our world today cannot be one that holds our allegiance.

All of this means that Relational Equality fails to treat people with equal concern. It allows some to have far less opportunities to self-determine than others due to brute luck. Poor and disabled individuals, *just as much as any other*, have one, and only one, chance of life. If their chance to live their own good is so much less than others, due to nothing other than cosmic fluke, society is unfair. A society that allows this is one that fails to show adequate concern; it is to shrug indifferently and turn away. It is, of course, not natural inequality per se that is unjust. As Anderson says (following Rawls) the natural distribution is neither just nor unjust, it simply is. But in Relational Equality natural inequalities are allowed to inevitably *lead to* different

¹⁴ "What Is the Point of Equality?," 325.

¹⁵ WorldBank, "Overview," The World Bank, <http://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/poverty/overview..>

¹⁶ David Boyle and Andrew Simms, *The New Economics* (London: Earthscan, 2009), 142.

opportunities, while the basic structure does nothing to nullify this – and that most certainly is unjust.

Another way to see the problem is that Relational Equality has too narrow a view of freedom and unfreedom. Its focus is on oppression and tyranny, and so freedom is conceived in the standard liberal (and republican) way as “negative.” Isaiah Berlin famously described negative freedom as the “area within which the subject – a person or group of persons – is or should be left to do or be what he is able to do or be, without interference by other persons.”¹⁷ It is a private sphere, or “a vacuum in which nothing obstructs me.”¹⁸

The problem with such a view is that it assumes a false ontology of the human being. It assumes that once the individual is left alone, not dominated or interfered with, then she will be free. Yet this is an implicitly ableist view – one that takes self-sufficiency as the norm. However, as feminist theorists have long taught, human beings are not self-sufficient. We are naturally vulnerable, dependent, and powerless. We are vulnerable because we are embodied beings whose functioning is always fragile and whose inevitable destiny is death and decay. In Fineman’s words, “vulnerability is – and should be understood to be – universal and constant, inherent in the human condition.”¹⁹ We are also highly dependent beings. We spend the first ten or fifteen years of life as more-or-less entirely dependent. After that, all of us will spend periods of our lives as sick and reliant on others. And if we live long enough we will again become completely dependent through the inevitable dependence of old age. As noted by Eva Kittay, life begins with the dependency of childhood and ends with dependency of old age.²⁰ For inherently vulnerable, dependent, powerless beings, freedom cannot be conceived of as being left alone, it is better conceived as able-izing or empowering, as acquiring real opportunities.

Once we realize this we see that Relational Equality’s focus on oppression is one sided. A view of freedom which focuses on interference or domination is deeply inadequate because it ignores the fact that we always need material things and social support from others in order to achieve our ends. In the Global North today, the most common lack of freedom is *not* intense

¹⁷ *Four Essays on Liberty* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press 1969), 121-22.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 144.

¹⁹ “The Vulnerable Subject: Anchoring Equality in the Human Condition,” *Yale Journal of Law & Feminism* 20, no. 1 (2008): 1.

²⁰ *Love’s Labor* (New York: Routledge, 1999), xii.

state coercion or oppression (though that of course exists too). Today, the major source of unfreedom is inability, deprivation, and social abandonment. The liberal and republican conceptions draws its animus from the image of the slave as the epitome of unfreedom; this is the most frequent example, used again and again in philosophical texts, and one can sense it always in the background of liberal and republican writings on freedom.²¹ While we can wholeheartedly agree that slavery is a terrible form of unfreedom, it is also true that, thankfully, in the rich societies today, aside from the appalling exception of sex trafficking, *there are no slaves*. We need a conception of freedom that speaks to the unfreedoms that do exist. For example, people who are blind, or deaf, or mobility impaired, or have Down Syndrome, are not unfree in the sense of being slaves; they are unfree because they are marginalized; they are denied the means to function effectively. Indeed, for the millions of poor, disabled, highly dependent, and marginalized people, it is not primarily coercion, but inability, which is the primary barrier preventing people from living the lives that they want.²² Yet Relational Equality is unable to recognize this.

Anderson dismisses concerns about the unequal kinds of opportunities that people enjoy as simply a form of envy. “Envy is malicious, for the envious stake their sense of well-being on another’s deprivation. Malicious claims have no standing before the bar of justice.”²³ But this is a strange view. Imagine a poor person (naturally untalented at wealth creation) looking at a rich person driving a nice car, going to a fancy grocery store, living in nice house. He puts in just as much effort, and we assume strives just as diligently for the right and the good. But because of bad luck in genetic endowment he is not able to have the same opportunities. He says to himself, “I want what you have.” Likewise, imagine a blind person hearing an acquaintance tell of going to university and the good jobs she hopes to get thereafter. The blind person knows that the university will not accommodate her needs nor will most employers hire her. She mutters to herself, “I want what you have.” Anderson’s response to this is entirely dismissive. Her response

²¹ See, for example, Ian Carter, Matthew H. Kramer, and Hillel Steiner, eds., *Freedom: A Philosophical Anthology* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2007).

