

Citizenship, Egalitarianism and Global Justice*

Abstract:

Many of the foremost defenders of distributive egalitarianism hold that its scope should be limited to co-citizens. But this bracketing of distributive equality exclusively to citizens turns out to be very difficult to defend. Pressure is placed on it, for instance, when we recognise its vulnerability to ‘extension arguments’ which attempt to cast the net of egalitarian concern more widely. The paper rehearses those arguments and also examines some – ultimately unsuccessful – responses which ‘citizenship egalitarians’ might make. If it does turn out that citizenship egalitarianism cannot be defended, then two options are open to its adherents: to substantially modify that position in order to embrace at least some global egalitarian components, or to argue for a reorganisation of citizenship regimes in such a way that citizenship might properly track the subjects of egalitarian justice. Both are radical options. At the end of the paper, finally, I briefly consider one way in which an attenuated form of citizenship-egalitarianism might still be defended.

Keywords:

Equality; egalitarianism; global justice; citizenship; global citizenship.

Introduction

Many of the foremost defenders of distributive equality agree, despite a host of other differences, that the scope of egalitarian redistribution should be limited to co-citizens. Thomas Nagel (2005: 133) has recently suggested that egalitarian distributive duties arise because of the particular nature of state institutions. “Once the state exists, we are in a new moral situation, where the value of equality has purchase”, he claims, and “We are required to accord equal status to anyone with whom we are joined in a strong and coercively-imposed political community.” Ronald Dworkin (2000) has argued that equality is a virtue owed by sovereigns to their

citizens, rather than to any other category of persons, whilst in a rare point of agreement some prominent critics of luck-egalitarianism have also sought to explain the force and nature of egalitarian distributive duties by pointing to the links between equality and democratic citizenship (Anderson 1999, Levine 1998). John Rawls's arguments in *The Law of Peoples* (Rawls 1999) are of a similar character: the impetus towards distributive egalitarianism emanates from a conception of *citizens* as free and equal, and hence does not pertain across borders. Finally, David Miller (1999: 19) has suggested that whilst 'comparative' principles such as equality make sense when applied between fellow citizens, any valid principles of justice at the global level must be non-comparative in character.¹ On this kind of view, as Michael Blake (2001: 258) puts it, "relative" principles such as equality may be appropriate "at home", but only "absolute" principles (such as sufficientarian ones) are appropriate "abroad." The status of individuals as either citizens or non-citizens wholly determines the appropriateness of egalitarian redistribution. To make my own stake in this debate clear, I have also argued that a commitment to equal citizenship gives force and shape to egalitarianism (Armstrong 2006). At the same time, I have argued at various points for some form of global egalitarianism (see e.g. Armstrong 2009a). How might the two views be squared? Doesn't an egalitarian's focus on the significance of citizenship lead him or her firmly away from global egalitarianism?

The defining characteristic of what I will call, for the purposes of this paper, "citizenship-egalitarianism" is that distributive equality is owed exclusively to citizens *as citizens*, although citizens might to be sure have some other duties to outsiders, whether those are best understood as duties of (non-egalitarian) distributive justice or humanitarianism. In this paper I will try to cast doubt on citizenship egalitarianism as an enterprise. In section I, I will illustrate the pressure which can be placed on citizenship egalitarianism when we acknowledge the normative appeal of global egalitarianism, and will also, relatedly, emphasise the vulnerability of citizenship egalitarianism to 'extension arguments' which attempt to cast the net of egalitarian concern more widely. In section II, I will examine two potential responses, each of which attempts to defend citizenship egalitarianism from such challenges, either by leaning on a distinction between fundamental principles of justice and rules of regulation, or by emphasising the particularly pernicious effects of the inequalities which pertain between citizens. Neither of those responses, though, will turn out to be successful. In section III, I examine the two options which appear to be open to the

citizenship egalitarian: to substantially modify her position in such a way as to embrace at least some global egalitarian components, or to argue for a reorganisation of citizenship regimes in such a way that citizenship might properly track the subjects of egalitarian justice. I do not expect citizenship egalitarians to find either option palatable, although they do seem to me to exhaust the plausible options *if* we take the challenge levelled in section I seriously. In section IV, finally, I briefly consider one way in which an attenuated form of citizenship-egalitarianism might still be defended.

