BRAVE NEW WORLD
2022

Manchester Centre for Political Theory (MANCEPT)

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Schedule

All talks on both days take place in the Boardroom, 2nd floor Arthur Lewis Building, The University of Manchester, Manchester, M13 9PL
Refreshments will be served in the reception area outside the room.

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"Praise, Oppression, and Practice-dependent theories of moral responsibility"

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Dennis Pirdzuns

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Break

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Panel 2: The Responsibilities of Citizens and States
Carline Klijnman
Zara Goldstone

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(2 Tony Wilson Pl, Manchester M15 4FN)

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Paula Keller

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Elaine Yim

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The Republican Concern with Domination

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Opening Keynote

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Praise, Oppression, and Practice-dependent theories of moral responsibility.

Jules Holroyd

The University of Sheffield

Since P.F. Strawson's 'Freedom and Resentment', *practice-dependent* theories of moral responsibility have teased out conditions for moral responsibility by scrutinising our practices of holding each other morally responsible (Hutchinson et al 2018). In this paper, I argue that a challenge faces these accounts: that our practices are systematically distorted by oppressive norms. I focus specifically on attributions of praise, a largely overlooked aspect of our practices of attributing responsibility. I tease out the implications for theory, and propose some supplementary norms for both theorising, and engaging in practices, of attributing praise.

P.F. Strawson's influential work, 'Freedom and Resentment' (1974) can be thought to mark a 'social turn' in theorising about, and attempting to justify, our practices of holding each other morally responsible, and in attributing praise and blame. Following Strawson, a rich seam of work on moral responsibility is now concerned with articulating and justifying a socialised conception of moral responsibility. Characteristic of these approaches, write Hutchinson et al (2018), is that 'we identify what it means for an agent to be responsible by examining the practices under which we hold agents responsible … Strawson [and those influenced by his work] therefore develop a *practice-dependent* theory of moral responsibility' (2018, 4).

Strawson remarks on the potential 'seamy side' of our practices, but dismisses such concerns as matters of 'comparatively minor importance' (1974, 26). This is not so, I argue: oppressive gender, race, class and ableist norms (inter alia) all affect whether and when individuals are held morally responsible. This can be vividly seen by examining practices of attributing praise, instances

of which are shaped by stereotyped expectations and oppressive norms. Practice-dependent theories of moral responsibility face an - as yet unmet - challenge in addressing themselves to these oppressive features of our practices.

The challenges depend on exactly what the relationship is between theory and practice. I draw on the work of Victoria McGeer (2019) in teasing out three different ways in which we might understand the relationship between practices as we find them, and our theories of moral responsibility. Each view faces different challenges, depending on how this relationship is construed. I argue that each approach requires supplementary norms: such that as well as being guided by backward-looking norms (to do with moral worthiness) and forward-looking norms (to do with cultivating agency), our practices should also be supplemented by a norm to challenge oppression. I locate this view in relation to two recent approaches to moral responsibility: Shoemaker's (2017) conventionalism, and Ciurria's radical ameliorativism (2019).

Closing Keynote

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The Republican Concern with Domination

Dorothea Gädeke

Utrecht University

The core contribution that the republican revival has made to contemporary political theory is, arguably, having placed the concern with domination centre-stage. However, a concern with domination is not exclusive to the republican tradition of political thought. For instance, anarchism or feminism also appeal to this concept. What is distinctive about the republican concern with domination is that it takes domination to describe asymmetric relations of power, which make some dependent on the will of others and thus deny them the equal status as free persons.

Yet, this status-based core of the republican concern with domination has been, or so I will argue, curiously neglected in contemporary republican theorizing. As I will show, both the earlier, largely freedom-based debates on the conception of domination as well as the more recent power-based approaches fail to fully grasp it. I argue that this neglect is rooted in a conceptual ambivalence of current republican theories of domination that jeopardize both, their distinctiveness and their social analytical value. And I will show how this can be remedied by reconceiving domination as a structurally constituted form of power.