²² This is not at all to discount the very real physical concerns and coercion, such as police brutality, that many poor and racialized people face. Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow* (New York, NY: The New Press, 2010). But only to point out that this is not the only kind of inequality that exists.

²³ Anderson, "The Fundamental Disagreement between Luck Egalitarians and Relational Egalitarians," 27.

seems to be along the lines of “you are not a slave; therefore, your complaints are hollow. Any request for more is impertinent and envious. You were struck with cosmic ill luck. That is unfortunate, but it is not society’s job to remedy it.” I disagree. Such expressions here may indeed be envious, but they are also perfectly justified. Their envy is not rooted in malice but in outrage at the unfairness of differences in vital life opportunities that have no rhyme or reason.

The problem I am pointing to is not that Anderson merely forgets or overlooks the issue of individual opportunities to self-determine. It is not as if she can just say, “Oh, I forgot about that, but no problem, I want that too.” The problem is deeper: relational equality is unable to account for this dimension of inequality. The tools provided by it, the insight into the social relations between people in a group, are not adequate to the task of analyzing the opportunities that individuals have to pursue their own good. Justice cannot be concerned simply with relationships of hierarchy and domination because people who have nothing are still unfree, even if they are in no such relationship.

In thinking about the individual dimension of our lives, we require the core luck egalitarian intuition that it is arbitrary and unjust for some to live such worse lives than others due to things outside of their control. I want to suggest that there is no insoluble problem here. Both Relational Equality and Luck Egalitarianism contain important insights, but they pertain to different spheres. We should conceive of equality as requiring both an individual and social dimension.

By “individual dimension” I mean that areas where the issues of my freedom are primarily about *me*. What I am able or unable to do in terms of the personal decisions that I make in pursuing my own goals? For example, should I apply for this job or that one? Should I go back to school? Become an artist? Move to a different city? By “social dimension” I mean the areas where the issues of my freedom are primarily relational. How do we stand in relation to each other in terms of respect, recognition, status, power, decision-making, and so on? One aspect here is the associations that one is in, where there is continual collective decision-making (for example, the state, workplace, religious community, or family). Another aspect here is the cultural norms, respect, and recognition, or lack thereof, that mark social relations (for instance, the norms around race, gender, LGBTQ lifestyles). Clearly the individual and social dimensions of life are messy and in real life interpenetrate in myriad ways. Nevertheless, the distinction is useful.

In the individual sphere, we need to think about equality primarily in terms of the kinds of opportunities that people have to lead the lives that are valuable to them. In the social sphere, we need to think about equality primarily in terms of hierarchy and democracy. This means that equality is not an issue of *either* social relations *or* distribution. It is both.

In sum, egalitarians should be relational egalitarians. But they should not be *only* relational egalitarians. In the individual dimension of our lives a different kind of equality – some kind of luck egalitarianism, sensitive to differential opportunities – is required. The task of the rest of this paper is to flesh out what exactly this might be.

2. What Kind of Luck Egalitarianism?

It is obvious that in the individual sphere of life, different people have markedly different opportunities to pursue the kind of life they value. However, what is not at all clear is the way that we should think about these inequalities. Should we think of them in terms of the amount of resources that people can access, or welfare, or capabilities, or something else entirely? In this section I argue that there are deep problems with each of the main contenders.

Consider first, whether the goal should be equality of resources, as advocated by Dworkin (ref) and Rawls (ref).²⁴ A number of scholars have noted (ref), following Amartya Sen (ref), that problem with a focus on resources is that it is fetishistic and ableist. It is fetishistic because it is not resources per se that matter to people, but what resources enable people to do. It is ableist because different bodies require very different amounts of resources (such as specially designed wheelchair ramps on buses) to acquire similar functionings (such as transportation). So providing equal resources will not lead to meaningful equality but will disadvantage the disabled among others. This is why Sen urges us to focus not on resources, but *capabilities*, that is, the abilities we have to achieve the functionings that we desire.

