

Rawlsian anti-capitalist environmental justice

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ABSTRACT In this paper, I examine John Rawls' claim (1971, p. 17) that *Justice as Fairness* cannot include considerations about the environment and non-human animals, given that "the status of the natural world and our proper relation to it is not a constitutional essential or a basic question of justice" (Rawls, 1993, p. 246). The paper scrutinizes this perspective and argues that securing a Rawlsian well-ordered society is not possible without concern for the rest of nature. Through a more charitable reading that draws from anti-capitalist and environmental justice frameworks, we can discern how Rawlsian justice tightly connects to these issues. I conclude that the Rawlsian well-ordered society must be committed to anti-capitalist environmental justice.¹

KEYWORDS Rawls; environmental justice; political philosophy; anti-capitalism.

RESUMO Neste artigo, examina-se a asserção de John Rawls (1971, p. 17) de que a *Justiça como Equidade* não pode incluir considerações sobre o ambiente e os animais não-humanos atendendo a que "o estatuto do mundo natural e a nossa adequada relação com este não é um dos elementos constitucionais essenciais ou uma questão básica de justiça" (Rawls, 1993, p. 246). O artigo analisa esta perspectiva e argumenta que não é possível assegurar uma sociedade rawlsiana bem ordenada sem levar em conta preocupações com o resto da natureza. Por meio de uma leitura mais caritativa [do ideal Rawlsiano], fundada em paradigmas anti-capitalistas e na noção de justiça ambiental, podemos entender de que modo a justiça rawlsiana se imbrica de forma estreita com estes temas. Conclui-se que a sociedade rawlsiana bem-ordenada deve mostrar-se comprometida com uma justiça ambiental anti-capitalista.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE Rawls; justiça ambiental; filosofia política; anti-capitalismo.

1 Many people helped shape this paper into its final form. Thank you to the attendees and organizers of *After Justice: John Rawls' Legacy* in the 21st Century and the *Rawls Symposium* at the University of Girona for providing invaluable feedback on early drafts of this paper. Thank you to David Schweickart for a fruitful email exchange on fitting in Economic Democracy. Thank you to Stefan Sciaraffa for encouraging me to examine how we might account for environmental justice under the Rawlsian framework. Finally, thank you to the dedicated and helpful editors and reviewers at *EP&S*.

Introduction

In the first edition of *A Theory of Justice*, Rawls (1971, p. 17) concedes that Justice as Fairness is not a complete contract theory, as it fails to “embrace all moral relationships, since it would seem to include only our relations with other persons and to leave out of account how we are to conduct ourselves toward animals and the rest of nature.” Although Rawls acknowledges the importance of these questions, he sets them aside and recognizes the limits of his theory concerning this subject.² So then, Rawls (1971, p. 512) asserts that the environment and animals are “outside the scope of the theory of justice, and it does not seem possible to extend the contract doctrine so as to include them in a natural way.” In *Political Liberalism* (1993), Rawls considers four extensional problems, discussing if we can extend justice to cover duties towards (1) future generations,³ (2) international law, (3) “normal” health care, and (4) “our relations to animals and the order of nature” (p. 245).

Rawls (1993, p. 245) notes how “animals and nature are seen as subject to our use and wont” following the “traditional view of Christian ages.” Given this view, Rawls invokes the political values of furthering the good of present and future humans, alongside human health, to describe why we might preserve and foster the natural order. Although Rawls explicitly acknowledges that some will find this position anthropocentric, he (1993, p. 246) concludes that “the status of the natural world and our proper relation to it is not a constitutional essential or a basic question of justice.” Finally, in his book *Justice as Fairness: A Restatement* (2001), Rawls is primarily concerned with *human nature* and the *state of nature*—the only mention of nature proper comes about in a quick note about how legislation which protects the environment is the kind of legislative question beyond fundamental notions of basic justice (p. 91).

This paper aims to examine the complications that arise when securing a Rawlsian well-ordered society without concern for the rest of

2 This sentiment also meshes with the way that Rawls (2000, p. 119) rejects cosmopolitanism, stating that “The final political end of society is to become fully just and stable for the right reasons. Once that end is reached, the Law of Peoples prescribes no further target such as, for example, to raise the standard of living beyond what is necessary to sustain those institutions.” Similarly, Rawls sees environmental and animal concerns as beyond the scope of what is needed, as a ground, to organize and stabilize a well-ordered society.

3 For more on this interesting topic of generational justice within the Rawlsian framework (a topic not addressed within the confines of this paper) see Caney (2018) and Moellendorf (2009).

nature. In the first section of this paper, I will examine what a well-ordered society without concern for the environment would look like and illustrate how such a society will struggle to be well-ordered in the first place. Section two will try to remedy this tension through a more charitable reading of Rawls that works in an anti-capitalist approach to environmental justice. David Schweickart's system (2011), *Economic Democracy*, will provide a starting point for this solution. However, I will argue that although Schweickart's framework moves in the right direction, the innovations he proposes cannot fully address the problem at hand. I will provide further suggestions in the final sections of the paper that go beyond Schweickart's recommendations. Specifically, I will argue that implementing several ecological reforms and utilizing the institution of public education will prevent the well-ordered society from falling victim to climate injustice. Once we see how central these concerns are to the well-ordered society's success, it becomes apparent that care for the rest of nature is connected to the Rawlsian principles of justice—the properly well-ordered society must be committed to anti-capitalist environmental justice.

1 What hinges on environmental justice in the well-ordered society

An economic system that requires constant growth while bucking almost all serious attempts at environmental regulation generates a steady stream of disasters all on its own, whether military, ecological, or financial
(Klein, 2007, Oct, p. 58).

Our planet is on the brink of several climate change tipping points (Lenton et al, 2019). Human activity has driven up global temperatures, warmed the ocean, shrunk glaciers, destroyed habitats from wetlands to rainforests, accelerated the extinction of entire species, and increased the frequency of extreme weather events (NASA, 2023). Little needs to be said about why these trends are harmful, in general, as this seems evident—our lack of care for the rest of nature and our consumption habits are undoubtedly leading us towards an irreversible and inevitable climate crisis. If this crisis materializes, it will have immense consequences on all aspects of human life.

It is clear that a society dealing with this magnitude of climate change simply cannot be well-ordered. However, it is another question if a Rawlsian well-ordered society without concern for the rest of nature will avoid this scenario or end up in a similar position. The first section of this paper will argue for the second option by using a strict interpretation of Rawls' assertion that *Justice as Fairness* cannot be extended to account for the rest of nature. This approach will take Rawls' claim to its extreme, showcasing how a well-ordered society that does not foster care on these fronts will have difficulty in securing human justice and stability. Such an interpretation will have several points of contact with the Rawlsian apparatus.