Panel 1: Harm and Justice

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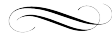
Talia Shoval

The University of Edinburgh

"Is Nature a Noncombatant? On the Non-Human Casualties of Warfare and the Concept of Environmental Immunity"

Dennis Pirdzuns

The University of Manchester

"The Problem of Enough"

Is Nature a Noncombatant? On the Non-Human Casualties of Warfare and the Concept of Environmental Immunity

Talia Shoval

The University of Edinburgh

This paper considers the idea of granting immunity from conflict-related harm to nature and nonhumans. War and armed conflict are inherently destructive activities, often resulting in considerable ecological damage and injury to humans and nonhumans alike (Machlis and Hanson 2008). Nonetheless, security concerns typically overshadow ecological considerations, thereby excluding the extra-human world from the sphere of concern.

While civilians, along with their property, are morally and legally protected from intentional direct harm by the requirement of discrimination and noncombatant immunity (Walzer 2006, 144-45; Geneva Convention, 1977, Protocol I, Art. 51), the other-than-human world has yet to receive such defence. This lacuna is apparent in Just War Theory, the most prominent theory of the ethics of war and the philosophical foundation for the modern laws of war.

To date, only a few scholars have touched on the idea of granting wartime protections to the nonhuman environment, either for the preservation of endangered species (Drucker 1989) or the protection of humans' vested interests in the Earth (Hedahl et al. 2017; Reichberg and Syse 2000). Others have sought to protect the interests of nonhuman animals in wartime (Milburn and Goozen 2020). Expanding on these accounts, this paper explores the prospects of incorporating environmental protection duties to jus in bello ('justice in warfare'), one of the three accepted frameworks in Just War Theory.

The central argument is that if noncombatants and their artefacts are morally shielded from the adverse impacts of warfare, there is no reason to

preclude nature and nonhumans from direct protection. Therefore, I advance a new, analytically free-standing criterion of just warfare, which I call 'environmental immunity'. A critical, nonanthropocentric normative approach of environmental ethics is used to interrogate the meaning and implications of the proposed criterion.

The analysis critically engages with the previous proposal to apply standard noncombatant immunity to the nonhuman environment based on its analogy to human noncombatants and artworks (Drucker, 1989). By contrast, I suggest that the nonhuman world deserves a special kind of protection tailor-made for its unique features. This can only be expressed by a distinct criterion of immunity.

This proposal has potentially far-reaching implications for the theory and practice of just war-making, as all military activities are restricted not only by considerations of human rights and national sovereignty but also nonhuman interests and ecological integrity. In short, restraining the environmental impact of warfare is an essential development to Just War thinking, particularly in the context of our ongoing ecological crisis.

The Problem of Enough

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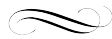
Dennis Pirdzuns

The University of Manchester

The notion or 'doctrine' of sufficiency in theories of distributive justice states that justice demands first and foremost that all have *enough* of what is considered valuable. Most often, this is presented as (better) alternative to other approaches in distributive justice, like those of equality, utility, or priority to the worse off. Advocates of these latter accounts have, however, criticised the notion of sufficiency for its arbitrariness and ambiguity. This *Indeterminacy Objection* proves forceful as it challenges sufficiency's defining feature: the level of 'enough. If 'enough' cannot be defined in a non-arbitrary and unambiguous way, the plausibility of sufficiency-focussed approaches, indeed, seems highly questionable. This *Problem of Enough* describes the question: '*what is enough?*'. On first sight, this might be understood as a question for the '*currency*' of justice, meaning the kind of good considered valuable. From this perspective the question could be re-phrased as '*enough of what?*'. But all theories of justice need to provide a plausible answer to this kind of question, so this cannot be the defining problem for sufficiency approaches. The question could also be '*how much is enough?*', asking for a precise amount of goods considered to be sufficient. Without a precise amount, a level of enough remains vague. *Vagueness*, however, is not a logical problem, as an amount can be approximated. Critics rather question the *existence* of something to be approximated in the first place. This can be expressed in the question: '*is there enough?*'. While this does aim at the core concept of sufficiency approaches, on its own it begs the question: proponents of sufficiency could simply pick a level and insist on it being enough. Yet, critics could counter this by asking: '*why is it enough?*' And this does in fact turn out to be one side of the 'Problem of Enough'. Without plausible reasons for why an amount is deemed sufficient, a distribution based on sufficiency remains *arbitrary*. The other side of the problem is that 'enough' often refers to a different level than 'not enough', like