What about equality of welfare, or the more sophisticated equality of opportunity for welfare (ref Arneson)? There are two major problems here. First, disabled people may have high levels of welfare, but that does not thereby mitigate our sense that they deserve societal support. Cohen (ref 1989) gives the example of Tiny Tim, who has naturally sunny disposition, and so

²⁴ Rawls (ref), of course, argues not for equality but for the difference principle, and not in terms of resources exactly, but primary goods.

has high levels of opportunity for welfare, however welfare is conceived.²⁵ Nevertheless, most of us think that regardless of his welfare, he should still have access to a publicly-funded wheelchair. Society should concern itself not with his happiness per se, but with his basic freedoms. (It is often the case, of course, that we use our freedom in order to obtain more happiness, but it is important to remember that this is not always the case, people have many other ends besides happiness too). The second problem is the harshness objection that we mentioned above. Imprudent people like Bert, or caregivers who end up poor, may well have started their adult lives with equal opportunities for welfare. As they went through life they made choices that explain their current dire circumstance; but it nevertheless seems unduly harsh and moralistic to tell such people that they have made their bed and so must sleep in it. Surely a decent society would provide some things, such as the essential freedoms of healthcare or economic security, to such people regardless of the occasional “bad” choice. An egalitarian society should be generous and empathetic not vindictive and cold-hearted.

Perhaps a better metric of equality is Sen’s suggestion of capabilities. According to Sen, “living may be seen as consisting of a set of interrelated ‘functionings,’ consisting of beings and doings. A person’s achievement in this respect can be seen as the vector of his or her functionings” (Sen, 1992, p. 39). Capabilities, in other words, refers to the functionings that one can achieve. They represent the real freedom one possesses to lead one life or another. A number of theorists, such as Cohen (ref), Arneson (ref), and Anderson (ref), have argued, correctly in my view, that Sen’s focus on equal capabilities represents a major advance from a focus on either resources or welfare.

The problem with Sen’s approach is that he gives us no guidance as to *which* capabilities are important (ref Arneson). Should the state act to provide everyone the capability of having enough to eat, or visiting the rainforest, or building golden statues to their gods? Sen is adamantly silent about providing any definitive list. This may be admirable from an anti-perfectionist perspective (he does not want to specify apriori the kinds of good lives people should lead), but it leaves us pragmatically hamstrung. However, Martha Nussbaum, Sen’s long-

²⁵ A related example here is that of the “contented slave.” Sen (ref) points out that oppressed people often have cheap preferences because they have accustomed themselves to their harsh circumstances. So egalitarians need to insist not on preference fulfillment, but on providing a broader basis of essential freedoms, even if they are not currently desired.

time collaborator, has been willing to take the perfectionist plunge in providing a list of essential capabilities that she sees as fundamental for any and every human being to flourish: “One obvious difference between Sen’s writings and my own is that for some time I have endorsed a specific list of the Central Human Capabilities as a focus both for comparative quality-of-life measurement and for the formulation of basic political principles of the sort that can play a role in fundamental constitutional guarantees” (Nussbaum, 2003, p. 40).

Nussbaum’s list comprises ten capabilities, which she sees as essential to a life with dignity. She argues that “a society that does not guarantee these to all its citizens, at some appropriate threshold level, falls short of being a fully just society, whatever its level of opulence” (2003, p. 40). The current list is: (i) life; (ii) bodily health (this requires basic health care); (iii) bodily integrity; (iv) senses, imagination, thought (this requires basic education and rights of free expression); (v) emotions; (vi) practical reason (this requires rights of freedom of conscience and religion); (vii) affiliation (this requires rights of freedom of assembly and the social bases of self-respect, as well as non-discrimination); (viii) other species; (ix) play; (x) control over one’s environment (this requires rights of political participation and material participation – being able to own property and seek work) (2003, pp. 41-42).

What would a Nussbaumian state look like that institutionally guarantees these capabilities to all? We see at once that any of the rich welfare states – even neoliberal ones like the UK– generally satisfy this list (though one may quibble about whether the condition of non-discrimination is genuinely met, particularly vis-à-vis racialized groups and immigrants). But by and large the UK meets all these requirements. There is something remarkable about this. If all social justice requires is a neoliberal welfare system – with its bleak poverty, mean-hearted welfare system, its harshness towards disabled people (Atkinson, 2015; Toynbee, 2003) – then social justice requires very little. No egalitarian in the Global North can accept this as the sum total of justice. Indeed, Nussbaum’s list seems more relevant as a measurement of a minimal quality of life that could perhaps form the basis of a global regime of human rights. That is an admirable endeavour, but it is far from justice.

The central problem with Equality of Capabilities, interpreted in this way, is that there is not enough real freedom to self-determine. Nussbaum’s list provides far too little economic security. There are no entitlements to housing, transport, pensions, unemployment or disability insurance. Poor and disabled people would therefore be subject to extremely unstable lives,

facing a scramble to survive, and suffering from continual fear and anxiety. Nor is there adequate provision of education. Equality of Capabilities would provide elementary education but no higher education or vocational training. There are also no measures to ensure free time. So it is not clear how poor or disabled people are supposed to acquire good jobs, or how they are to balance their work aspirations with those of personal life or family.

Taking a step back, I have argued that we need a conception of Luck Egalitarianism to conceptualize the kind of equality that we value in the individual sphere of life. We have seen that neither equality of resources nor welfare is adequate. Sen and Nussbaum's focus on equal capabilities is on the right track, but doesn't provide an adequate answer to the question of which capabilities matter most. That is the issue I turn to now.