I. Citizenship-Egalitarianism versus Global Egalitarianism?

The cosmopolitan ‘moment’ in political theory notwithstanding, citizenship-egalitarianism is a very widely-adopted position. But despite its popularity, the restriction of egalitarian distributive duties to co-citizens alone is rather troubling. And it is not, in contrast to the views of other illustrious commentators I have just cited, a position I think likely to be defensible. Why might that position be a troubling, hard-to-defend one? I’ll briefly canvass three reasons, before turning to some further ‘extension arguments’ later on in this section:

First, although citizenship egalitarianism (at least as captured by Blake, or by Miller) eschews ‘comparative’ principles beyond the nation-state, there may be issues which impact on citizens of different communities where the language of “comparative” distributive justice nevertheless seems appropriate. Simon Caney (2003: 292), for one, argues that explicitly “comparative” issues abound in the contemporary international scene. At the level of the European Union, decisions are regularly made on the contours of common agricultural or fisheries policies as an inevitable result of which “comparative decisions are made about what size of the pie members are entitled to and what distributive criteria should be applied.” Lest we consider the EU in this sense exceptional, Caney reminds us that a variety of *global* institutions (such as the World Trade Organization) must also make decisions about how the benefits and burdens they create should be distributed. A further example would be the justice of climate change, where the suggestion that the capacity to sustainably pollute the atmosphere must be shared in a broadly egalitarian fashion has considerable intuitive appeal (Singer 2002).² For many it will seem plausible to claim that regardless of citizenship, any institution which governs the distributions of

benefits and burdens arising from economic association, for instance, owes those whom its actions affect equal consideration; thus Aaron James claims that “The basic moral demand that existing institutional and social structures treat those they affect in an equitable way generates real limits on socio-economic inequality across societies” (James 2006: 700; see also Hinsch 2001: 62-3).³ Raising these arguments is not supposed to settle the issue in favour of global egalitarianism, but it is supposed to show that drawing a tight connection between equality and citizenship (at least as currently understood; see Section III:B), seems not to capture the full range of egalitarian aspirations.

Second, it is questionable whether genuinely persuasive grounds for restricting equality exclusively to co-citizens have yet been produced. Arguments in favour of this restriction vary, but the most popular accounts claim that co-citizens are united in their subjection to a common system of coercion (see R. Miller 1998, Blake 2001, Nagel 2005, Mandle 2006, Risse 2006);⁴ or that they share bonds of reciprocity (Sangiovanni 2007) or cooperation (Barry 1982) that do not pertain beyond the ties between them. Unfortunately, there has been less clarity than we might like about whether these special relationships are supposed to be sufficient or necessary conditions for egalitarianism to become relevant. For even if we believe coercion or reciprocity to be *important* or necessary, are they really the *only* things that can trigger egalitarian duties? Further, I’ve argued elsewhere that relations of coercion or reciprocity are embodied in institutions which in fact *traverse* the boundaries of states (Armstrong 2009b). Perhaps as a result, some defenders of the coercion view, for instance, have tried to provide a much narrower account of what kind of coercion can trigger egalitarian duties (see e.g. Risse 2006). But here, I think, we run the risk that in describing more and more specifically exactly what the state *does*, we sacrifice wider normative plausibility. We risk, that is, producing increasingly arcane bases for the citizenship-egalitarian conclusions we are wedded to. And moving in the opposite direction - arguing that some *conjunction* of coercion, cooperation or identity might be key - produces its own distinct problems.⁵

Third, citizenship-egalitarianism seems to run into trouble policing its normative boundaries. For in reality, the *subjects* of coercion or reciprocity for instance are not well captured by the term ‘citizens.’ In every state there are, after all, individuals such as guest workers, tourists, and short-term or long-term refugees who may either share in their subjection to the coercive institutions of that state, or engage

in reciprocal activity to sustain, or respect, various institutions or public goods (see also Goodin 1988). Of course this concern with subjects might just be a different way of making the second point, though it does switch the focus from the relations that matter to the people who are wrapped up in them – a switch which can further illuminate the difficulties of policing the boundaries of citizenship. To my knowledge, the only citizenship-egalitarian who has paid any attention to this issue thus far is Andrea Sangiovanni (2007: 3-4). He argues accordingly that equality should be restricted to citizens *and residents*. But as I've shown elsewhere (Armstrong 2009b), that formulation does not help him, and in fact only sharpens the dilemma. Either we confine our attention to citizens, but in so doing we move further from the relationship which is supposed to unite them, but which turns out to do so imperfectly. Or we hold firm to the importance of that relationship, but acknowledge that the subjects of it are some category other than citizens. Either way defending citizenship-egalitarianism turns out to be a tricky business.

Extension arguments

One thought which reflection on these challenges might provoke is this: what if citizenship egalitarianism is simply a mistake? What if what motivates citizenship-egalitarians is in fact another, *underlying* ideal which properly understood will have broader salience than they have realised? Critics of statist positions on justice have certainly made “extension” arguments to this effect, claiming that the underlying impulses of some prominent egalitarian accounts should give rise to arguments with more global application. One such argument (which could be called the *brute luck extension argument*) suggests that, properly understood, what motivates accounts such as those of Rawls is the idea that morally arbitrary factors such as race or sex should not be allowed to affect the distribution of resources. The adequacy of this as an interpretation of Rawls, and as an organising principle for egalitarian thought, have been the topic of much discussion, but the challenge suggests that *if* race and sex are morally arbitrary in this sense, then so too must be nationality, and hence distribution should not be affected by the brute luck of one's country of birth (see e.g. Caney 2005). Whilst I think that the argument by extension is not strictly speaking complete (because it is not entirely clear how, and why, nationality should be seen as arbitrary

in just the same way as race or sex), it still has considerable rhetorical power (Armstrong 2010a).

