

EQUAL STANDING IN THE GLOBAL COMMUNITY

The cosmopolitan ideal presses us to look beyond our moral commitments to those near and dear, expanding the boundaries of our moral gaze outward to include those in other parts of the world. To be a cosmopolitan is to see oneself as a part of a global community comprising all of humanity. The original articulation of the ideal, from the Ancient Greeks, viewed the cosmopolitan as a 'citizen of the world' who eschews the tendency to identify first and foremost as a member of one's local community. The notion of a global community was posited as an aspirational ideal rather than as a descriptive claim that an actual global community existed. Central to cosmopolitanism is the idea that each person in the world deserves respect in virtue of his or her moral status *qua* human being. It is this recognition of the moral worth of all persons that joins us in the global community endorsed by the cosmopolitan. The language of 'citizenship' and 'community' invites us to regard all other human beings in an official capacity as bearers of rights and entitlements, as embedded in social and political relationships, and as having duties and responsibilities towards others. Beginning from this image of interconnectedness, the cosmopolitan pushes us to recognize that by the same logic grounding our relationship and commitments to our compatriots we are similarly positioned to all of humanity.

Discussion of the cosmopolitan ideal has been reinvigorated in recent years. Undoubtedly, this renewed interest stems at least in part from the growing sense of a tangible global community to which we all belong. No longer just an abstract construct, we have before us a global community marked by extensive cross-border interaction. Global interaction is by no means a new phenomenon. Relations of trade, colonialism, and conquest stretch back millennia. Yet the ability individuals today possess to impact distant others is greater in terms of magnitude, immediacy, and pervasiveness than in times past. Appreciation of this community has naturally spawned an inquiry into the reasons for and against extending concerns of

justice from their traditional domain of the state to the world at large. What exactly is the moral relevance of this global community? Is the character of our global duties altered by widespread global interaction, the consequent capacity to significantly and directly affect foreigners, and our awareness of their circumstances?

Some moral duties seem unrelated to the relationships in which we stand with others. For instance, confronted with the extreme poverty suffered by one sixth of humanity, many believe that if we have the means to put an end to this suffering then we ought to do so. This is the case independently of any facts about interaction such as our relations with the desperately poor through a globalized economy. Beyond the duty to address global poverty, the existence of other duties towards individuals in distant parts of world is viewed as controversial. This paper focuses on one class of duties that falls within this terrain, and these are duties of global egalitarianism.¹ I consider whether we have reasons to be troubled by the extremely large economic disparities between individuals from different parts of the world.

I argue that we, the well-off citizens of the world, have obligations to reduce global inequality. These obligations are grounded in the relationships in which we stand to worse-off foreigners. That is to say that facts about global interaction matter in determining what we owe to these individuals. A number of cosmopolitans have defended this claim that in virtue of widespread global interdependence we must embrace a commitment to global egalitarianism. They frame the injustice of global inequality as violating individuals' claims to distributive fairness. Individuals worldwide are entitled to a fair share of various goods and opportunities, and the current global order fails to secure those entitlements according to this line of thought. The account of global egalitarianism I defend differs from this view with respect to both the content of and the justification for a commitment to reducing global inequality. Such inequality is troubling, I argue, because it threatens the social and political standing of individuals worldwide. The global community fails to treat its members with respect by permitting avoidable gross inequality.

In the first section I sketch a difficulty that faces accounts of global egalitarianism that cast the wrongfulness of global inequality in terms of

distributive fairness. In the second section, I present an alternative account of why inequality becomes morally problematic within the bounds of certain kinds of relationships. After presenting this account, I argue on that basis that we should care about global inequality in light of the existence of a global community. The third section addresses some potential objections faced by my account of global egalitarianism.

1. Institutional Versions of Global Egalitarianism

Call any account that grounds duties in facts about interaction 'relational'. Unlike 'nonrelational' duties—such as those we have to the global poor, which obtain independently of any facts about interaction—the rationale for relational duties is grounded in some morally relevant feature of the relation between parties. As such, to make the case for global relational duties one must (1) provide an empirical account of the relations between individuals worldwide, and (2) explain which characteristics of those relations give rise to moral commitments. The following features of the global community are usually taken to be morally relevant: The existence of internationally recognized rules and norms that are the product of human design and thus alterable; the ability of individuals and groups to significantly influence the life prospects of foreigners; and mutual awareness of circumstances abroad. These features find expression in institutions like the World Trade Organization (WTO), the United Nations (UN), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the World Bank; rules of international law such as those governing state sovereignty and property rights; the extensive flow of goods and people across borders; globalized media and increasingly sophisticated communications technology; the recognition of shared problems facing humanity such as the threats posed by political violence and weapons of mass destruction, by climate change and other environmental issues, by international crimes including human and drug trafficking, and by infectious diseases requiring cross-border collaboration.