3. Equal Real Freedoms to Self-Determine

If the individual dimension of equality should be conceived in terms of capabilities or real freedoms, the question then becomes: *which* capabilities matter? There are two fundamental constraints here. On the one hand, we are constrained by scarcity. It is impossible to provide everything that people desire, and so society must inevitably prioritize certain things. On the other hand, we are constrained by the necessity of respect for plurality. In contemporary multicultural society, with widely divergent views of the Good, it is unacceptable for the state to impose one way of life on its citizens. (One may well doubt, as I do, that complete neutrality is a viable or even attractive goal, but it is surely sensible to insist that state policy have wide appeal and not be seen as oppressive or demeaning to any significant number of residents).

What is needed, then, is a list of essential freedoms that the state should provide to all, yet which is not overly narrow or perfectionist. I propose that a non-arbitrary way to proceed is to engage in an immanent critique of contemporary neoliberal capitalism. We can make progress in thinking through the kind of essential freedoms that an egalitarian society requires by analyzing the kinds of unfreedoms that currently exist. In other words, the non-arbitrary or "objective" source of authority that I rely on here is not so much a strong view of human nature as it is the result of allowing "suffering to speak" (ref Adorno).

I submit that when we open our eyes and ears to the kinds of suffering that exist in the countries of the Global North, focussing our attention on the individual dimension of life, we

come to appreciate that the fundamental problem is the extreme inequality in people's real ability to self-determine, that is, to live the kind of life that they genuinely desire.

A close analysis of neoliberal capitalism reveals at least four major impediments to self-determination. First, there is endemic insecurity (lots of refs!). For instance, almost a third of people in the UK fell below the poverty line at some point between 2010-2013 (up to 60% for single-parent households).²⁶ In Canada, about 14% of workers have insecure, precarious jobs (it is as high as 52% for the Greater Toronto Area).²⁷ Such people are caught in a desperate scramble to make ends meet, filled with worry and anxiety, their life plans, goals, and aspirations displaced to the margins of their existence.

Second, many people lack meaningful opportunities to advance economically (ref lots of stuff, e.g. Esping-Andersen; and Chetty et al). University has become a basic prerequisite for most decent jobs, yet it is now a highly uneven playing field. **[fact/stat about inequality in uni accessibility; wide cost differential]. Disabled people shut out of many careers (ref).** Likewise, many women are effectively shut out, due to their overwhelming care responsibilities, and lack of social supports in terms of daycare, flextime, quality part-time jobs and so on (ref).

Third, most people lack the free time from work to meaningfully self-determine (ref lots!). Across the OECD, 17% of men work over 50 hours per week.²⁸ In Europe, the average woman in a couple with children works a massive 71 hours every week, when you include her unpaid care work.²⁹ Such people are like armies of Sisyphus, their heads down, shoulders straining against the boulder, pushing it up the hill with all their might, day in day out. They can glimpse other vistas of possibility around them, yet have no choice but to keep their heads down and push. Moreover, most jobs, most of the time, are mind-numbing, and tedious, with little

²⁶ BBC, "Third of UK Population 'Fell Below the Poverty Line'," BBC, <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-32812601>.

²⁷ Tavia Grant, "Canada's Shift to a Nation of Temporary Workers," The Globe And Mail, <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/economy/jobs/canadas-shift-to-a-nation-of-temporary-workers/article11721139/>. Sara Mojtehdzadeh and Laurie Monsebraaten, "Precarious Work Is Now the New Norm, United Way Report Says," The Toronto Star, <https://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2015/05/21/precarious-work-is-now-the-new-norm-united-way-report-says.html>. [replace with scholarly sources]

²⁸ OECD, "Work-Life Balance," OECD: Better Life Index, <http://www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org/topics/work-life-balance/>.

²⁹ Eurofound, *Fifth European Working Conditions Survey* (Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2012), 95.

creativity (the most common jobs in our economies are those of retail clerks and truck driving). When they are not boring it is because the pace is set so fast as to be stressful and exhausting. At the end of the work day, when work is over and people are finally free to do as they please, finally free to be themselves, finally able to focus on their own projects, they find themselves with little time and even less energy. The lives they want to lead are crushed under the lives they must. True, some work may be pleasant, but no re-arrangement of work will ever be able to transform the bulk of work tasks into play. Any and every complex society will inevitably require an enormous amount of drudgery – growing food, washing dishes, stacking shelves, transporting goods, filing paperwork, sweeping floors, chopping vegetables, marking essays, and on and on – that will inevitably remain tiresome, repetitive, boring, fatiguing, or stressful. Much work is toil: it is inherently deadening, and unchangeably so. The more that people’s hours are spent in such toil, the more they will be drained of their vital life energies to do the things they really value.