Under the Rawlsian ideal of the well-ordered society, Freeman (2007, p. 28) argues that: "(a) all citizens agree on the same conception of justice and this is public knowledge; moreover, (b) society enacts this conception in its laws and institutions; and (c) citizens have a sense of justice and willingness to comply with these terms." The sought after conception of justice should appeal to reasonable and rational persons and aim at stability.⁴ In the context of this paper, a Rawlsian well-ordered society *without* care for the rest of nature does not direct its citizens, institutions, or government on this topic in a fundamental manner through the principles of justice.⁵ There may be some level of environmental regulation and legislation; however, ecological concerns do not carry much importance in organizing and regulating the well-ordered society. Instead, concerns about fairness between humans are of utmost importance and overrule considerations about the rest of nature. For example, a well-ordered society without care for the rest of nature might care about animal welfare *just* because of, say, the spread of zoonotic disease—a concern that impacts public health and human welfare. Or such a society might regulate the industry of fast fashion because of concerns about worker well-being rather than sustainability, which would only be an accidental side effect of worker regulations. As flagged earlier in the paper, Rawls (1993, p. 246) notes that, "the status of the natural world and our proper relation to it is *not* a constitutional essential or a basic question of justice." Concern for the rest of nature must come after

4 As Rawls (2008, p. 135) mentions in his lecture on Locke political philosophy "cannot formulate a precise procedure of judgment," rather, it provides a guiding framework for deliberation. Reasonable persons are "bound to differ" on how to weigh conflicting considerations, making it sensible to aim at stability since "there is no avoiding [...] having to reach a complex judgement weighing many imponderables."

5 Care will be used in an interchangeable way with concern, consideration, or relation to the rest of nature.

the *basic* question of justice, a downstream concern for the Rawlsian well-ordered society. Such an approach separates matters of human justice from environmental and animal justice issues, only dealing with the former in a fundamental manner. The following sections will show how this separation is incorrect and artificial—a failure to deal with environmental and animal justice impacts elements of human justice. The two sides of justice are tied up in a way not acknowledged by the strict reading of Rawls. This section will describe how the Rawlsian, well-ordered society without care for the rest of nature will struggle to secure human justice and be well-ordered in the first place. This tension mainly comes about from a failure to acknowledge that securing human justice, in some ways, depends on the proper treatment of the rest of nature. Beyond doing so in a vague⁶ and highly instrumental sense⁷, the Rawlsian picture does not acknowledge this connection.

Social and Economic Inequalities. *Justice as Fairness* is made up of two principles, the first states that all persons must possess an equal right to the most extensive basic liberty compatible with a similar liberty for others (Rawls, 1971, p. 60). The second principle requires social and economic inequalities to be (1) attached to offices and positions open to everyone in a way that respects fair equality of opportunity and (2) arranged in a way that benefits all, including the least advantaged, in the best way possible (Rawls, 1971, p. 83). The latter part of the second principle, also known as “the difference principle,” is most relevant when it comes to the environmental crisis, as it often further exacerbates existing inequalities in a disproportionate way rather than distributing burdens fairly (see Islam & Winkel, 2017).

Consider, for example, the impact of the rising sea levels. As sea levels rise and extreme weather events become more frequent; more communities are exposed to flooding. Those living in well-off areas with sufficient social supports and personal resources will recover from any damages. However, climate crisis does not act with the difference principle in mind. Natural disasters are uncontrollable forces that impose financial and social burdens without rules.⁸ Most crucial in terms of

6 Here, I am referring to the way that Rawls only briefly touches on the topic of nature and animals, as outlined in the introduction of this paper.

7 Here, I am referring to the way that Rawls sees animal justice, and environmental justice more generally, as a mere instrument to human flourishing.

8 One way that natural disasters impose financial and social burdens *without rules* is in the way that these occurrences ignore the borders of contained states. Climate change presents as a global problem that extends beyond national concerns of individual well-ordered societies.

impact on the previously described Rawlsian principles is that extreme climate change events, like floods, will be felt *more* by the least advantaged persons and communities. These individuals are at greater risk of being exposed to climate hazards in the first place and lack the support and resources to quickly cope and recover during the aftermath (Islam & Winkel, 2017, p. 17). On this point, Naomi Klein (2007, Oct, p. 54) points out how wealth provides a sort of “escape hatch” from ecological disasters. Klein (2007, Oct, p. 51) exemplifies this by describing Help Jet—“when a storm is coming, the charter company books holidays for its members at five-star golf resorts, or Disneyland.” Those who can afford the price tag not only are taken away from the disaster zone, they end up on first class vacations. Here, we see how climate crisis creates a space for privatized disaster response which widens existing social and economic inequalities.

Further, as Töns (2022, p. 78) notes, given the global impact of climate change and the way that justice transcends borders, “it follows that justice cannot stop at territorial borders; to maintain domestic justice there is a need to enter into a cooperative relationship with other peoples.” Accounting for environmental concerns within the boundaries of Rawls’ theory involves a rejection of cosmopolitanism⁹ given that justice does not stop at state borders.¹⁰ The Rawlsian difference principle—and social and economic inequality more generally—extends beyond human borders.

Of course, one might point out that a well-ordered society designed to advance its members’ good and regulated by a stable and public conception of justice will balance out the imposition of ecological burdens on its citizenry (Rawls, 1971, p. 453). However, over time, a well-ordered society that does not relate to the rest of nature sustainably will face increased difficulty fulfilling the difference principle’s requirements. This difficulty will arise due to how the climate crisis unequally imposes a burden on specific groups, both locally and globally. In particular, those who are the least advantaged will have to shoulder more severe economic and social burdens during a climate disaster. There is only so much that can be done to correct for arbitrary or natural disadvantages. Importantly, without a proper account of how to relate to the rest of nature, these arbitrary disadvantages will be more common and

9 For a thorough argument on how cosmopolitan justice impacts responsibility on the front of climate change, see Simon Caney (2005).

10 For more on this topic, also see Gardiner (2011).

increasingly difficult to control. The well-ordered society without care for the rest of nature will be far less likely to satisfy the difference principle over time and fall short of its own standards in this first way.

Scarcity of Resources and Self-Respect. Rawls (1971, p. 440) describes self-respect as one of the most important primary goods. Self-respect includes two parts; first, a person must value themselves and consider their respective conception of the good and life plan as worth carrying out. A person must also believe that they can *actually* exercise their powers to fulfill these intentions. Climate change diminishes self-respect by aggravating existing inequalities, as described above, and by worsening the scarcity of resources. Since the Rawlsian picture considers the well-ordered society to be a “cooperative venture for mutual advantage,” human cooperation under these conditions is possible and necessary.¹¹ Individuals must cooperate to best suit their identity of interests, despite their conflict of interests (Freeman, 2007, p. 126). In the circumstances of justice, there is a *moderate* scarcity of resources that persons can overcome. This scarcity, however, is intensified by climate change. The climate crisis causes heightened housing insecurity, destruction of property, food insecurity, and depletes essential natural resources like freshwater. The heightened impact of climate change supports the worsening of the scarcity of resources and, in turn, diminishes cooperation and self-respect. When individuals and communities must worry about these basic needs, there is less time to focus on fostering fellow feeling and self-respect. Instead, persons must compete with each other to acquire these basic goods. A heightened scarcity of resources pushes on the cooperative endeavour that individuals in the well-ordered society take up.