Interestingly, even the arguments of critics of such “luck egalitarian” principles may be vulnerable to the slide into global egalitarianism. For instance, Elizabeth Anderson (1999) suggests that what egalitarians should really be concerned by is not the influence of “brute luck”, but the way in which domination and oppression distort relations between citizens. But if so, then why do the domination and oppression experienced by those outside of state borders not matter in the same way as what takes place inside them? Why, to put it bluntly, is it acceptable for relations between citizens and outsiders to be distorted by domination or oppression? We could mould this intuition into what could be called the *domination extension argument*: if we are concerned with the corrosive effects of distributive inequalities on self-respect, on the quality of social interaction or on the potential for political equality, for instance, then we might ask why such considerations should not apply beyond the state too. Thus Charles Beitz (2001: 105) suggests that a significant strand of egalitarian theory has challenged the “debilitating effects of material deprivation on self-respect and the capacity for self-direction.” The egalitarian objects to social relations “in which the advantaged exercise an unreasonably large degree of control over others” (for instance); but “if this is a legitimate grounds of complaint about inequality at the domestic level, then prima facie it seems equally so at the global level” (Beitz 2001: 106).⁶ This challenge is a powerful one. But if we accept either of these extension arguments - to the effect that the influence of brute luck on distribution, perhaps, or else domination, matter wherever they occur – then we are also led to abandon citizenship-egalitarianism.

We have an odd situation, then, whereby citizenship-egalitarianism is a widely-held position, but also often a poorly-defended one, with the arguments in its favour not obviously sufficing to establish the case. The position seems vulnerable to a kind of instability, whereby the more specific we get about why citizenship is important the more we run the risk of excluding some citizens from equality, whereas the broader the normative criterion we employ the wider the net is cast *beyond* the boundaries of actual citizenship. At the same time, globally speaking, the expansion of relations of reciprocity, and of coercive international institutions, is continuing apace. Restricting the duty of distributive equality to citizens of discrete states is likely going to become a more, rather than less difficult endeavour over time. As if

this were not enough, extension arguments can be made which claim that citizenship egalitarianism is really a mistaken enterprise, since what *ought* to be important to egalitarians (the struggle against the influence of brute luck, or against domination and oppression) does not cease to be important once we cross borders.

Although the difficulties facing citizenship egalitarianism are formidable, I only claim to have established that defending that position is a formidable task, rather than an insurmountable one. Perhaps successful arguments for citizenship-egalitarianism can be produced. The next section investigates two attempts to rehabilitate it. I suggest that both of them are ultimately unconvincing. But still, my account of possible arguments in favour for citizenship-egalitarianism is not exhaustive. For my present purposes, what I am interested in investigating is how citizenship-egalitarians might respond *if* their arguments prove enduringly unable to delineate citizens from non-citizens. Assuming – rather than demonstrating - that good arguments cannot be provided, where might citizenship-egalitarians stand? The arguments of Section III suggest that two possibilities will be left open to them. They are not likely to be very palatable to citizenship-egalitarians – or at least, they are unpalatable to various degrees – but it is not clear where else citizenship egalitarianism can turn for respite from the problems emphasised in section I. Section IV, though, concludes by re-considering the significance of institutions like citizenship from an egalitarian point of view, and examines one way in which an attenuated form of citizenship-egalitarianism might still be defended.

II. Rescuing Citizenship-Egalitarianism?

This section, as promised, investigates two attempts which could be made to rehabilitate citizenship egalitarianism, and defend it, in more or less its present form, against the challenges levelled in section I. The first appeals to a distinction between fundamental principles of justice and rules of regulation, arguing that whereas citizenship egalitarianism encounters problems at the first level, citizenship might still be a reasonable, pragmatic placeholder for the objects of egalitarian concern at the level of rules of regulation. The second emphasises the particularly pernicious effects of any inequalities between citizens, and argues that even if we ought to care about

inequalities more broadly, tackling those occurring between citizens should be a priority.