Fourth and finally, many people lack access to the conditions for autonomy, and so are unable to critically reflect on the kind of life they desire to lead. They do not have access to different viewpoints, or do not have the material wherewithal to step away from an oppressive or disliked cultural community, such as the family or religious community one was born into.

I conclude from this that we should conceptualize equality in the individual sphere as Equal Real Freedoms to self-determine. A truly egalitarian society is one that guarantees to all, as far as is feasible, *freedom from the time and material pressures of work, so that everyone has the essential means to be able to devote themselves to their own conception of the good life.*³⁰

Let me say a bit more about why it makes sense to think of equality in this register. As long as humans have existed, the struggle to survive, to acquire the material means of life, has been the centre of most people’s lives. Indeed, this is the core feature we share with the beasts: an overriding concern with material survival. Yet our economies are now productive enough that no one should have to worry about mere survival. This fact that our economies are productive enough to provide real economic security for all constitutes nothing less than a transformation in what it means to be human. It shifts the goalposts of life from mere living to living well, from

³⁰ This is, of course, not a new idea. There are many echoes of it in what we might call the tradition of “socialist romanticism,” including such figures as Thomas More, Karl Marx (at times), John Keynes, EF Schumacher, Juliet Schor, and so on.

surviving to flourishing, from bread to roses. As Keynes said, prophesizing what life could be like in 2030, “for the first time since his creation man will be faced with his real, his permanent problem – how to use his freedom from pressing economic cares, how to occupy the leisure... to live wisely and agreeably and well.”³¹ No animal lives according to the purposes, goals, and pursuits that it sets for itself. Having free time and economic security allows us to be, for the first time in history, fully, distinctly human. It allows us to devote the bulk of our energies to our higher selves, whatever they may be. No longer pulled down by material scramble, this frees us to look upwards as we search for and create our own meaning. This is the fundamental reason why having significant leisure time, freedom from toil, is so important: it means that people can devote themselves to the things that really matter to them, be it beauty, exploration, love, the cultivation of skills, the pursuit of knowledge, the development of talents, spirituality, social connection, physical or aesthetic pleasure, and so on.

A second reason for the importance of free time to self-determine, which I grant will not be accepted by all, is the existential or scientific argument that there is likely no god and so no pre-ordained purpose to human life. If the universe is disenchanted, as Weber would say, if there is no pre-given purpose, then we must, each of us, strive to make our own. And this implies that freedom – the ability to choose one’s own path – is the highest good. If the scientists are right, then we are those beings who will one day not be. We are the almost-annihilated. We exist always on the narrow precipice of being dead for good and forever. The existential-scientific worldview implies that this, right here and now, is our one chance, our one spark of existence before we vanish forever into the night. “We see, surrounding the narrow raft illumined by the flickering light of human comradeship, the dark ocean on whose rolling waves we toss for a brief hour.”³² It is the precariousness and inescapable finitude of life that gives self-determination, the ability the use our precious time in pursuit of a life that we ourselves value, its paramount importance.

In the past, real freedom to self-determine was enjoyed by a privileged few, such as the rich, male citizens of Ancient Athens, or the feudal aristocrats. But of course their freedom relied on the subjugation of slaves and serfs and women to do the work that enabled their leisure. The

³¹ John Maynard Keynes, "Economic Possibilities for Our Grandchildren," in *Essays in Persuasion*, ed. John Maynard Keynes (New York: W.W. Norton & Co. , [1930] 1963).

³² Bertrand Russell, *A Free Man's Worship* (Portland, ME.: T.B. Mosher, 1923).

great potential of our age is that we have the potential to universalize this freedom. Our computers, machinery, and robots can do the bulk of the work, so that people are set free.

The extent that that is possible will obviously depend on the productivity of the society in question. But in the rich countries of the North, there is no question as to the feasibility to provide significant security and leisure. To give a sense of the scale of the possibilities, consider this stunning thought experiment. If, tomorrow, the US magically transformed itself into a socialist country with the desire to share out work and income evenly, it would be possible for every adult to have the same median disposable income that exists today (about \$22,000), while benefitting from even better public services than exist in Sweden, with each worker only needing to work three hours per day!³³

Indeed, the material possibilities for economic security for all have existed for a long time. We can picture the GDP as an enormous storehouse, filled with goods and services of every kind, growing slightly bigger every year. What is shocking is that there is more than enough there to provide everyone with security, but it is as if the guardians keep much of it locked away for the exclusive use of the rich, so that many remain poor and vulnerable. In the past, insecurity was a natural condition; but today, we have scarcity that is entirely artificial and insecurity that must be carefully maintained. What else can we say of a society like the US that allows five hundred thousand people to be homeless, while simultaneously permitting Bill Gates to accumulate seventy billion dollars?