Additionally, climate change exacerbates the divide between different social and economic groups. In particular, since the impact of climate change is not felt equally across the board, tensions arise from the realization that some persons will carry a more considerable burden based on arbitrary factors such as geographical location or class.¹² For example, in some ways, the rich stand to get richer due to the climate crisis. Several online venues list where individuals should invest based on certain commodities that will soon be scarce, such as clean water,

11 As Samuel Freeman (2007, p. 483) describes, “as distinguished from efficiently coordinated activity, social cooperation involves an account of each person’s rational advantage, and an account of fair or reasonable terms of cooperation”.

12 Class also intersects with several other attributes that put persons at more risk of climate change related burden. See Islam & Winkel (2017).

and areas expected to see growth, such as the green energy industry (Reeves, 2019, Sep 28). The purchasing of stocks described as “good buys” in light of climate change illustrates how even in the face of crisis, the wealthy stand to benefit in a way simply not possible for the less advantaged. Further, wealthier consumers can afford the higher prices of goods driven by the scarcity of resources.¹³ Ultimately, the impact of climate change on wealthier persons and communities is several levels less severe than the burdens imposed on the less advantaged.

In a well-ordered society dealing with ecological crisis, scarcity of resources will worsen, and tensions will arise between groups if environmental justice concerns do not play an essential role in organizing and regulating society.¹⁴ A properly well-ordered society will aim to distribute resources in a way that satisfies fairness. However, if justice is not extended to the rest of nature, scarcity of resources will be worsened in the first place. If the material conditions in this scenario become harsh, there are limited ways to distribute resources in a way that satisfies the citizenry’s basic needs and meets a standard of fairness, leading to diminished self-respect and solidarity.¹⁵

Stability. The improper distribution of inequalities and the degradation of self-respect, in turn, negatively impact the stability of the basic structure as a whole. For Rawls (1971, p. 454), a conception of justice is “more stable than another if the sense of justice that it tends to generate is stronger and more likely to override disruptive inclinations and if the institutions it allows foster weaker impulses and temptations to act unjustly.” The basic structure itself is both the site of and the victim

13 As seen in the previous section on Social and Economic Inequalities, especially when it comes to the example of Help Jet.

14 As an anonymous reviewer aptly pointed out, one might object that climate change, although harsh in its impact, will not do as much as to return us to previous levels of economic capacity. Rather, we might suspect that climate change will merely reduce economic growth, but not enough to dampen still positive levels of growth. If this is the case, we might not think that climate change creates a *real* threat of scarcity—rather than higher levels of inequality. This ought-implies-can style objection urges a more thorough consideration of the connection between material conditions and justice. This paper has argued that as climate change increasingly impacts scarcity of resources, cooperation, solidarity, and self-respect suffer greatly. But this objection rightly points out how there is room for the degradation of cooperative ventures without *full* scarcity of resources and economic breakdown. It seems that even with the dire conditions created by climate change, it is not immediately clear that scarcity will break down cooperation between persons. Given this, the paper holds that although scarcity of resources pushes on the cooperative scheme at hand, economic capacity and economic growth may still flourish, despite this pressure. As argued by Klein (2007, Oct, p. 56), we increasingly see ourselves in situations where “the world [is] going to hell, there [is] no stability in sight, and the global economy [is] roaring its approval.”

15 By solidarity here, I refer to the feeling of unity that comes along with shared interests. Under the Rawlsian scheme, this feeling is generated by the way in which the principles of justice shape and determine the terms of social cooperation in the well-ordered society.

of these problems regarding stability. The way we organize our social, political, economic, and legal systems has serious power when it comes to our treatment of the environment and animals. When this structuring does not take the rest of nature into consideration, unstable conditions negatively affect the basic structure. So then, Rawlsian institutional design projects must take these concerns into account. A basic structure without regard for the rest of nature will struggle to adequately meet the citizenry's needs on this front, who depend on how the basic structure functions to "distribute fundamental rights and duties and determine the division of the advantages from social cooperation" (Rawls, 1971, p. 7). The principles of justice can only diminish arbitrary natural and social advantages, thus securing the equality of persons as best as possible, if the well-ordered society takes environmental justice seriously (Rawls, 1971, p. 96). Without addressing these issues, the citizenry under a poorly designed basic structure will face diminished solidarity and unfair distribution of burden. Citizens will have few guiding reasons to act in ways aligned with environmental justice if a well-ordered society's principles and institutions do not foster care on this front. As we have seen, environmental justice and human justice are intimately connected.

Without the former, the latter will not follow on the Rawlsian picture.¹⁶

Climate Injustice and Inequality. Before moving into section two of the paper, a note on the broader connection between climate injustice and inequality will help frame the content to come.¹⁷ Throughout the previous subsections, we have seen how climate injustice brings about instability, degrades solidarity and self-respect, increases scarcity of resources, and generates both social and economic inequalities. But what is the most fundamental connection between climate injustice and inequality? Klein (2007, Oct, p. 48) speaks to how inequality is generated rapidly in a system where when "crumbling infrastructure is blasted with increasingly intense weather, the effects can be as devastating as war." Under what Klein calls "disaster capitalism," moments of crisis produce new economic opportunities while generating an "unapolo-

16 Absent from this paper, due to scope, is a more extended version of how climate injustice links up with what Thomas Piketty (2020) calls "inequality regimes" throughout history. An extended version of this paper would discuss how colonialism, for example, has exacerbated climate injustice. For more on inequality regimes, see parts one and two of *Capital and Ideology* (2020).

17 Thank you to an anonymous reviewer for pointing out how establishing this link explicitly would benefit the structure and aim of the paper.

getic partition between the included and excluded, the protected and the damned” Klein (2007, Oct, p. 49). Disasters, especially environmental ones, drive us further apart and widen the schism of inequality between persons. Given this furthered division, we begin to see an emerging picture where it seems “many of our elites, both political and corporate, are so sanguine about climate change [because] they are confident they will be able to buy their way out of the worst of it” (Klein, 2007, Oct, p. 54). The connection between climate injustice and inequality is direct in this sense—those persons who experience inequality are more likely to suffer from climate injustice—and those persons who suffer from climate injustice are subject to heightened inequality.¹⁸ Islam and Winkel (2017, p. 2) describe the connection between climate change and social inequality on the state level as “characterized by a vicious cycle, whereby *initial* inequality causes the disadvantaged groups to suffer *disproportionately* from the adverse effects of climate change, resulting in greater *subsequent* inequality.” Islam and Winkel’s framework (2017, pp. 5-22) makes clear how those groups and person that suffer from social inequality (1) are more likely to be exposed to climate hazards in the first place, (2) face increased chances of damage from climate hazards, and (3) have decreased ability to recover from damage from climate hazards.