A) Fundamental Principles of Justice and Rules of Regulation

If the boundary problems mentioned above do indeed prove to be unavoidable in practice, one possible response to them would be to make recourse to a distinction between fundamental principles of justice and rules of regulation (Cohen 2003). It would be possible to argue that, whereas a given relation (such as reciprocity or coercion) is what matters at the level of ideal theory, when *implementing* principles of justice it is characteristically necessary to make rough-and-ready administrative decisions. Pure principles of justice tell us what is just. But they do not provide us with a full account of what we should *do* in particular circumstances, for implementing them purely might be unduly onerous or expensive when we confront facts about the real world. Rules of regulation, on the other hand, tell us how to structure our social and political world all-things-considered, and may point us towards quite different policies in practice (Goodin 1996). At the level of rules of regulation, egalitarian duties might appropriately be extended to all citizens, regardless of whether they meet the relevant criterion, on the basis that it might be too costly or difficult to tailor distribution more carefully to the “right” candidates. If so, then citizenship would be acting as a pragmatic place-holder for the subjects we would ideally like to extend distribution to. Reciprocity, or coercion, or nationality is what matters at the level of ideal theory, but citizenship, when all things are considered, is an appropriate and pragmatic measure for the range of egalitarian duties.

Defenders of the accounts under review have not explicitly described their principles as rules of regulation, or defended their positions on such an ostensibly all-things-considered basis. Sangiovanni (2007: 29-31), in fact, has been most clear that he would not, all-things-considered, extend equality to citizens who do not engage in relations of reciprocity. But such a move is at least theoretically open to them, and it is worth considering whether it might be successful in rescuing the attempt to restrict egalitarian duties to co-citizens. For the response to be successful, it would be necessary to provide compelling reasons why extending equality to (all and only) citizens would be preferable all-things-considered to any policy that extended equality

more purely on the basis of nationality, coercion or reciprocity. The “credit” side of the argument will be the more plausible: it might indeed serve justice better, all things considered, to extend equality to non-contributing or non-national citizens. The alternative might prove either unduly expensive, or unduly divisive. But what of the “debit” side of the argument? Can compelling all-things-considered reasons be provided for not extending equality to non-citizens who nonetheless do contribute reciprocally to the production of key collective goods, or who do fall within the purview of coercive trans-national or global institutions?

Making this argument successfully appears to be a much taller order. Take a coercion-based account, for instance. Such an account would have to say that non-citizens whose life-chances *are* significantly affected by the actions and policies of political institutions are not owed duties of equality by those institutions – because although they are coerced, granting equality to citizens is neater and more practical. But the cost (or “debit”) here seems hard to justify. In fact the same implication also follows from reciprocity- or nationality-based accounts. If reciprocity or nationality are considered to be *necessary* conditions for equality to apply, then adherents must deny that considerations of distributive equality can be triggered beyond the state by *any* of the characteristics of the contemporary world.⁷ By the same token, any actual reciprocal contribution to systems of economic production, distribution and exchange must be denied *any* egalitarian significance by proponents of *each* of the accounts under inspection. Each of the three accounts must assert, further, that when *existing* global institutions divide up the benefits and burdens of the (albeit limited) global cooperation that does pertain in the contemporary world, or the burdens of dealing with global problems such as climate change for that matter, egalitarian distributive principles should play *no* part in our moral reasoning. This, I would suggest, is not morally plausible even all-things-considered. So citizenship egalitarianism does not appear to possess sound credentials even if it is reformulated as a rule of regulation.

B) The Special Dangers of Domestic Inequalities

It might be suggested that even if some global inequalities appear morally troubling, we are justified in focusing our energies on alleviating the inequalities between citizens. Perhaps these inequalities have pernicious effects which are not present in

the global case. One such argument would suggest that, empirically speaking, distributive inequalities within states are likely to undermine *self-respect* in a way that distributive inequalities between states do not (Bertram 2006: 333). Perhaps, on witnessing large inequalities between myself and my fellow citizens, my self-respect is likely to suffer in a way in which it would not if I was instead surveying the large inequalities between myself and foreigners. If citizens take fellow-citizens as their ‘reference group’ for comparing standards of living, then inter-citizen inequalities might be damaging in a way in which global inequalities are not.

Is it the case that citizens of poorer states do not make the link between their own wealth and status and that of the more privileged, globally speaking? John Rawls suggested precisely this in *A Theory of Justice*, claiming that we tend to compare ourselves with those we interact with, and that this might make us prepared to accept inequalities we would otherwise find intolerable (Rawls 1971; 537).⁸ On the global scale, Rawls (1999: 114) did admit that damage to self-respect would (if justified) provide a good argument against some global inequalities – but claimed that it did *not* provide such an argument. However, the meaning of the parenthetical clause remains rather vague. It is not clear whether Rawls is denying – or is able to deny – that damage to self-respect *does* occur as a result of global inequalities. It seems, rather, that he believes that those whose self-respect is damaged by global inequalities *ought not* to make the relevant comparisons, or that those comparisons are in some sense unreasonable. Citizens of poorer countries, perhaps, ought to adapt themselves to the inequalities of the world, and stop paying attention to the affluence of developed countries. But why ought they? If there is any such duty, a good argument for it has not yet been supplied. If self-respect is what matters then seems at least as plausible to suggest that the current global order displays extremes of inequality which as Charles Beitz (2001: 105) puts it may *also* be inconsistent, for many in the “developing world”, “with a sense of oneself as an active agent, capable of taking effective command of the conduct of one’s life.”