What, then, is practically required for people to be able to devote themselves to their own view of the good life? Answering this question in detail would require careful political-economic analysis far beyond the scope of this paper. For brevity let me simply suggest that four essential means are required: access to economic security, access to free time, opportunities to acquire additional resources, and access to the conditions for autonomy.

Economic security is necessary because, as Franklin Roosevelt once remarked, “necessitous men are not free.”³⁴ A basic level of material security and stability is a prerequisite for life planning. Without it, one is constantly worried, distracted, and unstable. Without it, life is

³³ For the calculations, see (ref).

³⁴ Franklin Delano Roosevelt, "Speech before the 1936 Democratic National Convention: A Rendezvous with Destiny," <http://www.austincc.edu/lpatrick/his2341/fdr36acceptancespeech.htm>.

not living, it is mere survival.³⁵ Securing such needs in an adequate way requires things like high-quality healthcare, childcare, decent housing, a pension, public transit, care for the elderly, injured, and severely disabled, and some sort of income guarantee (which might come from a robust system of welfare payments, a job entitlement, or a basic income).

Free time is an essential freedom because it is, like basic security, a fundamental prerequisite for people to accomplish many of their life goals. One cannot be deeply involved in family, art, activism, sport, music, or any of the other myriad projects that animate people's lives and fill their aspirations if one does not first have free time. The required institutions here are things like publicly funded childcare; generous state support for parental leave; increased options for quality part-time work; and enhanced flextime so that workers can arrange their schedules in ways that allow for combining work with other life projects. Together, such measures provide a real basis of what we might call "time sovereignty."³⁶

People also require opportunities to be able to acquire additional resources above and beyond the guaranteed minimum. This is necessary because many good lives that people wish to pursue require resources to actualize them. A poet may be quite satisfied on the minimum income, but a collector of rare cars will not. However, society can obviously not provide everyone with all the resources they desire. What it can do is provide everyone with equal opportunities to acquire additional resources (this is why I talk of "opportunity" not "access" here; society can only guarantee the pursuit of resources, not the access to them). What is necessary for this? At the very least, free or affordable secondary education; non-discrimination in the labour market; affordable childcare; and accommodation for disabled workers.

Finally, Equality of Real Freedom requires access to the conditions for autonomy. By autonomy I simply mean the ability of an agent to think critically for herself about what is best

³⁵ There is sizable psychological evidence showing that most human beings are unable to pursue their projects (and so are not meaningfully free) unless their basic needs are secured. See, for example, Edward L Deci and Richard M Ryan, "The "What" and "Why" of Goal Pursuits: Human Needs and the Self-Determination of Behavior," *Psychological inquiry* 11, no. 4 (2000); Louis Tay and Ed Diener, "Needs and Subjective Well-Being around the World," *Journal of personality and social psychology* 101, no. 2 (2011); Abraham Harold Maslow, "A Theory of Human Motivation," *Psychological review* 50, no. 4 (1943).

³⁶ The term was first used by Bernhard Teriet Karl Hinrichs, "Working-Time Deveopment in West Germany: Departure to a New Stage," in *Working Time in Transition*, ed. Karl Hinrichs, William Roche, and Carmen Sirianni (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1991), 41.

for herself.³⁷ This requires things like: freedom of expression; education about other ways of life; confidence, self-respect, and self-esteem; and a secure material basis for independence, or what Virginia Woolf referred to as a “room of one’s own” (ref).

We have been discussing the real freedoms – the open doors – that must be available for people to self-determine. But we must also be sensitive to the fact of different people’s ability to “walk” through such doors. Society must, in other words, commit to accommodating a range of disabilities, so that, for instance, the mobility-impaired, the visually-impaired, the hearing-impaired, the learning-impaired, and others, are able to access security, free time, resources, and autonomy, and through such means be able to self-determine on an equal basis with everyone else.

In sum, we can envision this egalitarian society as a strongly-regulated market economy with high levels of taxation (perhaps in the range of 50 or even 60% of GDP) to pay for the robust public services and guaranteed freedoms.³⁸

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I have made a number of claims in favour of ERF. Let me reiterate the main three.

(i) Equal Real Freedoms builds on Sen’s capability approach by providing a list of essential freedoms that could form the basis of egalitarian policy. This list is neither subjective and arbitrary, nor overly perfectionist, but flows from an analysis (one that is always contingent and revisable under new knowledge) about the “objective” conditions of contemporary neoliberal capitalism. The essential freedoms are the those necessary to overcome the existing obstacles to meaningful self-determination.

(ii) Equal Real Freedoms is a species of Luck Egalitarianism because it is based on the belief that it is arbitrary and unjust for some to have such impoverished opportunities to lead the lives that they value compared to others, when such differences are entirely out of their control. Equal Real Freedoms focusses on neutralizing one specific type of bad brute luck, that

³⁷ I understand autonomy as a psychological ability. Whereas the ability to actually do things I refer to not as autonomy but as freedom.