'having enough money' and 'having not enough money'. The former seems to suggest affluence while the latter suggests poverty. Not clarifying this leaves the level of sufficiency *ambiguous*, raising the question: '*enough for what?*'. Both sides of the Problem of Enough can only be solved by providing plausible reasons and clarification as to what determines sufficiency. Nine different attempts at such a solution can be identified in the literature: three failing attempts in form of *deflection*, *value pluralism* and *threshold pluralism*; three quantitative attempts, namely *diminishing values*, *intersecting values* and *restricted values*; as well as three qualitative attempts, which are *satiable values*, *objectively limited values*, and lastly *discontinuous values*. To solve the Indeterminacy Objection, any number of the latter six approaches can be chosen to support a sufficiency principle in distributive justice.

Panel 2: The Responsibilities of Citizens and States

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Carline Klijnman

Università degli Studi di Genova

"Procedural Epistemic Democracy and Virtue-Based Epistemic Responsibilities"

Zara Goldstone

University College London

"Colonialism, Relational Inequality and Migration"

Procedural Epistemic Democracy and Virtue-Based Epistemic Responsibilities

Carline Klijnman

Università degli Studi di Genova

Epistemic democrats claim that democratic decision-making holds epistemic values, and are typically instrumentalists (they value the epistemic quality of democratic outcomes). Procedural views on legitimacy (that value democracy for intrinsic values) are excluded from discussions regarding epistemic responsibilities of citizens, as it is assumed that values such as fairness render such responsibilities irrelevant.

In this paper, I will argue that epistemic democracy has tended to occlude two areas of conceptual space that are well worth considering:

i) **The idea that conceptions of citizens' epistemic competence can be virtue-based.**

>   Prominent in the literature are what I call 'belief-based political epistemic responsibilities' (BPERs), e.g. information gathering and possessing certain political facts. However, being an epistemically responsible citizen seems to involve, additionally, and perhaps more fundamentally, having a certain epistemic character or attitude towards political inquiry. Arguably, evaluations of epistemic responsibility of democratic citizens should not merely be concerned with what citizens know, but also with what kind of knower they are. This move mirrors a recent shift from belief-based to virtue-based epistemology. Incidentally, epistemic virtues tend to be knowledge-producing, whilst epistemic vices typically get in the way of knowledge acquisition. (Instrumentalist) epistemic democrats will thus do well to embrace the notion of 'virtue-based political epistemic responsibilities' (VPERs).

ii) **The possibility that procedural democratic values can generate (virtue-based) political epistemic responsibilities for democratic citizens.**

Most epistemic democrats assume a consequentialist, veristic social epistemology, which evaluates a social epistemic practice according to its outcomes, i.e. whether it increases true beliefs or 'correct' outcomes. Granted, it is difficult to conceive of procedural values generating such epistemic normativity. However, epistemic benefits of democracy needn't necessarily be understood in veristic terms. For example, Fabienne Peter's 'Pure Epistemic Proceduralism' is a view on democratic legitimacy that employs a procedural social epistemology, taken from Helen Longino. Procedural social epistemology evaluates social epistemic practices not according to their outcomes, but rather, according to the conditions under which the procedure takes place (e.g. whether it includes venues for uptake of criticism or opportunities to detect background assumptions). These conditions might not be able to generate BPERs, but they can generate VPERs. After all, several epistemic vices tend to undermine these conditions for inquiry (e.g. testimonial injustice prevents the detection of social background assumptions). Pure epistemic proceduralism is thus an example of a proceduralist account that provides an epistemically normative basis for generating VPERs, without instrumentalist reference to a procedure-independent standard.

Colonialism, Relational Inequality and Migration

Zara Goldstone

University College London

I argue that former colonising states should offer migration rights to people from their former colonies as a means of establishing relations of equality. To make the argument, I commence by claiming that relational inequality, hierarchies that assert the inferiority of some and the superiority of others, shaped relations between colonisers and their colonies. I then argue that even today people from former colonising states relate as unequal to people from their former colonies. Relational inequality is morally objectionable, involving self-respect harms to those related to as inferior and intrinsic wrongs. Therefore, the relational inequality that persists between people in former colonies and their former colonisers ought to be redressed, replaced by relations of equality, with the responsibility to redress falling primarily upon those relating as unequal.