Chris Bertram (2005) has provided a rather different argument for why those concerned about the maintenance of self-respect should nevertheless be sceptical of global egalitarianism. Bertram suggests that we actually have a strong reason to be *wary* of global egalitarianism. Because of their huge scale, he suggests, the kinds of institutions which would be necessary to achieve the goals of global egalitarian could hardly be democratic in nature. In fact, they would likely be unwieldy and

unresponsive to the desires of individual citizens.⁹ In the face of the gulf that would inevitably arise between local citizens and global political institutions, people could not maintain their own self-respect as people directing their own lives to a reasonable degree (Bertram 2005: 77, 83). Instead their lives would be subject to the whims of a set of global institutions which they could scarcely identify with their own beliefs and preferences.

This is an important objection, but it should be clear that Bertram's point counts as a (partial) corrective to some forms of global egalitarianism but not to others. For instance, whilst it could have some bearing for inter-personal egalitarian principles such as global equality of opportunity (see e.g. Caney 2006, Moellendorf 2006a) *if* it were supposed that such principles required hugely powerful global institutions, it is not clear how it could be used to object to the egalitarian restructuring of the existing global institutional order, such as to more fairly distribute the benefits and burdens arising from global interdependence. To the contrary, many global egalitarians will place emphasis on democratising the global institutional architecture at the same time as making it more egalitarian in nature: the drive to eradicate bargaining inequalities between rich and poor states clearly serves both goals simultaneously, and cannot be said to do unreasonable damage to self-respect. As Allen Buchanan has argued, many states might prefer egalitarian principles to govern the global institutional order precisely for the kinds of reason suggested by Bertram. Firstly, they might demand a global institutional order that justly distributed the benefits and burdens arising from interdependence, since otherwise they would not be able to preserve their own sense of effective self-determination: as Buchanan puts it, any given state "will be concerned to ensure that the global basic structure's distributional effects do not impede [that] society's capacity to achieve its own conception of justice or of the good." Secondly, states might opt for a "global basic structure that would at least rule out those inequalities among peoples that are incompatible with preserving the social bases of self-respect for all peoples". For Buchanan, this commitment to an egalitarian basic structure does not impinge on the capacity for internal self-determination, interpreted as the ability to pursue whatever distributive scheme fits within one's "culture" – in fact it better secures it (Buchanan 2000: 708, 709).¹⁰ If that is right, then the opposition between self-respect and global egalitarianism is a false one, and Bertram's argument does not look likely to succeed.

Another version of the claim that inequalities between citizens are especially pernicious is available, though. Andrew Altman and Christopher Heath Wellman reject the luck egalitarian vision and defend instead Elizabeth Anderson's 'relational' view of equality. This view suggests that the impulse of the egalitarian is to drive out the potential for oppression and domination, rather than the influence of brute luck (as they put it, 'it is the existence of oppression which is morally crucial.' Altman and Wellman 2009: 133). But this view, Altman and Wellman claim, dictates that we focus on the relations between people who share an individual community – in other words, co-citizens. As they put it, because citizens share a community, 'they are not only aware that others are faring considerably better/worse, they occupy relationships that are affected by these inequalities' (Altman and Wellman 2009: 131).

But here we have not one but two *non sequiturs*. First, Altman and Wellman are claiming that *since* citizens share a community, they (and presumably only they) are *aware* of inequalities. But this is false: there is abundant empirical information about global inequalities, as well as a rapidly globalizing mass media, and we have no reason to suppose that inhabitants of developing countries are unaware that people in developing countries are generally much better off than them. We might try to present an argument about why they should not *care* about that (see above), but it is not yet clear what that argument would be, and it is certainly different to the argument Altman and Wellman appear to be leaning upon. Second, they are claiming that *since* citizens share a community, they are *affected* by inequalities. The meaning is not entirely clear here, but their account appears to focus on the way in which sharing a community with someone exposes you to oppression from them in a way which does not apply to outsiders. As such, 'If there is no relationship...then, even if there is a large inequality, the most important egalitarian concern has no foothold' (Altman and Wellman 2009: 132). This latter claim, though, is asking us to equate the relationship of citizenship with the rather different relationship of exposure to the possibility of oppression. It is not at all clear why we should equate those two things. We could, for instance, as Altman and Wellman's own account makes clear, abuse the poverty of people in the developing country in order to expose them to dangerous or inhumane working conditions, and in so doing oppress them. In fact the authors concede that 'robust' relationships 'are emerging all over the globe,' but maintain that inequalities among foreigners are 'not nearly as morally significant' as those between citizens (Altman and Wellman 2009: 136).