Why might the existence of the global community so described render global inequality morally troubling? The explanation favored by most global egalitarians adopting a relational approach focuses on the existence of a 'global basic structure', consisting of alterable global rules that significantly influence individuals' prospects in life. Recognizing that such a set of rules obtains at present, it follows that those subjected to

them are owed a justification for the shape they take. I call these accounts 'institutionalist' insofar as they locate the justification for duties in the existence of institutional rules. The justification for specifically egalitarian principles arises from an argument familiar to readers of Rawls. Having established the existence of a global basic structure, so the argument goes, we must consider which principles of justice would be chosen by parties in a global 'original position' reflecting on a just design of the global order.

Rawls famously argues with respect to the basic structure of the state that behind the 'veil of ignorance', parties in the original position would select egalitarian principles of justice to regulate society's major institutions. Construed as free and equal persons ignorant of morally arbitrary traits like their gender, race, and religion, such parties would choose principles that do not attach social and economic (dis)advantage to those traits. Global egalitarians argue that by the same logic parties in a global original position would reject principles that discriminate on the basis of the morally arbitrary trait of nationality. The rest of their argument unfolds as expected. Parties so positioned would select the same principles of distributive justice defended by Rawls for application in the state: The principle of fair equality of opportunity, which requires 'that those with similar abilities and skills should have similar life chances' (1999a, 63) and the difference principle, which mandates that socioeconomic inequalities be arranged to serve 'the greatest expected benefit of the least advantaged' (1999a, 72).²

Let us make clear why the existence of a global basic structure gives rise to an egalitarian commitment on the institutionalist view. The justification for global egalitarian principles is grounded in a *subjunctive* understanding of institutional responsibility. That is, to determine what constitutes a just institutional design we must take into consideration all alternative, feasible arrangements. This is a major component of Rawls's understanding of justice as fairness: individuals' distributive entitlements are to be determined with respect to how they would fare under different possible ways of structuring the rules rather than with reference to a historical baseline.

But why must such a demanding form of justification kick in once the mere existence of a set of influential and alterable rules has been es-

established? The following hypothetical illustration serves to spell out this concern. Imagine two separate societies that do not interact with one another who become aware of the fact that they both draw water from the same river. Individuals from each society depend vitally on the river for their everyday activities. One day, the two societies decide that they need to devise a scheme to ensure equitable use of the river—implementing rules on pollution, damming, and the like. According to the form of reasoning used by global institutionalists, it follows that in addition to the rules concerning the fair use of the river, an egalitarian principle aiming to reduce inequalities that stem from morally arbitrary factors would also have to be implemented. That those inequalities may have arisen for reasons entirely separate from the respective societies' use of the river is beside the point.

To extrapolate from the river case to the real world, as soon as *any* global rule that significantly influences individuals in at least one aspect of their lives arises, extensive duties to address inequalities follow. That is, the institutionalist maintains that egalitarian principles ought to be adopted in our highly globalized world, but, more controversially, these principles should have been embraced as soon as any single, influential global rule came to be recognized. So understood, the relevance of extensive global interdependence is diminished. It is difficult to see why these facts about global interaction are relevant since regardless of their *actual* content they become saddled with the heavy normative baggage of all the *potential* forms they could take.³

Is any of this a more acute problem for the global egalitarian than it is for a domestic egalitarian like Rawls? After all, the subjunctive understanding of institutional responsibility is what grounds the case for domestic egalitarianism. I believe this is a greater problem for global egalitarians because they detach parts of the Rawlsian argument for equality from the cohesive whole. In focusing on one, admittedly significant, aspect of Rawls's account, global institutionalists have neglected a different element of Rawls's defense of domestic egalitarian principles. The understanding of a fair share as an egalitarian one does not gain traction in *any* rule-based association that affects individuals' lives in significant ways. The normative relevance of the state enterprise for Rawls runs deeper than the state's role in defining distributive entitlements. A

further integral role of the state is to ensure that all members of society enjoy equal standing in their publicly defined role as citizens, an identity that he takes to be crucial to individuals' sense of self-respect (esp. Rawls 1999a[1971], §67 and §82).⁴ Egalitarian principles are not simply grounded in what constitutes a claim to a just entitlement within a domain of rule-based interaction; they are moreover based in an ideal of how members of a certain kind of association ought to treat one another.