I then propose two ways in which relational equality could be realised by former colonising states offering migration rights to people from their former colonies. Firstly, the offer of migration rights would signal to people from former colonies that at least some of those that previously related to them as superior, including those politicians that opened the borders and any citizens that support the open border policy, now affirm their moral worth, to the extent that they value the prospect of living alongside them. Secondly, the actual migration of some people from former colonies to their former colonising state would significantly help to eliminate any persisting prejudicial attitudes held by citizens in former colonising states. In social science, 'contact theory' holds that when members of minority and majority groups interact under the right conditions, any unequal treatment or regard of the minority group by the majority group over time is replaced by respectful behaviour and attitudes. Further, members of the majority group come to respect even those members of the minority group that they did not have direct contact with, as people generalise positive interactions with specific people to the entire group

to whom those people belong. Drawing on this logic, I argue that if some people from former colonies migrated to their former colonising state, under the right conditions, citizens from former colonising states would begin to relate to those post-colonial migrants as equal, as well as relating as equal to those from their former colonies that did not take up the right to migrate. Therefore, I argue that former colonising states ought to open their borders to people in their former colonies, given the potential that migration offers as a means of engendering relational equality.

Panel 3: Addressing Injustice

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Hannah McHugh

University College London

"For a Backward-Looking Account of Political Responsibility:
Rescuing the Role of Blame and Praise"

Paula Keller

The University of Cambridge

"Utopia and the Modality of Injustice"

For a Backward-Looking Account of Political Responsibility: Rescuing the Role of Blame and Praise

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Hannah McHugh

University College London

Should we blame agents for their contributions to and role in structural injustices and domination? Am I blameworthy for not becoming vegan given the environmental impact of global meat consumption? Or, should I respond to a gendered microaggression despite the minor nature of the discreet harm, given the context of gender inequality more broadly? Answering these questions will require first investigating the function and role of reactive attitudes (in particular, those which express blame and praise). Second, we must consider whether agents are actually fit to be held responsible in structural cases given their remoteness from and minor contribution to harm.

Existing accounts of political responsibility seek to divorce the role of blame. Against this, this paper argues that reactive attitudes develop our sensitivity to moral and political reasons, and thereby motivate both individual and collective action. Further, removing blame implies a misconstrued disconnectedness between agential actions and structural injustice. I defend rescuing the role of blame.

In the examinations of structural injustice and domination from Young and in recent republican accounts, we can see some prima facie reasons to separate blame and responsibility. (Young, 2011, Gadeke 2021). Many of the features of the ways agents interact with structural injustice appear to be exemptions or excuses from blameworthiness. I argue, contrarily, that blame is attributable precisely for failing in a structural responsibility and not for any particular interpersonal responsibility thus eliminating many excuses.

Moral responsibility theorists do not divorce the role of blame. Drawing on reason-responsive theories of a Strawsonian origin and recent signalling theories of blame (e.g. Shoemaker & Vargas, 2013)., this paper defends blame as both appropriate and important for its ability to reveal

emerging norms, improve uptake of responsibility, undermine dominating sources of power and transform structures. Blame has a role in developing our sensitivities to normative reasons (e.g. Pettit & McGeer, 2015).

The paper argues, firstly, we should rescue blame because a purely forward-looking conception of responsibility, absent of blame, produces what Nussbaum has termed a 'moral-free pass' (Nussbaum, 2009, 141-142). Secondly, blame is key in the development of our moral and normative reasoning as well as our ability to effect political and personal change such as is required to undermine and transform dominating or unjust sources of power. Finally, rescuing blame is important for its ability to make opaque structures transparent. In particular, in cases where norms are emerging. This aligns with recent republican literature highlighting the role of agents in the creation of sources of power which allows domination to persist.

"Utopia and the Modality of Injustice"

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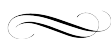
Paula Keller

The University of Cambridge

To call something an injustice involves making a modal claim. The devastating consequences of a storm are unjust only if they could have been prevented. High crime in urban areas is an injustice only if better political decision-making could have significantly reduced crime. Exploitation of workers is an injustice only if alternative, non-exploitative forms of economic organisation are possible. But what is our evidence for these modal claims? How can we know that a storm's consequences could have been minimised, crime reduced, exploitation avoided? How do we acquire modal knowledge about social or political conditions so we may call them injustices?