Even if their account *was* successful in establishing that citizenship-egalitarians may be justified in devoting their primary attention to the oppression that afflicts relationships between citizens – perhaps because there is more of it, or it is more corrosive – that would not provide grounds for rejecting global egalitarianism. Even if it were true that there is more potential for oppression in the domestic case, the difference would only be one of degree. If their claim is that egalitarians are essentially concerned with oppression, then an argument against global egalitarianism would only be successful if they established that oppression just does not occur at all across borders – and they have not supplied an argument for that contention. In the absence of such an argument, Altman and Wellman are able to tell us that certain inequalities are especially *pressing*, but they must allow that at least some global inequalities matter too. Their argument, as such, cannot serve as a rejection of global egalitarianism.

III. Options for the Citizenship-Egalitarian

Thus far, it has been suggested that citizenship-egalitarianism encounters serious “boundary problems.” The accounts discussed tend to experience the same general kind of problem: on any strong view of the normatively-key relationship in question, equality will not be owed to citizens as citizens at all (but in fact, only to some citizens). On a weak view of the relationship in question, equality is going to be owed to at least *some* non-citizens. Citizenship egalitarianism is also vulnerable to compelling extension arguments which again try to throw the net of egalitarian concern more widely. Unless these problems are categorised as essentially either trivial or contingent – and I have argued that they should not be – then a response is required. In this third section, I shall argue that the citizenship-egalitarian must either substantially *modify* her citizenship-egalitarianism by incorporating non-citizenship-regarding egalitarian principles, or argue for a major *reorganisation* of contemporary citizenship practices. In Section IV, the final section, I will also go on to argue that, if citizenship-egalitarians want to hold firm to their positions nevertheless, they would benefit from distinguishing two ways in which institutions (such as citizenship) might be important from an egalitarian point of view.

A) *Equality with and without Citizenship*

If there do turn out to be good reasons for arguing that the relations between citizens should be given some prominence within egalitarian accounts, then a second option is to attempt to render this compatible with global egalitarianism. Strictly speaking, this option requires us to abandon citizenship-egalitarianism, if we define that formally as the claim that egalitarian distributive duties are *only* owed to co-citizens. But an element of citizenship egalitarianism is preserved, insofar as the resulting position can still claim that *some* egalitarian duties are only ever owed between citizens as citizens. This option, in effect, suggests that citizenship-egalitarians should become *pluralists* about the foundations of equality. They should accept that egalitarianism is a complex set of commitments, some of which will be captured by the ideal of equal citizenship, perhaps, and some of which will extend beyond that ideal.

The resulting pluralism could obviously play out in a variety of ways. For instance one could say that the states (and via them, citizens) of the world need to accept collective responsibility for the nature of the global system of trade, and ensure that it treats those it affects equally, but still maintain that co-citizens have to recognise *additional* “requirements of justice” towards one another on account of the particularly dense constraints they place on one another. If we were convinced by this, we would still expect a form of egalitarianism to apply to all *qua* individuals, but would also allow and expect that to be supplemented by citizenship-regarding egalitarian principles. At the level of ideal theory at least this may not be accepted by those who argue for strictly equal opportunities for all individuals, but other global egalitarians are less troubled by the idea that different forms of egalitarianism might apply in different contexts. Thus Darrell Moellendorf (2006b: 615) has briefly suggested that “The distributive demands of compatriots derive from a common political association, those of noncompatriots from the global economic association. The bases and (most likely) the ideals of equality are different.”¹¹ The devil is undoubtedly in the detail, but from an institutionalist perspective at least the idea that different institutional settings motivate different forms of egalitarianism, or give reasons for the egalitarian distribution of different kinds of goods or opportunities, cannot be ruled out.

This would represent an important reformulation of the citizenship egalitarian project. Although some theorists (such as Nagel) want to argue that beyond the state we only owe duties of humanitarian assistance aimed at addressing serious deficits in human rights, the standard citizenship egalitarian position holds that some non-egalitarian but nevertheless distributive principles are valid beyond the level of the state. These are usually held to be sufficientarian in character.¹² A pluralist global egalitarian, though, could carve out divergent standards of distributive justice at the domestic and global levels, but nevertheless provide a broadly egalitarian specification, and justification, for each of them. Other versions of a pluralist global egalitarianism have been implied by Ayelet Banai (Banai 2010), and by Michael Blake and Matthias Risse (2009). On Blake and Risse's account, an egalitarian version of common original ownership of the earth operates as a constraint on, for example, state immigration policy. Of course in a sense these pluralist accounts only defer, or partially defuse, the problems encountered by citizenship egalitarianism, insofar as they would still need a justification for restricting some egalitarian principles to the domestic level. But there are signs that erstwhile global egalitarians too are content to accept such a variegated picture of justice, so long as equality is acknowledged to play an important role at the global level.¹³