³⁸ When we put this side of the picture together with the institutions necessary for equal standing – such as robust political democracy, workplace democracy, and economic democracy – we obtain a sketch of what might be called self-managed market socialism or simply democratic socialism.

of not possessing the means to meaningfully self-determine. However, although Equal Real Freedoms is a type of Luck Egalitarianism, it avoids the major problem that plagues it: the problem of harshness to those who choose imprudently. Equal Real Freedoms would provide Bert with healthcare. In addition, Equal Real Freedoms is not a starting-gate theory, so would not abandon people part way through their lives, but would continually support people's ability to start a new life – to go back to school, take up a new career, move to a new city, etc. Furthermore, Equal Real Freedoms would be sensitive to the needs of caregivers. Economic security would prevent women falling into poverty; and there would be expansive support to help women (and hopefully men) to balance their caregiving with other pursuits, through universal childcare, quality part-time work, flextime, robust parental leave, non-discrimination policies and so forth.

(iii) A final advantage of Equal Real Freedoms is that it relies on very thin view of the Good, and so does not privilege any one form of life. In contemporary neoliberal society, with its culture of acquisitiveness and possessive individualism, and its economy of inequality and insecurity, it is extremely difficult for the bulk of the people to choose any other life than the conventional one of constant striving to get a job and earn money. Most people have no possibility of devoting themselves to caregiving or activism or art or music or spirituality or countless other pursuits without the overwhelming fear of deprivation and marginalization. So a large part of what motivates the insistence on providing a secure material foundation for self-determination and choice is the desire to expand the cultural space for a flourishing of myriad kinds of lives. To let a thousand flowers bloom.³⁹

It is true that the background essential freedoms envisioned here are not completely neutral – nothing could be. For instance, it is true that one who wants to write poetry can easily do this, whereas someone who wants to worship in her private golden temple is far less able to do so (unless she can acquire the necessary resources through working to build such a temple herself). Some luck egalitarians may object to this, on the ground that the desire to worship in this way is just as unchosen as the desire to write poetry; it is not their fault, it might be argued, that they have this expensive taste, and so the state should respond to both equally. My response is purely practical. It is simply impossible for the state to provide everyone with all the resources

³⁹ This proverb comes from Mao Tse-tung, but of course the anti-authoritarian views articulated here are about as far from Maoism as it is possible to be.

they would like. All the state can feasibly do is guarantee that a certain range of good lives be open and accessible. If someone with expensive tastes wishes to worship in golden temples, or take a vacation to the moon, she is free to try to earn the money herself to pay for it (the state will help her find employment), or try to convince her fellow citizens that is a public good that they should help subsidize, or modify her aspirations – in any case it is hard to argue that she is being oppressed or being treated unfairly.

What of those whose primary goal in life is to work long hours in order to spend lots of money? This is a complicated issue. On the one hand, Equality of Real Freedom guarantees to all the opportunity to earn money. So, in general, there is no problem here. However, there is an open question as to whether, at its extreme, this kind of life is compatible with the freedom of other people. In particular, there is a question of whether long hours of work fuels a work-consume cycle that is ecologically unsustainable.⁴⁰ Additionally, a working culture of long hours risks marginalizing part-time work, flexible work, and work-life balance, all of which are dangerous from a gender-equity perspective.⁴¹ These issues are beyond the scope of the present paper, but I think it is a real possibility that a just society, one that is both sustainable and feminist, would have employment standards (such as a standard working week) that are geared towards part-time employment. Long hours might not be illegal, but may need to be discouraged, through things like tax policy.

Equal Real Freedoms is clearly based on set of socialist-feminist values, such as freedom and autonomy, that are not shared by all. But this does not mean that it is oppressive to others. Consider religious and conservative people who place more value on tradition, hierarchy, and community stability. Such people would not be coerced in any way (except for the fact that they would have to pay taxes like everyone else). They would be free to continue living as they choose. The difference from conventional liberal democracy is that Equal Real Freedom would provide real opportunities for such people to feasibly leave their community and experiment with a different form of life, should they ever desire to do so.

So even though Equality of Real Freedom is not totally neutral, it allows for an extremely broad range of good lives. Indeed, it is hard to imagine any background structure that would allow for *more* ways of life to be achieved. That is a major point in its favour. Modern society

⁴⁰ Tim Jackson, *Prosperity without Growth: Economics for a Finite Planet* (London: Earthscan, 2009).

⁴¹ [reference removed for blind review].

contains an inescapably heterogeneous range of views about the good life. The very fact of pluralism, the very fact of a broad disagreement about final ends, implies the reasonableness of selecting freedom (understood as real ability to choose) as the central desideratum for distribution. This is a good that everyone can reasonably subscribe to because it is a means to their own good, whatever that may be.