2 Fitting in Environmental Justice

The first section of this paper took Rawls’ claim, that concerns about the rest of nature cannot be dealt with under Justice as Fairness at face value. Under this interpretation, a Rawlsian society that does not deal with this set of issues will struggle to be well-ordered at all. Such an approach will have difficulty securing several important Rawlsian values such as equality, stability, and self-respect. Additionally, the material conditions of persons in this scenario will be harsh due to an *increased* scarcity of resources. Justice on this reading is not sensitive enough to the sorts of complications that arise from a lack of concern for the rest of nature. There is a more charitable and nuanced approach we may take, though. The Rawlsian framework can guarantee the success of a well-ordered society facing a climate crisis through a commitment to

18 For a discussion on the different ways, we might carve out this connection using both justice theory and climate change politics, in relation to Rawlsian frameworks, see Vanderheiden (2013).

anti-capitalist environmental justice. The following sections will lay out the foundations for this approach, which can neatly overcome the hurdles of the previous more literal reading of Rawls' assertions about the rest of nature. This task is one of reimagining the Rawlsian picture to account for our current ecological worries. I will argue that this care for the rest of nature can be injected into the well-ordered society by way of (1) the political economy, (2) several ecological reforms and innovations, and (3) the institution of public education.

2.1. *Why Anti-Capitalism?*

Now our self-respect normally depends upon the respect of others. Unless we feel that our endeavors are honored by them, it is difficult if not impossible for us to maintain the conviction that our ends are worth advancing. Hence for this reason the parties would accept the natural duty of mutual respect which asks them to treat one another civilly and to be willing to explain the grounds of their actions, especially when the claims of others are overruled. Moreover, one may assume that those who respect themselves are more likely to respect each other and conversely. Self-contempt leads to contempt of others and threatens their good as much as envy does. Self-respect is reciprocally self-supporting (Rawls, 1971, p. 178).

My approach to fitting these concerns into the Rawlsian framework will rely, in part, on economic restructuring. Rawls did not see capitalism as a just system.¹⁹ Even in *A Theory of Justice*, Rawls (1971, pp. 270-274; 280) suggests that a system of either property-owning democracy or liberal market socialism would best satisfy the principles of justice. In the context of this paper, a society is capitalist if it meets three conditions. First, the means of production are, for the most part, privately owned. Second, goods are exchanged in a market at prices determined by competition and demand. Finally, the majority of people who engage in wage labour are not the owners of the means of production (Schweickart, 2011, p. 39).

19 During an email exchange, David Schweickart described sending one of his early papers by mail to Rawls, where he argued that Rawls should be a socialist, with the note "Am I right?" attached to it. Rawls "responded, pointing out that in *A Theory of Justice* he never said that *capitalism* could be just. (At that time everyone reading Rawls assumed that he was defending a form of welfare-state capitalism. In his later work he makes it clear that he thinks a form of "property-owning democracy," as well as market socialism, could be just-but not capitalism)."

When we examine some of the ways a capitalist society generates inequalities on an environmental front,²⁰ it quickly becomes apparent why part of the solution to fitting environmental justice into the Rawlsian framework must be a commitment to anti-capitalism. Capitalism encourages over-extraction, over-production, and the commodification of nature and animals. This happens under capitalism in particular because of its expansionary dynamic (Schweickart, 2011, p. 139). Industries that rely on fast, cheap, and unsustainable production methods, such as fast fashion and factory farming, thrive under capitalism. These industries are incredibly productive and profitable, at the expense of underpaid workers. This leads to a vicious cycle opposed to ecological concerns since:

[E]nvironmental sanity requires that rich countries cut back on consumption and poor countries target their resources to eliminating poverty—the exact opposite of what globalized capitalism demands. From the perspective of globalized capitalism, rich countries must consume even more, because they are the key markets for the “lesser-developed” ones, whereas poor countries must cut back on public spending, keep wages low, open up their economies, look the other way when ecological issues surface, because they must, above all else, attract foreign investment (Schweickart, 2011, p. 139).

These practices are detrimental to the environment and animals. An account that seeks to promote environmental and animal justice must be anti-capitalist, then. Overall, this section of the paper aims at what Graham and Roelvink (2010, p. 323) call “the process of opening our economic thinking” to include “all being(s), human and non-human, animate and inanimate, processual and fluid as well as categorical and definite in conception.” Economic Democracy, the system that David

20 Although I do not have space for a full treatment of the non-environmental benefits of anti-capitalism, it is apparent that securing self-respect and solidarity under conditions of economic inequality is challenging. The threat of unemployment, the expectation to overwork, and widespread poverty degrades self-respect of wage labourers. Moreover, even those at the top of capitalist schemes lose out by distancing themselves from the groups underneath them—which means solidarity suffers on this front as well. See Schweickart (2011) sections 4.3-4.5 for more on this topic. Finally, we can see how securing the difference principle under capitalism is next to impossible. A picture of capitalism as an equalizer of inequality certainly would satisfy the difference principle. However, this picture is inaccurate. Rather than bringing those at the bottom up, capitalism actively encourages widening the gap between the rich and the poor. The opposite of the difference principle occurs here, where persons at the top gain at the expense of those at the bottom.

Schweickart presents in his book, *After Capitalism*²¹ provides a launchpad towards the solution to the previously described tension between capitalism and Rawlsian environmental justice. After describing the basics of Economic Democracy and the ecological reforms Schweickart suggests in his work, the paper will show how these elements make a good start but still fall short when it comes to securing the success of the well-ordered society. Economic Democracy can be broadly defined as a system that satisfies three basic features.²²

1. Workplace Democracy. Under Economic Democracy, workers control the enterprises they are employed at. Rather than functioning as mere production sites to be bought, sold, and invested in, workplaces are communities where workers receive full citizenship, including voting rights, upon entering (Schweickart, 2011, pp. 58-61). Management is selected democratically within workplaces, giving more autonomy to workers. Further, workers are responsible for workplace organization, making calls on producing goods, setting prices, and deciding how to distribute net proceeds (Schweickart, 2011, p. 60). So then, Economic Democracy rids itself of most instances of wage labour through democratizing the workplace.²³ Given this, inequality within workplaces in the well-ordered society will be less likely. For example, in a democratically run workplace, there will be less income inequality between workers.²⁴ Indeed, the length of time someone spends at a firm, or their skill will merit them some sort of pay increase, but this will be an increase that is democratically approved by all workers (Schweickart, 2011, p. 97).²⁵

21 Some details of this view will be passed over, simply due to the scope of this paper. The foundational elements that impact Schweickart's content on environmental justice will be focused on more heavily than other, still important, parts of the framework.

