

Why We Value Equality: The Salience of the Telic-Deontic Split and the Alternative Concepts of Valuing Equality

The overarching theme of this paper is the underlying reason for why we might find equality valuable, or more specifically, why it may come to play a role in our considerations of distributive allocation. The proposed subject is by no means new, but it received a breath of fresh air with Derek Parfit's introduction of the priority view, as well as his controversial split between Telic and Deontic egalitarianism.¹ Sadly for proponents of egalitarianism, this new air of discussion was mostly toxic. Parfit's revamped taxonomy of distributive positions wrought confusion about which of the remaining positions is rightfully regarded as egalitarian, and which of these might be more egalitarian than the other. The dilemma triggers the question of why we come to treasure equality, if we do, and how we come to justify it, if we realize it is worthy of consideration. I am also strongly setting myself here against the extreme alternative according to which "true" egalitarianism resides only in normative solutions appointing purely intrinsic value to equality. The title of 'egalitarianism' rightfully extends to more positions.

Many other authors believe the same thing, aiming to ground equality on different considerations and intertwining them with different values, but many of them retain and theorize within the controversial framework of Telic and Deontic egalitarianism. For these reasons, many authors have come to embrace the concept of equality as a constitutive value, which, in essence, means they associate equality with some other value, or as "being part" of some other value, but not instrumental to it. Others subscribe to yet another kind of valuing equality, which roughly corresponds to Christine Korsgaard notion of extrinsic value in her seminal paper 'Two Distinction in Goodness'.

¹ Derek Parfit, "Equality and Priority," *Ratio* 10, no. 3 (1997): 202–21, doi:10.1111/1467-9329.00041.

The intention of this paper is twofold. First, I look into Parfit's distinction between Telic and Deontic egalitarianism, and argue it is too exclusive, stringent, and thus, not particularly useful. I dispute the claim that valuing equality may only be intrinsic, and that to substantiate such a category of value may only be conducive to a kind of equality fetishism. The second part of the paper is itself divided into two smaller parts, as it introduces two alternatives for incorporating equality into a system of distributive evaluation. The first alternative I present is that of equality as constitutive value, according to which equality might merely 'be part' of another value. The second alternative that I explore is that of equality as extrinsic value, according to which the value of equality is drawn from a particular set of circumstances.