2. An Alternative Relational Account: Global Social Egalitarianism

I have suggested that institutionalism fails to offer a compelling explanation of why facts about global interaction are relevant to egalitarian concern. On that view, minimal interaction has the potential to generate demanding egalitarian commitments. In the river case, it doesn't seem clear that principles like fair equality of opportunity and the difference principle must be adopted to justly regulate distributions across the two societies simply because basic rules to govern use of the river are implemented. Similarly, justice does not seem to demand that these same principles apply in a world of sparse cross-border interaction regulated by just a handful of influential global rules. But our actual world is not like this. We have extensive cross-border interaction, and at least initially this fact appears relevant in deeming unjust the extreme inequalities between the world's richest and poorest members. So, what else might be said about the relevance of interaction in conditioning egalitarian duties?

I will argue that the call for reducing global inequality piggybacks on the ideal of treating members of an association as equals. This is the ideal that I have suggested plays an important role in Rawls's account of domestic egalitarianism (although he himself denies the prospect of its application beyond state borders), and which has been largely ignored by global egalitarians. I call this sort of relational account of egalitarian duties a 'social egalitarian' one, contrasted with the 'institutionalist' variety considered above.⁵ The enjoyment of equal standing in an association requires the political and social inclusion of all members. Fleshing out the meaning and requirements of 'equal standing' and 'inclusion' is no easy matter, and I will offer an initial statement thereof followed by several illustrations of these values. Political inclusion requires that individuals be enabled to participate in influencing the collective terms that shape their lives. Social inclusion requires that individuals be positioned

to enjoy the benefits that flow from the given association. The argument I put forward concerning how facts about interaction give rise to and shape the content of egalitarian duties has two parts:

- (1) All members of society should enjoy equal standing in influential, rule-based associations to which they are nonvoluntarily subject. Enjoyment of such standing requires inclusion in the social and political activities that constitute their status as members of the given association.
- (2) Distributive inequalities typically impede the realization of this ideal, and consequently we have a strong *pro tanto* reason to reduce them in such cases.

The first, normative claim reflects an ideal that is embraced by the liberal tradition. Our most deeply held convictions (our 'considered judgments' to use Rawls's phrase) reveal that certain ways of treating our fellow citizens are unacceptable. Rather than ground this normative claim in any particular set of foundational principles, I note that it already enjoys widespread acceptance as it applies within states. Given this starting point, I argue that we have good reasons for extending this ideal to the global community. Moreover, I claim that this rationale for reducing global inequality is less controversial than the institutionalist argument for the same.

To defend a commitment to reducing global inequality, social egalitarianism must offer an empirical account of the global community as it is, as well as a normative account of what it would mean for the global community to achieve the full social and political inclusion of its members and ensure their enjoyment of equal standing in that community. Focusing on the normative set of issues first, some relevant questions are the following. What form would that community take, and how would its members interact with one another? What decision-making procedures would be employed? What sort of global trade structure and property rights regime would be embraced therein? What public goods would be provided to members? What rules would be in place concerning border control and the environment?

It is not possible to respond to these questions in the abstract. In a community upholding the equal standing of all members, individuals would decide together the shape of their collective life. As such, answering these questions without reference to our actual global community would be like

trying to define from an outsider's perspective what exactly a marriage between equals would entail; for example, specifying the division of household chores they would adopt or the decision procedure they would use to determine their weekend plans. Numerous spousal arrangements are compatible with the notion that spouses interact as equals. Nonetheless, at least some preconditions must be in place to make possible the very process of their discovering and implementing arrangements that reflect their equal standing.

Financial dependency within a marriage can place the dependent partner in a position where she is unable to have her voice genuinely count in joint decisions. Or, where one partner has very low self-esteem and defers to the judgment of his wife in all major decisions, their ability to interact as equals again may be called into question. In these cases, factors that allow one party to dominate the other impede interaction as equals. Removing the vulnerability caused by one party's upper hand, whether it comes in the form of economic disparity or greater social power or from some other source, is usually necessary to enable a couple to freely participate as equals in defining the terms of their relationship together.

We can draw upon these loosely sketched insights to address the broader question of what it takes to create a *community* of equals. Setting out what it means to relate to one's compatriots as an equal in the community of a nation-state is a comparatively difficult task to doing so in the case of a marriage because of the comparative lack of direct, personal engagement. Despite this and other differences between the two cases, useful comparisons can be made. Because for most individuals, their state regulates their basic rights and opportunities, deeply influences their life prospects, and defines their official, public status as a citizen, relations with compatriots have immense relevance from the perspective of equal standing.

Complaints about unequal standing have underscored many historically important egalitarian social movements. The injustice of the Indian caste system and the Apartheid regime in South Africa, as well as the widespread disenfranchisement of women and minority groups exemplify societal arrangements that failed to treat members of society as equals in the public domain. This same reasoning opposes the exclusion of disabled persons from public spaces and the denial to lesbian and gay couples of the same rights to marriage and child custody that are granted to hetero-

sexual couples. The intolerance of particular religious or ethnic groups and the refusal to recognize their cultural traditions in public settings can similarly threaten the equal standing of those members of society who suffer discrimination.