4. Objections

Probably the most common objection to Equality of Real Opportunities is the resistance to paying the high levels of taxation necessary to ensure real freedoms for all. Will individuals be prepared to give half of their income or more to other people? Libertarians would argue that income comes into the world attached to specific individuals, and so taxation is theft.

Enormous amounts of ink have been spilt in responding to this.⁴² The fundamental response is that income is not an individual thing, but comes in to the world as a social product, through a system of joint social cooperation, and, I would add, it comes into the world through the work of beings who themselves are best understood as “social individuals” – beings who are enmeshed in webs of care and non-contractual obligation with others (ref).

A second objection inquires whether the essential freedoms should really be guaranteed forever, regardless of people’s choices? Does a smoker deserve expensive medical treatment for her lung cancer even though she has chosen to smoke? Does a tenant of social housing deserve a new place if he gets drunk and decides to set fire to the first one? If we think no, then we risk coldheartedly letting such people die or live in the street, deprived of essential freedoms to self-determine. If we think yes, then we are faced with the problem of society having to continually pay the cost of individuals’ bad choices. In Kymlicka’s words, “it is unjust if people are disadvantaged by inequalities of their circumstance, but it is equally unjust for me to demand that someone else pay for the costs of my choices.”⁴³ In addition, if society continues to support people regardless of their choices this risks undermining individual responsibility. One might

⁴² G. A. Cohen, *Self-Ownership, Freedom, and Equality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Gar Alperovitz and Lew Daly, *Unjust Deserts* (New York: The New Press, 2008); Martha Albertson Fineman, *The Autonomy Myth: A Theory of Dependency* (New York: The New Press, 2004).

⁴³ Quoted in G. A. Cohen, "On the Currency of Egalitarian Justice," *Ethics* 99, no. 4 (1989): 933.

argue that there is no moral responsibility and no incentive to act prudently if people do not have to pay attention to the costs that their choices impose on others.

Clearly a balance needs to be struck here. I think that the essential freedoms should indeed be open forever, regardless of one's choices, on the ground that these specific freedoms are so vital (we are not after all talking about any freedom at all, only the essential freedoms to self-determine) that their importance generally outweighs their costs. However, I accept that the entitlements should have some pragmatic restrictions to prevent society from being exploited by unwarranted costs. For example, it would be permissible to place an alcoholic lower on the list for a liver transplant than a child who has not made such health-damaging choices. If a person burns down their social housing, they should be evicted, and face criminal charges, but the state should still provide them a place to live in the future. If one chooses to smoke, it is permissible to be forced to pay an extra tax on the cost of the cigarettes to cover the costs of future medical bills.

Equality of Real Freedom does not at all mean that bad choices are nullified across the board. In most cases, people will suffer the consequences of such choices. A smoker, even one provided with medical care, still faces the prospects of painful, premature death. One who burns down his apartment still faces jail time and cultural stigma. People still have lots to lose from irresponsible conduct and so plenty of incentive to behave prudently.

In fact, Equality of Real Freedom augments responsibility in many ways because it means that people have no excuse to not be able to make something of their lives. Society says, with Sartre, "You are free, therefore choose – that is to say, invent."⁴⁴ No individual can fall back on bad faith, blame their community, upbringing, or bad luck for their circumstance. With the profound freedoms guaranteed by such a society comes profound responsibilities. Society will pay for your university, but whether you pass or fail is up to you. The state will provide economic security and free time, but whether you use that freedom well – to develop your personality, care for others, conscientiously strive for the right and the good, or stay at home watching TV and focussing only on self-interest – is one's personal responsibility. Of course, this is not to say that the outcomes one achieves vis-à-vis other people are ever totally one's own responsibility. Even with equal external means, we are internally different all the way down in

⁴⁴ "Existentialism Is a Humanism," in *Existentialism from Dostoyevsky to Sartre*, ed. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Meridian Books, 1956), 297-98.

terms of our talents, ability to exert effort, physical abilities and psychological dispositions. So success or failure compared to others is never totally within one's control, but it is much more so under Equality of Real Freedom than in other systems with much less level playing fields, and so our responsibility is that much greater.

Conclusion

This paper has sought to substantiate two claims. First, that Relational Equality and Luck Egalitarianism are not incompatible. Both are required for a comprehensive theory of equality. In the social dimension of our lives we require Relational Equality in order to abolish domination and ensure relationships of equal status and standing. In the individual dimension of our lives, we require Luck Egalitarianism, so that individuals do not suffer from inadequate opportunities due to arbitrariness or misfortune. The second claim was that the best way to conceptualize Luck Egalitarianism is in terms of Equal Real Freedoms to self-determine. In order to abolish powerlessness and marginalization, individuals need to be empowered to escape toil and possess the free time and other essential freedoms necessary to self-determine as they see fit.