Two answers have been proposed. First, we can scrutinise whether social forces produced these conditions. Second, we can scrutinise whether there was a point in history at which these conditions did not yet exist. If constructing forces were social or if the phenomenon in question has not always existed, this is evidence that it could have been different. However, this is no conclusive evidence that we could have made it better. But this second, stronger modal claim seems required when calling something an injustice. I suggest that accounts about social construction and about history can be complemented with imaginings of a better social alternative to cement our modal claim about injustice.

We can imagine that the devastating consequences of a storm could have been prevented by an adequate flood wall. We can imagine that a decent welfare state with equality, education, and job prospects for everyone could have significantly reduced crime in urban areas. We can imagine that the cooperative organisation of work and measures such as work-place democracy could have resulted in the absence of exploitation in the workplace. Some of these scenarios are harder to imagine than others. We will face questions about how specifically the funds for the flood wall could have been raised, to what extent the welfare state could have reduced crime, or how exactly the

cooperative organisation of the economy ought to work. These are hard questions. But in answering them we may not only learn something about distant possibilities. We also substantiate our understanding of real storms, actual crime rates, and existing exploitation. We gain strong evidence that these are truly unjust because we now know that—and how—we could have produced better alternatives.

Panel 4: Exploitation
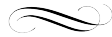
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Arianna Dini

The University of Vienna

"Cognitive Agency and Algorithmic Nudge"

Callum MacRae

CUNY

"Must Exploitation Theorists Choose Between Fairness and Non-Domination?"

Cognitive Agency and Algorithmic Nudge

Arianna Dini

The University of Vienna

Algorithmic pricing is one of the tools that platforms use to exploit the cognitive biases of consumers. This enables sellers to manipulate consumers into spending when they would rather not, or spending more than they would, if they had the ability to process all the relevant information efficiently. Through this mechanism, sellers extract greater market surplus from consumers than would be possible without the use of data analytics. Algorithmic pricing thus poses a problem for the voluntariness condition of contract: that transacting parties give their informed consent to the terms of exchange. This form of price discrimination is currently legal, but I argue that, in some cases, it should not be. This paper provides a normative analysis of the problem through the lens of theories of manipulation and exploitation, while rejecting recent characterisations of algorithmic nudge as a form of epistemic injustice—at least in the domain of algorithmic pricing. This normative analysis hints at possible remedies.

Must Exploitation Theorists Choose Between Fairness and Non-Domination?

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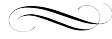
Callum MacRae

CUNY

According to a popular line in contemporary political philosophy, exploitation occurs when one individual takes unfair advantage of another. (Wertheimer, 1996, 10. See too Arneson 2016; Elster 1983; Ferguson and Steiner 2018; Steiner 2018; Zwolinski 2016.) In recent years, however, work by Allen Wood (1995, 2016) and Nicholas Vrousalis (2013, 2016, 2019, 2021) has developed an alternative domination-based account of exploitation, according to which exploitation is understood as domination for the purpose of furthering the ends of the exploiter. Across both sides of this debate, it is common to suppose that (a) fairness is best conceived in fundamentally distributive terms. Moreover, since (b) domination-based accounts set themselves against distributive approaches, both sympathizers of the domination-based account and their critics have taken it to be the case that (c) domination-based accounts and fairness based accounts of exploitation are fundamentally opposed to one another.

In this paper I argue that those attracted to domination-based accounts have good reasons to reject (a) and thus to reject (c). Section I reviews the literature to demonstrate the widespread endorsement of the argument from (a) and (b) to (c). In Section II I argue that those sympathetic to the domination-based account are hard pressed to rely on this argument (though the most prominent defenders of that account—Vrousalis and Wood—both endorse it.) This is because the major arguments provided by domination theorists for believing that exploitation is best understood in fundamentally non-distributive terms also undermine the reasons for believing that fairness is best understood in fundamentally distributive terms. Contra Vrousalis and Wood, the major motivation for the domination-based account thus undermines premise (a), and so domination theorists cannot argue for (c) on the grounds of (a) and (b).