22 Although there is not ample room to do so in this paper, one could apply a more critical lens to the system of Economic Democracy to modify its structure to even better fit the Rawlsian framework. In this paper, I will be using the basic features of Economic Democracy only to show how an anti-capitalist approach can help secure environmental justice. In using this work as a launchpad, however, I do not mean to suggest that every part of Economic Democracy is without fault.

23 Schweickart notes that some businesses may retain wage labour, simply because there is no need to run a democratic workplace between two people running a small business, for example. See section 3.5.3 of his (2011).

24 Additionally, unemployment will be less prevalent—in the first place, there is less competition between workplaces under Economic Democracy and less incentive to move production over borders. Further, the government will function as an employer-of-last-resort, acting as a safeguard to ensure that all persons can engage in meaningful work. Under capitalism, the threat of unemployment is used against workers, who otherwise might demand greater wages or fairer conditions. Under Economic Democracy, firms already focus on these concerns, and the government acts as a safeguard, alleviating the need for the threat of unemployment.

25 See also section 3.3 on the Mondragon experiment for this in action.

2. State Controlled Investment. Furthermore, under Economic Democracy investment funds are generated in a public manner: all firms pay a capital assets tax to the government on land, buildings, and equipment. This tax goes into a societal investment fund—the means of production become collective property, owned by society (Schweickart, 2011, pp. 60-2). The allocation of these funds back into society is also a public matter. First, a capital assets tax is collected and placed in the *investment fund*. Next, those funds are passed down to *regions* on a per capita basis. These regions decide how to further pass down investments to *communities* on a per capita basis (Schweickart, 2011, p. 66). Regions and communities are entitled to a fair share of the investment fund. A per capita distribution is preferable on the Rawlsian scheme as it satisfies a standard of fairness, diminishes inequalities between areas, and mitigates the intense pressure to compete²⁶ between regions and communities (Schweickart, 2011, p. 64). Further, state-controlled investment distributed on a per capita basis will promote income equality, solidarity, and stability in the well-ordered society.

3. Unregulated Market. One similarity between capitalism and Economic Democracy is that both are market economies. The market under Economic Democracy is unregulated and relies on a supply and demand price mechanism (Schweickart, 2011, p. 61). Schweickart argues that the existence of an unregulated market does not imply that Economic Democracy is, in some way, capitalist. Indeed, under any sort of market-economy, companies aim to maximize the divide between costs and sales. However, under Economic Democracy, labour is *not* a cost to be paid out alongside equipment and land. Instead, labourers are the claimants who stand to gain whatever remains after costs have been paid out. The incentive to maximize the divide between costs and sales ends up benefitting workers rather than exploiting them. Further, Schweickart points out that market competition helps inform production habits and pushes companies to be efficient and innovative.²⁷

26 However, this model does leave room for some healthy competition. Once funds reach communities, they are further distributed to public banks and then to firms. At this stage, past performance and the potential for profit and employment creation determine the allocation of funds. So then, competition exists at this final level and encourages banks and firms to be effective and innovative.

27 Economic Democracy will aim to foster competition but only in a healthy manner. Free trade, the practice of buying and selling across international borders with few safeguards or tariffs, often encourages the exploitation of less well-off states. Free trade encourages poorer nations to lower worker incomes, increase production, and relax certain standards, such as environmental regulations. All of this is done to generate foreign interest, for firms will be incentivized to move across borders in light of lower wages, increased productivity, and fewer safeguards. Economic Democracy opposes this model and calls for fair trade—a

2.2. *Ecological Reforms and Innovations*

If our species does not survive the ecological crisis, it will probably be due to our failure to imagine and work out new ways to live with the earth, to rework ourselves and our high energy, high-consumption, and hyper-instrumental societies adaptively. We struggle to adjust because we're still largely trapped inside the enlightenment tale of progress as human control over a passive and 'dead' nature that justifies both colonial conquests and commodity economies
Plumwood (2007).

Summed up, Economic Democracy does a better job across the board for workers in terms of equality and job security.²⁸ The well-ordered society welcomes improvements in these areas as they support the Rawlsian principles of justice. As well, Economic Democracy mitigates the impact of the political economy on the rest of nature. So then, it is clear that part of avoiding the problem laid out at the start of the paper is a commitment to an anti-capitalist political economy such as Economic Democracy.²⁹ The right sort of political economy secures aspects of Rawlsian justice in this way by improving solidarity between citizens on the economic front. Along with an anti-capitalist political economy, several reforms and innovations on the ecological front will help to fully secure the Rawlsian well-ordered society. Schweickart proposes the following innovations in *After Capitalism*. These innovations

sort of "socialist protectionism." The primary equalizer in this system are social tariffs imposed on imports from poorer countries. Tariffs are imposed on all imports from poorer countries, ensuring that consumers in wealthier states pay fair prices for goods. This imposition aims to foster a sort of international labour solidarity, as the imposed tariffs are paid out to poorer countries. Several positive outcomes flow from such a policy. First, on the part of more affluent countries, there will be a lack of pressure to relocate, slash wages, or relax standards since companies may only trade on equal ground with other states. This results in a twofold benefit, workers within a state are protected from outside competition, and poorer countries are not exploited for the sake of competition. Further, richer countries play a part in alleviating global poverty by paying fair prices for goods from poorer countries. This commitment illustrates how the existence of a competitive market does not necessarily imply an inherently exploitative policy of free trade. For more on this, see Schweickart (2011, pp. 85-7).

28 It is worth noting that this kind of approach goes against the neoliberal sentiment that states should avoid intervening to rebalance inequalities. The general thrust of this paper in general, as will be seen on the ecological front in the following sections, goes against the idea that intervention on the state level is morally wrong. For a more thorough discussion of neoliberalism and capitalism. Specifically, Boyle et al. (2023, pp. 155-79) discuss this topic from the angle of the COVID-19 pandemic in the UK, a case study that showcases the way in which neoliberalism colours a pandemic that worsened inequalities across the board. This connection comes up again in the coming subsection on public health in this paper.

29 Certainly, other versions of liberal market socialism or property-owning democracy could do similarly well in promoting Rawlsian and environmental justice. However, Schweickart's system is particularly well suited since it is, at root, Rawlsian, and provides specific ecological innovations.

have the potential to mitigate the impacts of the climate crisis and push the Rawlsian well-ordered society to success on this front.