B) Reorganizing Citizenship

It has been suggested both that our egalitarian intuitions extend beyond the borders of individual states, and that the standard reasons given for citizenship-egalitarianism might be taken to justify a broader extension of distributive egalitarianism than its adherents have recognised. If this is the case, a second option open to the citizenship-egalitarian is to hold firm to the claim that egalitarian duties are owed exclusively to citizens, but argue for a revision of current citizenship practices. This builds on the thought that although the contemporary legal order of citizenship does not neatly delineate those people we owe equality to from those we do not, an alternative citizenship regime might. There is no intrinsic reason, after all, why the citizenship-egalitarian is obliged to accept the contemporary boundaries of citizenship regimes, which have often been imposed with little regard for the complexities of identity and

belonging,¹⁴ and fail to neatly track the human relationships that trigger egalitarian duties (such as, putatively, reciprocity or coercion). Indeed an emphasis on the normative significance of citizenship generally is separate from, and does not settle, questions about the proper boundaries of citizenship.

But what form might a revised citizenship regime take? This depends in large part on our view of what the boundaries of citizenship are meant to track. To give a few examples, individuals might properly stand together as co-citizens in cases where they share a *nationality*, where they are *affected* by the same political institutions (or decisions), or perhaps when they *choose* to recognise themselves as co-citizens. In recent years there have been a variety of arguments for the necessity of either trans-national or global regimes of citizenship.¹⁵ There has also been extensive disagreement about whether a putative trans-national or global citizenship regime would augment or replace existing nation-state based citizenship regimes – or whether such citizenship regimes would be “transformative” or “additive.”

There are (at least) two possible moves here: a first would be to argue for a global citizenship regime as a replacement of all existing regimes. Some egalitarians have expressed scepticism about whether a move towards global citizenship is either possible or desirable (see e.g. Miller 2000), but regardless of its potential problems it would represent, at the theoretical level, a neat sidestepping of citizenship-egalitarianism’s boundary problems: egalitarians duties would be owed to all, and they would be owed exclusively to citizens as citizens.

On the second move, the citizenship-egalitarian could remind us that some form of “additive” trans-national citizenship looks like becoming a reality, at least for Europeans. If it makes sense to use the term “citizenship” to refer to a multi-layered system of rights and responsibilities (see e.g. Held 1999), there is no obvious reason why different levels of citizenship should not motivate different forms of egalitarian redistribution. For an institutionalist, any structure governing the distribution of benefits and burdens between a given set of citizens might plausibly owe equal respect to those citizens, and this in turn may generate at least an initial presumption in favour of egalitarianism in both procedures and substantive distributive principles (Moellendorf 2006a). Under a regime of multi-level citizenship, different institutional structures may govern the distribution of different goods (or else determine different policy areas), and hence the substantive content of egalitarian practice would be somewhat variegated. Assuming that some citizens will fall subject to the decisions of

some institutions and not others, different citizens could be expected to have different sets of rights and responsibilities. The challenge, if this second option were to be pursued by the citizenship-egalitarian, would be to ensure that all of our egalitarian entitlements, whether local or global, were simultaneously entitlements of citizenship. That would be far simpler if we saw global citizenship as a replacement for, rather than an addition to, current citizenship regimes. But the latter view enjoys much greater prospects of empirical success.

IV. Conclusions

Allow me to sum up the argument so far. This paper has been sowing suspicion about the likelihood of committed citizenship-egalitarians being able to defend the core of their position, which is that equality is owed exclusively to fellow citizens. This citizenship-egalitarian position is open to a series of objections, which suggest that the relations which are supposed to make citizens ‘special,’ and hence deserving of egalitarians’ attention, turn out not to reliably delineate citizens from non-citizens at all. I have suggested, further, that this boundary problem can not plausibly be defined away as a mere problem of implementation. I have also suggested that it accords with our intuition that equality is owed to at least some non-citizens at least some of the time.

Perhaps citizenship-egalitarians have been mistaken all along, and there is nothing special about citizens after all. Or perhaps equality between citizens does deserve our (non-exclusive) attention, precisely because of the specific ways in which it is vulnerable. What is clear is that, if the challenge of section I stands, and we still want to hold on to the idea that there is anything special about citizens, then we need to either supplement our citizenship-egalitarianism with at least some egalitarian principles of global scope, or else argue for a systematic restructuring of citizenship practices so that those to whom we owe equality are re-imagined as citizens. Either way, the scope of egalitarian principles turns out to be (at least partly) global, rather than purely local.