In most of these cases, the disadvantaged parties have faced a distributive shortcoming relative to others in their societies. Yet, the complaints of the worse off have not been inspired by the moral arbitrariness of being disabled or black or female. Instead, their protests have targeted the wrongfulness of social institutions, the norms upholding discrimination, and their perceived inferiority on the basis of these attributes, independently of the morally arbitrary character of the attributes. Moreover, the social egalitarian opposition to these inequalities targets both the distributive deficit (e.g., lacking a vote) and the attitude that deems certain groups as less deserving of the entitlement in question. In this way, the 'wrong-making' feature of inequality on this account contrasts with that of the institutionalist versions of global egalitarianism considered above. Social egalitarianism, with regard to these cases, tries to provide an explanation for the wrongfulness of such inequalities that coheres with people's reasoned reflections about perceived real-life injustices.⁶

Let's return to the empirical issue of why we should care about inequality as it obtains specifically in the bounds of today's global community. Social egalitarians explain the wrongfulness of global inequality in terms of its effects on relationships. Putting forward an argument that global inequality is problematic on social egalitarian grounds, then, requires drawing on various facts about global distributive inequality and its impacts on social relations. To consider the effects of distributive inequalities on global social relations, we need a sense of the relations in which individuals worldwide are embedded and what it would mean for them to enjoy equal standing therein.

First, I sketch the claim that equal standing in the global community is undermined by inequality in the ability to shape the terms of cross-border interaction. Global economic inequalities translate into inequalities across a number of important measures. Individuals growing up in developed countries statistically tend to enjoy greater opportunities for education, enriching careers, advanced health-care, as well as for the enjoyment of both basic goods and luxuries than those in developing countries. Focusing

only on economic inequality, for the sake of simplicity, let us compare the probable life prospects of a child growing up in the United States and a child growing up in Peru—each, let us suppose, in the median socioeconomic group of his respective society. To assess the inequality between these children on the social egalitarian account, we need to consider the ways in which the inequality affects their respective standing in the global community. This exercise is meant to make more tangible the requirements of equal standing as expressed in claim (1) above, as well as to offer support for claim (2), which links reductions of distributive inequality to the realization of the social ideal. There are a few different ways in which the superior economic position of the American translates to social and political advantages. To begin with, we can gauge how the design of the global order takes into consideration the interests of each of these individuals, which occurs both in direct and indirect ways. In a direct sense, it seems clear that the American is better equipped to rise to a position of power in which she can play a role in shaping the terms of the global order (such as the policies adopted by international organizations like the IMF, the WTO, or the UN). To be sure, her singular influence is likely to be negligible as there are many others who jointly exercise this power—the world's political leaders, senior officers and bureaucrats of transnational associations, and extremely wealthy individuals. The pathways to occupy a position amongst the global elite are slim for most individuals worldwide. Nevertheless, they are much further out of reach for the Peruvian than for the American.

In addition to the disparities in their direct access to positions of control over the terms of the global order, a more indirect form of influence over the shape of the global order obtains. Through their everyday actions, individuals from well-off countries typically exert much greater influence over those in poorer countries than vice-versa. The consumer preferences of persons in developed countries have immense influence on the livelihoods of developing-country producers, and this relationship is asymmetrical. In addition, the capacity to shape the terms of transnational social and economic interaction, such as the rules concerning the use of labor or environmental standards in international trading arrangements, primarily lies in the hands of the well off. This influence is carried out not only through the greater political representation of developed country citizens in international negotiations but also through nonpolitical bodies.⁷ For instance, multinational companies play a significant role in perpetuating relations of transnational dependence—sweatshop work being a paradigm

case. Even in cases in which particular individuals (such as the American and Peruvian) do not appear to have any clearly specifiable role with respect to transnational associations, the terms of the global order favor those who are economically well off, and thus statistically the American can expect to be treated more favorably by them than the Peruvian, all things considered. In part, this relates to the fact that the dominant norms reflected in the design of global rules are shaped by the worldview of those with power. Consequently, individuals from affluent countries are privileged with respect to having enjoyed specific types of education and social upbringing. So understood, distributive and social inequality reinforce one another.

A second complaint on the social egalitarian view relates to how distributive inequalities affect the ability of individuals to partake in the benefits of an association. In some instances inequalities threaten individuals' enjoyment of equal standing in society because of extreme disparities in their access to the benefits of the association. Take the case of a minimal state that protects its citizens' property rights in a largely unregulated market economy in which all citizens may freely compete with one another for jobs. Mostly due to the lack of public funding for education, individuals' chances of securing desirable social and economic positions are determined largely by their class of origin. In addition to being effectively unable to obtain all but the lowest-paying jobs available, suppose further that worse-off individuals in this state cannot even afford the requisite provisions to appear in public spaces without shame.