Poverty and overpopulation. Schweickart notes that the current trends for increasing world population are not sustainable. Notably, populations in poorer countries are growing, whereas “the populations of the industrialized nations of the world, apart from immigration, are flat or declining” (Schweickart, 2011, p. 132) So then, Schweickart holds that dealing with overpopulation, which puts pressure on many of our systems and resources, is a problem related to poverty at its roots. If we can deal with poverty, families in poorer countries will no longer need to have several children who “constitute an economic resource for their parents” (Schweickart, 2011, p. 132). Improving the conditions of overpopulated countries by ensuring persons have access to education and basic health care, for example, will go a long way in solving this issue.

Food scarcity. Schweickart concedes that resource shortages might be the problem here, not just a rapidly expanding population. Water is becoming scarce, and food production is near capacity. One significant factor here is that food production at the global level relies heavily on transportation; the “average bite of American food has travelled more than 1,500 miles before it reaches your lips” (Schweickart, 2011, p. 133). Schweickart (2011, p. 133) focuses on this transportation problem to craft his solution to food scarcity, asserting that if we can focus on small-scale and local food production, we can rely on fewer resources to produce enough food for everyone. If we can recraft our systems in this way, we can ensure that there is enough to go around, but “only if our current production, consumption, and distribution patterns are radically altered, and population growth is checked” (Schweickart, 2011, p. 133). Additionally, Schweickart (2011, p. 184) notes that on a personal level, we should all aim to shift to a diet with less meat or none at all for health and sustainability reasons.

Pollution, Green Technology, and Taxes. One considerable climate change threat comes from pollution brought about by human activity. Climate change is strongly driven, “not from what we consume, but from what we don’t consume” (Schweickart, 2011, p. 134). Schweickart proposes that we take four steps to curb the effects of pollution: (1) stop subsidizing coal and oil, (2) impose emission limits for heavy polluters, (3) enforce a carbon tax on fossil fuels, and (4) support and fund the development of green technologies (Schweickart, 2011,

p. 135). Collectively, these steps would push us towards a more sustainable economy focused on renewable energy.

Community Design. Part of achieving this more sustainable economy will involve engaging in a project of efficient community design. Schweickart notes that our current communities' design relies heavily on citizens' access to cars, leading to greater pollution levels. However, this is a problem of design, not of necessity. Our communities could be designed in a compact and more public transportation and cyclist-friendly way, diminishing our dependence on cars (Schweickart, 2011, p. 141). This redesigning would promote several ecological benefits, namely reducing pollution from the ways we travel and the distances we travel.

2.3. Further Innovations

The fact that Economic Democracy does better on these issues is unsurprising since capitalism and a lack of care for the rest of nature are tied up in each other—capitalist systems set a low ecological bar. There are several ways that the previously proposed innovations and the general structure of Economic Democracy would assist the well-ordered society in avoiding climate crisis by increasing care for the rest of nature.

Firstly, Economic Democracy may create the right sort of material conditions under which persons and communities will be more likely to have the time and energy to make more sustainable choices to combat climate change. We cannot expect this much of most persons under capitalism who often lack access to necessities, time for leisure, and essential services. Furthermore, if this system does a better job promoting self-respect, people may be softened up and more likely to accept sustainable changes. This once again ties into persons merely having the time and energy to engage with these issues. A more solidaristic and compassionate society may encourage a citizenry to be more sensitive to the plight of non-human animals and nature. Finally, focusing on compact community design will undoubtedly reduce a class of emissions related to transportation. If we can make cities more accessible for cyclists and public transit users, we can expect to reduce emissions related to transportation. Additionally, we can expect to see our food travel smaller distances, once again lowering emissions.

One might wonder if, at this point, the concerns in this paper are already dealt with by Schweickart and his system of Economic Democracy. If this is the case, we have the solution to the problem posed at the start of the paper—a well-ordered society must implement Economic Democracy and follow Schweickart’s ecological innovations to avoid an environmental crisis. The next sections will aim to show that this is not the case. Although Schweickart’s approach provides a helpful anti-capitalist starting point, several crucial additions to his innovations will secure the well-ordered society’s success. The approach that I take, in this way, provides reasons *beyond* Schweickart’s to deal with this problem of fitting environmental justice into the Rawlsian framework. To properly achieve Rawlsian justice for all of nature, including humans, we must place a strong focus on restructuring our food systems and harnessing the power of public education—two topics not addressed by Schweickart under Economic Democracy.³⁰

Reforming Our Food Systems. A specific ecological worry on Schweickart’s account is the ways in which overpopulation leads to scarcity and strains our current systems. This worry is uniquely Rawlsian, as well. Social cooperation under the well-ordered society, in general, depends on the right material conditions, which are threatened by a scarcity of resources (Rawls, 1971, p. 127). Schweickart concedes that it might be that scarcity is the more specific problem we need to remedy when it comes to our increasing world population. Poore and Nemecek (2018, p. 987) acknowledge that “with current diets and production practices, feeding 7.6 billion people is degrading terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems, depleting water resources, and driving climate change.” An approach focused on overpopulation would see this strain on our systems as an inevitable fact—if we have more people, our food systems will fail to meet the needs of consumers and will have grave ecological impacts.

This is not necessarily the case, though, as illustrated by Poore and Nemecek by way of a thorough analysis of 38,700 farms and 1600 food producers, packagers, and retailers. There are certainly hurdles to overcome. For example, we need to find sustainable solutions suited to diverse producers. These solutions must be successful across different

30 As a brief note, I will mention that the following arguments apply *only* to countries that consume animals in an industrialized way, normally relying on factory farms. There are certain communities who have a different approach to eating animals. Indigenous populations, for example, are not expected to make these sorts of changes—for the ways in which Indigenous people eat animals is vastly different in terms of ecological impact.

climates and fit the economic abilities of specific producers. However, across the board, Poore and Nemecek (2018, p. 987) found that “most strikingly, impacts of the *lowest-impact* animal products typically exceed those of vegetable substitutes, providing new evidence for the importance of dietary change.”³¹ The impact of animal agriculture strains several ecological and human systems. Currently, 43% of the habitable ice and desert free land on the planet is used for agriculture, and most of this land is used for livestock (Poore & Nemecek, 2018, p. 987). In total, food production is responsible for a quarter of worldwide greenhouse gases, with animal products accounting for 78% of these emissions (Poore & Nemecek, 2018, p. 987). However, these animal products only provide 18% of calories and 37% of the world’s protein—an amount that is not proportionate to the ecological damage of these practices (Poore & Nemecek, 2018, p. 987). In contrast, plant-based foods’ carbon footprints are around ten to fifty times smaller—an ecological benefit not reflected by our current allocation of agricultural land. Our current food consumption habits contribute disproportionately to deforestation, loss of biodiversity, greenhouse emissions, and pollution by run-off (Springmann et al., 2018, pp. 519-525).