But it might be that, in arguing for the normative significance of citizenship, we have been setting our sights too high all along. Elsewhere, I have suggested that there are two ways in which institutions – such as the institution of citizenship –

might matter from an egalitarian point of view (Armstrong 2011). On the first view, the presence or absence of relations such as citizenship determines the *scope* of egalitarianism, so that we ought *only* be concerned about inequalities when they occur between co-participants in some kind of relationship like citizenship. It should be clear by now that I find that position implausible, at least on any simple version. But a second possibility – which might make an accommodation between citizenship, equality and global justice much more likely – would hold that the presence of institutions such as citizenship does not determine the scope of egalitarian principles, but might (help) determine the *weight* of our objection to inequalities. The fact that a given inequality was institutionally imposed – for instance, that citizens imposed it on one another – might plausibly give an *additional* reason for being suspicious about it, by contrast to one which was not imposed by anyone. And that consideration will play a role in determining whether we ought to accept it, all things considered. This is not to say that this consideration will always be normatively decisive, as it is in Nagel’s recent account, rendering all (or all ‘social’) inequalities between citizens as unjust, and all inequalities between citizens and others not unjust (see Nagel 1997). That would be a wholly unwarranted conclusion, not least since many of the extra-state inequalities which characterise the contemporary world are especially egregious, and affect so many people. But it is to say that citizenship might sometimes, in some cases, tip the balance against accepting a given inequality which we would otherwise be prepared to accept, all things considered. That position is much weaker than the arguments of Rawls, Miller, Nagel, Dworkin et al. But ultimately, it might turn out to be more defensible. If we were to make such an argument, however, we would have abandoned the argument that the boundaries of citizenship define the scope of egalitarianism.

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¹ Miller (1995) also, famously, argues that social justice can be confined to co-nationals. I won’t consider the relationship between the two arguments here.

² For a broader argument for an equal per-capita entitlement to ‘ecological space’, see Hayward (2007). In fact there are good reasons for rejecting such a simple principle in favour of a more ‘holistic’ principle which governs (at least) all of our ecological impacts, both positive and negative. But this would be to reject one global egalitarian principle for another.

³ A commitment to equal respect does not, of course, automatically require substantive distributive egalitarianism. For Darrel Moellendorf (2006a: 304), though, interpreting the ideal of equal respect to suggest that rules and institutions must be acceptable by all then generates a presumption towards distributive egalitarianism, which is defeasible if, and only if, all can reasonably accept departures from equality. The assumption shared by Hinsch, James and Moellendorf is that many of the global distributive inequalities that characterise the contemporary world would not pass this test.

⁴ Dworkin’s view that equality is the special virtue of sovereigns also appears to fall into this category of argument; Dworkin (2000).

⁵ David Miller (2009) pursues this strategy. The problem is that Miller does not specify whether all of these relationships need to be present for equality to be relevant (which would have the implication that many fellow-citizens did not owe equality to each other), or merely one or two of them (which would have the opposite implication, and cast the net of equality beyond the state).

⁶ Strictly speaking Beitz considers this objection as being external to egalitarianism, whereas Anderson will more likely consider it internal to her egalitarianism.

⁷ This is probably not true of Matthias Risse’s account, since he both accepts that some form of coercion extends globally, and also wants to suggest further ‘grounds of justice’ (such as common ownership of the earth) that will have globally redistributive implications. Thus although Risse considers that there is something normatively special about the state, he does not appear to close the door firmly against global egalitarianism. See section III A).

⁸ David Miller (2007: 77-8) presents a similar argument against using a concern with self-respect to condemn global inequalities.

⁹ This reprises, in a sense, some of Kant’s worries about the dangers of a world state. See Kant ((1795) 1970).

¹⁰ For more on the potentially positive relationship between global egalitarianism and national self-determination, see Armstrong (2010b).

¹¹ Kok-Chor Tan (2006) also implies that a ‘thin’ global egalitarianism (whereby one discharges one’s general duties to support a just global basic structure) leaves space for additional special duties towards co-citizens, some of which, by extension, may be egalitarian in character.

¹² Thus for instance David Miller admits in some circumstances duties of justice to help meet basic human rights in other countries. Rawls is not especially clear on whether his Duty of Assistance is a duty of justice or not, but many of his supporters believe that it is, and Rawls accepts that it could be functionally equivalent to a sufficientarian principle of global distributive justice such as Thomas Pogge’s Global Resources Dividend. See Armstrong (2009a).

¹³ The goal of Tan’s arguments in *Justice Without Borders*, of course, was to render an egalitarian conception of global justice compatible with special duties (and, presumably, more demanding distributive standards) between compatriots. Caney has at times concentrated his attention (perhaps for merely strategic reasons) on defending a ‘moderate’ cosmopolitan position which would argue for the extension of some distributive principles to the global level, but nevertheless leave room for local variation. See Tan (2005); see also Caney, (2002).

¹⁴ It is notable that Sangiovanni and Nagel do not address the issue of the legitimacy of existing citizenship regimes. Option B might be expected to be the most palatable option for defenders of reciprocity- or coercion-based accounts – though I do not expect them to find it particularly appealing.

¹⁵ For critical overviews of some arguments for global citizenship, see e.g. Stoker, Armstrong et al. (2010), chapter 7; or Mason (2009).

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