A strong case can be made that worse-off individuals in this society do not relate as equals to their better-off compatriots. Their inferior status with respect to other members of their society (rather than to all persons worldwide in the absence of transnational interaction) concerns the uniqueness of the association they share with fellow citizens. In this example, co-citizens interact with one another through their mutual support of and participation in an economic system that protects their property rights and supports the benefits of a free market. Moreover, it provides public spaces for the use of all members of society. The problematic nature of the unequal capacities of citizens to partake in the enjoyment of these goods specifically arises because they are provided by social institutions.

Analogously to the domestic case, we can consider what it means for a person to partake in the benefits of the global economic order in a manner consistent with enjoying equal standing.⁸ The purpose of the global economic

order is to coordinate the behavior of many dispersed actors (in their respective capacities as consumers, workers, producers, etc.) to bring about greater overall economic benefit. Enjoying equal status as subjects of the global economic association depends, in part, on how well positioned individuals are to partake in the goods produced by it. What are some of these goods? Examples include the benefits of cheaper prices that have arisen from trade and from the increasingly international nature of labor and production, which has led to gains in efficiency. Additionally, the trade-related aspects of intellectual property rights regime (TRIPS), which regulates intellectual property rights on an international level, has granted producers the enjoyment of cross-border enforcement of patent protections. With reference to such goods, and the overall system of coordinating behavior to create such benefit, we need to consider the degree to which *all* individuals who are subject to global rules are able to partake in them. The disproportionate benefit enjoyed by well-off parties in these arrangements has been documented.⁹ The point here is not that strict distributive equality is required to justify the imposition of the global order on individuals worldwide. Rather, the perpetuation of this association has created a global underclass insofar as those on the lowest socioeconomic rung of the ladder are unable to enjoy many of the goods that have come about through global economic interaction. To take a specific case, we can consider how the social egalitarian argument applies to the situation of sweatshop workers and their relative position in the global economy. It is frequently pointed out that those laboring in sweatshops fare much better than they would in the absence of the opportunity for such work. At the same time, their interaction with distant others through a complex global network magnifies their inability to participate on a par with well-off individuals by increasing the scope in which they experience unequal access to global public goods. Global cooperation has led to freer trade, greater market efficiency, cheaper goods, more stable border control, greater cross-border migration, the spread of international property rights to previously neglected areas, as well as greater transnational telecommunication and cultural exchange. With respect to most, if not all, of these benefits, the global poor have enjoyed a dismal share compared to the world's affluent. To reiterate, this is not just a complaint about unfairness, nor about the related and previously discussed issue of disparities in global political influence. The concern here is that the global order

fails to treat all individuals as equal members as a result of their exclusion from the benefits that flow from it.

To return to the worry raised with institutionalist versions of global egalitarianism, I now show how social egalitarianism offers a superior explanation of the relationship between interaction and equality. In the river case considered earlier, on the institutionalist view, once the two societies have formed an influential rule-based system concerning fair use of the river, they must implement demanding egalitarian principles as well. In this same case, the social egalitarian needs further information to determine which inequalities if any should be addressed. In particular, social egalitarianism focuses on how inequalities between members of the two societies affect the relations that have come into existence as forged by the new set of rules. If individuals in both societies view the rules as equitable and their everyday social, political, and economic affairs continue to be confined to their respective societies as prior to the implementation of the cross-society regime, then the social egalitarian sees no need to aim for distributive equality between members of the different societies. The difference between institutionalists' and social egalitarians' respective use of facts about interaction concerns how these facts serve to justify claims about which inequalities between individuals are unjust. While the institutionalist views such facts as an input condition giving rise to the need for justification (typically carried out through hypothetical contract reasoning), the social egalitarian draws on such facts to assess the potentially wrongful effects of inequalities.

3. Objections to Global Social Egalitarianism Considered

I now turn to the worry that important differences between states and the global community make the case for extending the social egalitarian ideal to the latter domain inapt. I consider arguments voicing this concern from the perspective of 'domestic social egalitarians'—those who support social egalitarianism but reject its applicability outside of the state. The domestic social egalitarian does not deny that inequalitarian relations obtain between people in different countries. But those relations, she argues, are of the wrong kind: they are not the kind of relations that justify applying social egalitarianism. I assess a few different ways of elaborating on this objection to global social egalitarianism.