In this way, the solution to reforming our food systems, which have disproportionate ecological effects may be right in front of us. For example, redistributing agricultural land to prioritize plant-based food sources could go a long way in curbing the impact of agriculture on our planet. This suggestion is sound in several ways: replacing standard animal products with plant alternatives satisfies nutritional requirements and reduces land-use, water consumption, and greenhouse gas emissions (Eshel et al., 2019). So then, the first step in reforming our food systems to better support consumers, adapt to growing populations, and make significant ecological progress is to shift towards a stronger emphasis on plant-based sources and a reduction of animal products (Springmann et al., 2018). When it comes to impact on the Rawlsian well-ordered society, reforming our food systems improves the conditions needed for social cooperation.

Food Insecurity. Additionally, this suggested shift would also help mitigate the scarcity of resources, a problem that both Schweickart and Rawls are ultimately concerned with. As it stands, 36% of the world’s calories are used to feed livestock, whereas only 12% of those feed cal-

31 Emphasis is my own.

ories contribute to the human diet through animal products (Cassidy et al., 2013). This is intuitive when animals function as the middlemen in our food systems. Rather than directly consuming plant-based sources, we currently use land, water, and labour to grow plants to feed animals that we then consume. A beef burger then relies on two sets of resources to grow food and to raise cattle. More efficient agricultural practices and growing food for direct human consumption could increase available calories by 70%, addressing the worry about scarcity of resources by feeding an additional four billion people (Cassidy et al., 2013).

The Local Factory Farm. Another focus of Schweickart's ecological account is the scaling down of agriculture to the local level. Scaling down agricultural systems to fit local needs will result in fewer emissions related to food transportation. If we can ensure that communities are supported by local food production sites, each bite of food consumed on the planet will have a smaller footprint. However, this is not the entire picture. Local production contributes significantly to reducing transportation-related emissions but has an uncertain impact on production-related emissions. I will put it this way—every factory farm that contributes greatly to emissions, land use, and freshwater depletion is local to someone. Mere locality does nothing to mitigate these impacts. Imagine that under Schweickart's recommendation, the well-ordered society scales down food production to the point where every region has a factory farm. This goes a long way for curbing transportation emissions. We can now proudly say that our food systems require minimal movement across borders, leading to reduced emissions. However, we have missed the mark here. Instead of dealing with the bulk of emissions from production, we have only dealt with a small class of emissions. In terms of our current food systems, land-use and production account for around 80% of emissions related to most foods, in particular for foods with high footprints like beef. Transport, in contrast, contributes to about 10% of emissions (Ritchie, 2020, Jun 24). It is apparent, given these findings, that we need to focus not primarily on *where* our food comes from but *what* food we consume.

Public Health. Improper treatment of animals also puts a well-ordered society at risk for global pandemics, as illustrated by the animal origins of the 2012 MERS outbreak (Smith et al., 2009), the 2009 H1N1 epidemic, and the current COVID-19 pandemic (Mallapaty, 2020). Factory farms generate more than 90% of meat globally consumed and thrive by tightly packing animals together in unsanitary and

degrading conditions (Samuel, 2020, Aug 20). This lack of concern for animal welfare is not insulated though, or merely a failure on the front of animal justice. These practices create perfect conditions for the spread of zoonotic disease. This risk has been known of for several years, with groups like the World Health Organization acknowledging that since we coexist with the entirety of nature, “the interface between humans, animals, and the environments we share can also be a source of diseases impacting public health and the social and economic well-being of the world population” (World Health Organization, 2020, July 29). If the well-ordered society wishes to secure human justice on the front of public health, reforming these practices will play an integral role.

Funding the Eco-Friendly Shift. Achieving this goal is not impossible and is compatible with the goals of the well-ordered society. There would certainly be enough land to grow plants—particularly because so much land is taken up by livestock, we would likely come out on the other side with space to spare. This land could either be rewilded or repurposed for human use. There is also no need for this shift to drive a massive uptick in unemployment. Under a well-ordered society structured by Economic Democracy, in particular, this shift will come with the condition that workers within our current food systems retain or move to new employment sites so that they can continue to engage in meaningful work.³²

In line with Schweickart, it is clear that subsidies and taxes can play a large role in providing consumers and producers with an incentive to act sustainably. Harnessing this power will be incredibly important to the success of this change in our food systems. In particular, driving consumer and producer habits using subsidies and taxes will be especially important under Economic Democracy’s open market. If prices on the market are driven solely by supply and demand, ecological safeguards in the form of subsidies and taxes can step in when these trends encourage the production of goods that negatively impact the rest of nature.

Worker Cooperatives. A proponent of Economic Democracy might object to the previous sections by arguing that since workplace cooperatives tend to have better conditions on several fronts, we can expect such workplaces to adopt better food production practices. If

32 In fact, given the psychological and physical toll noted by workers in current slaughterhouses and factory farms, it might be easier for Economic Democracy to connect people with meaningful work outside this sphere. See Dryden & Riger (2020, May 6).

this is the case, the well-ordered society under Economic Democracy does not need to shift towards more plant-based eating. Rather, we can expect ecological practices to be more thorough and careful due to a commitment to Economic Democracy. The response to this is similar to the previous section on locality. Democratic workplaces will likely have better worker treatment across the board by giving workers more time for leisure, providing greater income inequality between workers, and allowing workers to have an autonomous say when it comes to management. All of this says volumes about the impact on the average worker but has little implication for ecological practices. A worker cooperative can do well by its workers and poorly when it comes to sustainability. For example, you could imagine a tremendously environmentally unfriendly factory farm that offers high incomes, good benefits, and a strong union to workers. Once again, we need to fill out the picture more; we cannot use “democratic workplace” as a placeholder for “sustainable workplace” since the two do not always overlap.³³

2.4. Public Education

From this perspective, responding to the challenges of the Anthropocene is not simply about humans finding a technological or normative fix that will control and restore the earth. It is about human beings being transformed by the world in which we find ourselves—or, to put this in more reciprocal terms, it is about the earth’s future being transformed through a living process of inter-being.
(Graham & Roelvink, 2010, p. 322)

The previous sections illustrated that the adoption of Economic Democracy and several ecological reforms would move the well-ordered society closer to securing Rawlsian environmental justice. One further hurdle largely unexplored by Schweickart is a psychological one. We need to encourage people in a well-ordered society to care for the rest of nature more thoroughly. Indeed, we can strong-arm people into making ecologically sound decisions. Taxes, subsidies, and community design can incentivize people to make sustainable choices that positively impact the rest of nature. However, this sort of strong-arm

33 An anonymous review aptly pointed out that there are clear difficulties when it comes to adjudicating the trade-offs between a “democratic workplace” and a “sustainable workplace,” given that these two do not always overlap, as explored in this section. Although exploring this at greater length in outside the scope of this paper, there is room to expand on how we might balance these trade-offs.

approach does not ensure that people *care* about these issues. We can go deeper than this and aim to educate.