Section III argues that various potential methods which have been suggested in the literature in support of the argument from (a) and (b) to (c) fail. And Section IV concludes by arguing that this should be welcome news to those sympathetic to the domination-based account of exploitation. Rejecting (c) and allowing for a more congenial relationship between the values of fairness and non-domination makes for an account of exploitation that is both more attractive and more consistent with its own underlying philosophical rationale. Contemporary exploitation theorists needn't choose between fairness and non-domination and, particularly if they are sympathetic to the domination-based account, nor should they

Panel 5: Economic Injustices
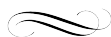
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Barbara Bziuk

Utrecht University

"Corporate Finance as the Organisational Social Structure"

Elaine Yim

Princeton University

"Against the Parallel Case Argument for Workplace Democracy: Authority, Democracy, and Voluntariness"

Corporate Finance as the Organisational Social Structure

Barbara Bziuk

Utrecht University

Global business corporations are involved in many unjust practices: environmental degradation, exploitation of workers, human rights violation, tax avoidance, and so on. Often such practices result from the type of structural constrains and incentives corporations face, many of which are related to the practices and standards of corporate finance. For instance, accounting standards determine what kind of corporate behavior is considered to add or diminish value. If corporate contribution to climate change is not accounted for or considered to diminish value, there might be no structural incentive for the corporation not to contribute to climate change. Thus, practices of corporate finance can have constraining and enabling effects on corporations and actors within them. Building upon organizational theories, I argue that if we are concerned with corporations and social justice, we should be concerned with these practices – with how they constrain and enable, with what kind of normative concerns they raise and whether proposals of corporate reform respond to these concerns. I defend the view that corporate finance is one of the most important structures in business corporations, and I map three normative concerns that these practices raise: epistemic, value-related, and power-related. For each of these concerns, I give examples of practices of corporate finance and the corresponding unjust behavior they facilitate or unjust consequences they produce. The contribution of this paper is twofold. It brings together different strands of literature: political theory of business corporations, ethics of finance, and financialization literature. It shows that corporate finance, an area often neglected by political theorists of corporations, should be at the forefront of the normative analysis of corporations. Second, the implication of the power-based concern is that corporate finance in its current form is fundamentally unjust which is neither a trivial nor a utopian conclusion, or so I argue.

Against the Parallel Case Argument for Workplace Democracy: Authority, Democracy, and Voluntariness

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Elaine Yim

Princeton University

An important argument in support of workplace democracy, known as the parallel case argument, appeals to the similarities between states and firms: if democracy is justified in governing the state (or if there is a moral right to political democracy), then it must also be justified in governing firms (or there must also be a moral right to workplace democracy) (Dahl, 1985; McMahon, 1994; Schaff, 2012; González-Ricoy, 2022). Critics of the parallel case argument often state that voluntary consent distinguishes firms from states: workers voluntarily consent to managerial authority by signing the employment contract, whereas citizens are born into the state involuntarily and it is highly costly to migrate to another state (Arneson, 1993; Phillips and Margolis, 1999). Proponents of workplace democracy respond by arguing that the workplace is not as voluntary as one might think and that exiting a firm also comes with great costs (Landemore and Ferreras, 2016; González-Ricoy, 2022; Schaff, 2012).

In this paper, I join the critics in arguing that justification for political democracy does not logically lead to justification for workplace democracy, albeit through a different path. Rather than focusing on whether a worker's consent to managerial authority is sufficiently voluntary, I contend that establishing involuntariness is not sufficient for establishing the moral right to democracy in the economic sphere. Even though the proponents of the parallel case argument may be correct in saying that some existing workplace lacks voluntariness because exit opportunities are insufficient, this does not support their conclusion that there is a moral right to workplace democracy. Rather, the solution should be to ensure that there are enough exit opportunities through regulation, e.g., by providing training and unemployment benefits, reducing monopoly, etc. This marks an important factual difference between firms and states: firms are subject to check and regulation by a higher authority

(i.e., the state) whereas states are not. This fact makes a moral difference because voluntariness can be ensured through regulation. The implication of my argument is that the solution to the lack of autonomy in existing workplaces should be to ensure that workers can choose their jobs freely, rather than imposing a right to workplace democracy.

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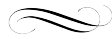
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