One line of argument for restricting the scope of social egalitarianism to the state draws on a type of institutionalist reasoning. A domestic social

egalitarian might concede that inegalitarian social relations obtain globally, yet deny that these relations generate egalitarian duties because they do not occur in the right type of political or social context. On this view, the morally relevant difference between the state and the global domain is that only the former has formal political and social channels that recognize individuals as members of equal status. So understood, the social egalitarian concern with enabling individuals to enjoy equal standing as co-members of an association only gains a foothold in the context of formal political and social institutions that recognize individuals as members.

According to this argument for domestic social egalitarianism, citizens of the state owe one another justification for the terms of their interaction because of the political and social circumstances unique to the state. It is individuals' status as citizens and the idea of each member of society as an equal *qua* citizen that ground the need for domestic principles of social egalitarianism. David Miller (1998, 33) articulates the centrality of the notion of citizenship to social egalitarianism, writing that "Unless we enjoy an equal status as citizens, we cannot have equal status in social life more generally . . .". Curtailing distributive inequalities between citizens is seen as an important step in enabling them to interact as equals, which is required to preserve their status as equal citizens. For example, significant gaps in income might allow society's better-off members to exert a great deal of political influence to bring about policies that favor their interests over those of the worse off. Economic inequalities also often prevent fraternal social interaction between citizens of different socioeconomic groups. These inegalitarian relations would be unjust exclusively within the state because they violate the claim that all citizens have upon one another to preserve their equal status as citizens. Because this claim tracks individuals' formal status as members of the state, it follows that *only* co-citizens of a state have claims to enjoy egalitarian social relations with one another and consequently to the distributive arrangements that make those relations possible.

On this view, relations of equality take on a different meaning in the global domain than in the state. In most states, citizens enjoy the status of citizenship that grants them various welfare entitlements and rights to political participation. As such, there appears to be a pre-established normative baseline against which to frame complaints about the social and political exclusion of members of society. For example, consider the complaint

of citizens who do not enjoy meaningful political representation or suffer from exclusion in civil society. At least *prima facie*, this state of affairs reveals an injustice since citizens are taken to have entitlements to political and social participation, (although what precisely this translates to is a point of debate in different societies). In contrast, the global domain lacks formal political mechanisms; individuals' entitlements *qua* members of the global domain are not formally recognized; and, transnational opportunities for social interaction and participation in public discourse are virtually nonexistent by comparison to the state. Thus while there is a default presumption against political inequality and social exclusion in the state, these terms seem inapt when used to describe relations in the global domain.

Using official membership in an association to ground claims to social egalitarianism proves problematic when objectionable criteria have been used to determine who counts as a member in the first place. As such, this domestic social egalitarian defense of the scope restriction is dubious. To illustrate, it would follow from limiting the domain of egalitarian justice in this way that during the reign of slavery in the United States egalitarian relations between blacks and whites were not unjust precisely because blacks were not counted as citizens of the political order to which whites belonged. Only once blacks were recognized as citizens did the distributive inequalities that contributed to the social domination they endured matter. By the same token, this view also implies that until women gained the right to vote, a distinctly social egalitarian complaint regarding the conditions that undergirded their perceived inferior status was baseless. These examples show that pinning the demands of social egalitarianism to *official* membership is perverse. It renders us unable to criticize some of the gravest distributive inequalities that make social egalitarianism an appealing view in the first place, such as those leading to relations of dominance and marginalization. This perverse conditionality doubly disadvantages the worse off insofar as it excludes the most vulnerable individuals, the merely *de facto* members of society, from claims of justice precisely because of their formal exclusion.

In this way, basing claims to social egalitarian justice on the formal status of citizenship achieves little. It simply pushes the central query a step back. That is, it does not matter who *is* recognized currently as an equal member of society but instead we must ask who *ought to be* recognized as one for the purposes of determining the scope of social egalitarianism.

tarianism.¹⁰ One plausible suggestion regarding which individuals ought to be recognized as members entitled to equal status draws on individuals' subjection to a legal system (even if these persons are not recognized as equal citizens under that system). On this explanation, individuals' claims to social egalitarian justice are predicated on their subjection to legal rules backed by coercive force. By this criterion, domestic social egalitarians can account for the intuition that blacks in the American antebellum period were treated unjustly since their obedience was demanded by American political and legal institutions as was the case for whites. Similarly, on this view, women residing in a sexist society should have been given the same voting rights as men all along. Both of these groups had legitimate complaints with reference to the distributive inequalities perpetuating such inegalitarian relations because of their status as legal subjects.