One site of injecting this value into the well-ordered society, largely unexplored by Schweickart, is the institution of public education. Schweickart (2011, p. 80) does note that under Economic Democracy, all children will have access to free primary and secondary education. This commitment makes it easier for all children to receive a standardized education similar in quality across the board. Consistent and accessible education provides a clear avenue for promoting concern for the rest of nature. Poore and Nemecek (2018, p. 991) emphasize the power of knowledge to drive action, noting that:

communicating average product impacts to consumers enables dietary change and should be pursued. Though dietary change is realistic for any individual, widespread behavioural change will be hard to achieve in the narrow timeframe remaining to limit global warming and prevent further, irreversible biodiversity loss. Communicating producer impacts allows [consumers to avoid certain products], which multiplies the effects of smaller consumer changes.

Empowering consumers with knowledge about the impact of various products provides persons with deep reasons to enact personal change. This sharing of knowledge also puts pressure on producers to enact better practices on an ecological front due to increased transparency and accountability.

Further, educating rather than incentivizing will have a wider reach. Some individuals will buy certain goods or engage in unsustainable practices regardless of the price alone. In particular, those with income to spare can choose to accept a higher price tag on certain goods. Through educational efforts, these people may be brought on board in a more profound sense. Education ultimately provides deeper reasons to take specific steps compared to raising or lowering the price point of goods in an ever-shifting marketplace.³⁴ Taking this approach within the well-ordered society's framework increases stability by providing

³⁴ This intrinsic public education also deals with two hurdles related to this topic. First, the fact that almost any price point cannot deter all consumers. For those who are well off, in particular, a high price point acts as no serious barrier if a certain good is desired strongly enough. Second, that those who have little care for future generations will find instrumental value lacking—if one does not care about the well-being of future persons, they will not find securing human justice through environmental justice particularly compelling.

strong reasons for persons to override temptations and inclinations to act in ways opposed to environmental justice and, therefore, human justice (Rawls, 1971, p. 454). In this way, public education plays a moral education role here, promoting the acceptance and stability of Rawlsian environmental justice by educating persons at an early stage of their moral development. Here we can see how part of promoting Rawlsian environmental justice will involve a project of motivating persons to internalize the *intrinsic* value of the rest of nature over time. There are merely instrumental reasons that persons have for caring for the rest of nature; the most significant reason being securing human equality. Beyond these reasons, though, promoting the intrinsic value of the rest of nature will also be beneficial to the well-ordered society. Fostering persons in the well-ordered society to internalize the intrinsic value of the rest of nature will result in a more solidaristic, self-respecting, empathetic, and kind citizenry attuned to the plight of non-human animals and nature. If public education can promote the intrinsic value of the rest of nature, this process can further bolster Rawlsian instrumental values. For example, a citizenry that cares for nature intrinsically will be more likely to avoid ecologically destructive practices that lead to inequality of persons. This approach ultimately shows how these issues are not downstream concerns; instead, they come into play at the same place as the principles of justice.

One might object that it is not immediately clear why public education needs to aim at intrinsic value here—why not educate based on the instrumental value that the environment and animals bring about to humans?³⁵ In fact, it might be preferable, on a liberal picture, for a state to remain neutral on this topic. This objection points to an alternate approach this paper could take. If education focuses on instrumental value alone, we can still show how care for human justice involves care for the environment. However, I wish to maintain that *mere* instrumental value is not enough to foster the kind of solidaristic, self-respecting, empathetic, and kind citizenry I described in the previous paragraph. First, promoting mere instrumental value may not provide a strong enough pull to foster this kind of citizenry because of the temptation to focus our efforts on *offsetting* rather than addressing climate injustice. For example, we could imagine how a state might take up ecological side-efforts for the reason of securing human well-being. A state might

35 Thank you to an anonymous reviewer for raising this important objection.

plant trees to offset the ecological cost of factory farming—but ultimately, we are not addressing the core issue at hand. This kind of offsetting, based on securing instrumental value for human well-being, presents as a band-aid solution at best. Second, instrumental value might not generate the kind of *long-lasting* change needed to combat ongoing climate change. When it comes to the previously described band-aid solutions, we might find that once we have done what feels like *enough* to offset our practices, we return to bad habits. Finally, instrumental value is not fundamental or strong enough to combat climate crisis. Education based on intrinsic value encourages the growth of solidaristic and empathetic attitudes, rather than furthering the picture of the rest of nature as primarily for human consumption and enjoyment. Ultimately, for these reasons, it seems that education based on intrinsic value has a higher chance of fostering the right kind of citizenry and combating climate change in a long-lasting and sustained manner.

2.5. Rawlsian Anti-Capitalist Environmental Justice

An underlying thread has tied all of the elements in this paper together. It has become clear that the Rawlsian, well-ordered society must incorporate an anti-capitalist system concerned with environmental justice. At the start of this paper, I forwarded several instrumental reasons for the Rawlsian system to care about the rest of nature. Without this concern, the Rawlsian society struggles to be well-ordered at all. However, there is a deeper level in which the Rawlsian project must care about the rest of nature. This care is embedded in the principles of justice. Anyone who takes these principles seriously must acknowledge the importance of respect for animals and the environment intrinsically and instrumentally when it comes to impact on human justice. If we fail to do so, we will fail to appreciate the very *basis* of the principles of justice. Reasons for accepting this conclusion exist throughout the paper and overlap in meaningful ways with a rejection of capitalism. Ultimately, because unsustainable practices and capitalism are so tied up in each other and lead to widespread inequality, erosion of solidarity, and impact the distribution of the primary goods, the Rawlsian project must take on both problems at once. A Rawlsian institutional design project that accounts for anti-capitalist environmental justice will properly secure human justice. A well-ordered society without embedded care for the rest of nature will result in ecological crisis similar to the

level we face now. The well-ordered society must foster this care at the instrumental and intrinsic level. One important site for injecting this intrinsic care is through the institution of public education.

Conclusion

In this paper, I have argued that a Rawlsian institutional design project that does not fulfill the requirements of environmental and animal justice will struggle to create a well-ordered society. In particular, a lack of care for the rest of nature encourages unchecked ecological disaster that impacts the equality of persons, the distribution of burdens, stability, and the securing of solidarity. A Rawlsian well-ordered society that hopes to do well by the principles of justice must practice anti-capitalist environmental justice. The success of Rawlsian anti-capitalist environmental justice is best supported by (1) the imposition of Economic Democracy, (2) several ecological innovations, and (3) the promotion of the intrinsic value of the rest of nature through the institution of public education. This paper represents only a brief exploration of this topic. A more thorough analysis would examine multiple fronts of anti-capitalist environmental justice beyond reforming our current food systems. For example, more can be said about how over-extraction of resources and dependence on fossil fuels impacts the well-ordered society. However, I have shown how these issues are pressing, and both instrumentally and intrinsically Rawlsian.

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