Yet, when it comes to the question of whether inegalitarian social relations globally are a matter of injustice, the domestic social egalitarian responds in the negative. Unlike those who suffer formal social and political exclusion within the territory of a state, individuals from different states do not have claims for equal standing in the global community because only their own states directly subject them to a coercive legal system. Despite the existence of an international system of state sovereignty and border control backed by coercive force, such coercion is not administered through a legal system that is directly imposed upon individuals worldwide. Since foreigners are not coerced *as legally recognized subjects* of the global order (or of other states), they are not entitled to justification for such acts of coercion.¹¹

This reply falls prey to the problem discussed above concerning the privileging of formal status. As one author puts it, this rejection of duties of global egalitarianism amounts to giving worse-off foreigners the following explanation: "We not only coerce you, but we coerce you without subjecting our ongoing coercion to the constraints of a legal system and the rules of law, and therefore we have no responsibilities of comparative distributive justice to you" (Abizadeh 2007, 351).¹² Excluding foreigners from having a say in the conditions to which they are subjected by other states and by the global order, is the very action that serves to justify their further exclusion from the scope of justification (via egalitarian or other duties of justice). In this way, the need for justification of the terms we

play a role in imposing upon others would depend on the existence of formal legal institutions that recognize them as its members. This would allow individuals from well-off countries to maintain that they owe no justification to worse-off foreigners because the former impede the creation of the institutions necessary to give rise to such justification, which lies exclusively in their power to bring about.¹³ This refusal to recognize individuals as claims holders cannot do the necessary normative work to underscore the disparate treatment of domestic and global inequality. It effectively legitimates the coercive, informal, nondemocratic subjection of individuals to rules in light of the further denial to grant them official recognition as subjects.

A different argument for restricting the scope of social egalitarianism to the state draws on individuals' cultural identification with their compatriots.¹⁴ This defense invokes subjective and objective dimensions. First, concerning the subjective dimension, it can be claimed that individuals identify with their fellow citizens as equals, but do not do so with foreigners. Whereas inequalitarian relations with foreigners are punctuated by distance and are thus impersonal, relationships between compatriots are characterized by direct, face-to-face interaction. Second, on the objective dimension, the greater cultural similarities amongst compatriots can be taken to contribute to their shared understanding of desirable social relations.

However, in the absence of mutual identification between individuals worldwide and a lack of shared transnational norms defining what constitutes valuable social relations, the proponent of this view concludes that we need not structure transnational relations according to social egalitarian norms. From a practical standpoint, their challenge is apt: if we do not have a culturally neutral way to measure the achievement of egalitarian relations across state borders, then there is no way to implement the ideal.

Empirically, it is difficult to defend a significant disanalogy between the state and the global domain along these lines. Many states are culturally diverse, and some individuals identify more strongly with nonstate communities—either more local affiliations or transnational ones—than with the state community. Although more face-to-face interaction occurs within the state, this point leads to two difficulties for domestic social egalitarians. First, states are largely anonymous communities in which most citizens will never meet one another. As such, if we take direct in-

teraction to be a necessary constituent of egalitarian relations, then applying principles of social egalitarianism at the state level rather than more locally seems mistaken. Second, the increasingly porous nature of state borders has expanded the scope of direct and often inegalitarian interaction between individuals of different countries, as illustrated by sex tourism and increases in the employment of migrant seasonal workers.

The domestic social egalitarian may respond that they take to be morally relevant the indirect social ties that join co-citizens rather than direct social relations. Importantly, shared public media and the state-based institutions of civil society contribute to a collective national consciousness that citizens use as a reference by which to make judgments about their standing as equal members of society. In this case too, the uniqueness of the state can be countered by pointing to both the globalization of media and the spread of culture, which have increased individuals' exposure to the lifestyles of foreigners (Beitz 2001, 104–105). A further challenge to the subjective claim that individuals identify with their co-citizens and not foreigners is that in both richer and poorer nations, people have been vocal in expressing their feelings of powerlessness and exclusion in the face of economic globalization through platforms like the World Social Forum.

At best, the difference between the state and the global domain with respect to these criteria is a matter of degree rather than of kind, and this does not lend support to the wholesale restriction of social egalitarianism to the state, at least not without some nonarbitrary method of determining a necessary threshold of relations required for social egalitarian concern to obtain. Moreover, restricting the scope of social egalitarianism solely in accordance with what people feel faces the same difficulties as using the criterion of official membership. After all, the majority of blacks and whites in the antebellum period certainly did not embrace one another as social and political equals. So why should they have aimed for egalitarian relations? Unless they are willing to bite the bullet on this point, domestic social egalitarians should abandon the search for a subjective explanation and instead try to capture in objective terms the relevant social interaction between compatriots that is independent of official political membership. Employing this latter strategy, it does not appear that a hard and fast line can be drawn between the state and the global community, and instead the wrongfulness of inequalities in each domain will prove to be a matter of

degree. Granted, it is likely that there will be a broader range of reasons to care about inequalities within states than in the global community given qualitative and quantitative differences between the two domains. This result is consistent with embracing global social egalitarianism.

4. Conclusion

I have argued that due to the nature of the global community we must take seriously the duty to address extreme inequality within its bounds. Social egalitarianism expresses the idea that our relations to worse-off individuals worldwide have implications for the moral assessment of global inequality. On the social egalitarian view, the increasingly strong economic, social, and political ties we have with individuals in distant nations generate a compelling set of reasons to address global inequality. The need to address these inequalities, I have argued, is not fundamentally a question of what distributive fairness requires but of how our relations with others should be structured. This account offers a more nuanced examination of the wrongfulness of inequality in inviting us to explore the actual relations in which people stand and the ways in which these are evolving in the face of globalization. In doing so, it can account for the idea that inequality becomes more morally problematic in the face of increasing global interdependence. This holds an advantage over institutionalist versions of global egalitarianism upon which the same principles endorsed by domestic egalitarians are taken to be required in the global domain once the mere existence of influential and alterable global rules is established.

More work remains in clarifying the practical aims of global social egalitarianism. In applying the ideal, we must identify specific sites of transnational inegalitarian relations as well as the multiple roles, relationships, and overlapping identities of the actors involved. The social egalitarian model can be drawn upon to assess many existing sites of global interaction—important cases include trade relations, immigration, environmental issues, and transnational chains of labor—thereby bringing together academic discussions about equality and actual global justice social movements. This is one of the most pressing and challenging tasks for social egalitarians. Currently, we face something of a catch-22 in that massive distributive inequalities worldwide likely serve as the primary obstacle to the development of more democratic, equitable global institutions. Yet, only through forums

in which diverse sets of global actors can engage with one another will we be able to understand exactly what egalitarian social relations would look like.

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NOTES

1. I use the term 'global egalitarian' to refer to views that endorse a commitment to reducing global inequality and the term 'domestic egalitarian' to refer to views upon which principles of egalitarian justice apply only in the state. Proponents of domestic egalitarianism include Blake (2002), Miller (2005), Nagel (2005), Rawls (1999b), and Sangiovanni (2007). Defenses of global egalitarianism are found in Beitz (1999[1979]), Caney (2001 and 2005a), Pogge (1989, 1994, and 2007), Moellendorf (2002 and 2009), and Tan (2000).

2. The following authors defend the global application of these two principles: Beitz (1999[1979], Part 3), Pogge (1989, Part 3), and Moellendorf (2002, ch. 4). See Caney (2001 and 2005a, 123) and Moellendorf (2009, ch. 4) for defenses of globalizing the principle of fair equality of opportunity.

3. The institutionalist could avoid this problem by claiming that egalitarian duties apply only above a particular threshold of interaction. However, this view too is problematic since any threshold seems arbitrary if no attempt is made to connect the type of interaction to the type of duties required. See Caney (2005b, 396–99) for critical discussion of the threshold view.

4. On the importance of all citizens enjoying equal status see also Anderson (1999), Miller (1998), Scanlon (2002), and Scheffler (2003 and 2005).

5. The following authors offer useful discussions of social egalitarianism: Anderson (1999), Miller (1982 and 1998), O'Neill (2008), Scanlon (2002), and Scheffler (2003 and 2005). In Nath (2010) I offer a more fully worked out presentation of the social egalitarian ideal.

6. My discussion in this paragraph draws on Young (1990) and Anderson (1999).

7. Political inequalities between countries in international organizations are evinced by voting power in the IMF and the World Bank correlating to financial contribution. The United States controls just above 17% of the total vote in the IMF, and similarly in the World Bank voting power is proportionate to the relative size of a country's economy. See <http://www.imf.org/external/about/quotas.htm> and <http://go.worldbank.org/J0UEXULT20>.

8. Economic interaction is just one significant sphere of global interaction, and analogous points hold with respect to other, noneconomic elements of the global order.

9. Pogge (2005) shows how the current design of the TRIPS regime severely limits developing countries' access to essential drugs and medicines. See Pogge's (2002, 112–15) discussion of the 'international resource privilege' and the 'international borrowing privilege', as well as Wenar's (2008) elaboration of the harms of the first of these privileges.

10. Fraser (2008, 407–408) offers an illuminating discussion of this idea.

11. Blake (2002, 280n30) and Nagel (2005, 129–30) endorse this view.

12. On the perversity of excluding those *not* subject to lawful coercion from the scope of egalitarian justice, see also Julius (2006, 179–84).
13. Pevnick (2008, 403–406).
14. For this sort of defense see Miller (2005).

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