

**Meaningful Work in Community:
Essays on Good Work and Just Work**

Jens Jørund Tyssedal

Meaningful Work in Community:
Essays on Good Work and Just Work

PhD Dissertation

Politica

© Forlaget Politica and the author 2022

ISBN: 978-87-7335-295-3

Cover: Svend Siune
Print: Fællestrykkeriet, Aarhus University
Layout: Annette Bruun Andersen

Submitted March 15, 2022
The public defence takes place May 24, 2022
Published May 2022

Forlaget Politica
c/o Department of Political Science
Aarhus BSS, Aarhus University
Bartholins Allé 7
DK-8000 Aarhus C
Denmark

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	7
Overview	9
Introduction	11
Chapter 1. Central concepts and background theory: Work, distributive justice and good work ideals.....	15
1.1 Work.....	15
1.2 Distributive justice and work.....	19
1.2.1 Work in the classical theories of distributive justice	21
1.2.2 Recent scholarship on distributive justice for work.....	27
1.2.3 Distributive justice and work: A summary.....	31
1.3 Good work ideals	31
1.4 Summary	35
Chapter 2. The objection from freedom of occupational choice	37
2.1 Background	37
2.2 Summary of A1: ‘There is No Basis for the Freedom Objection: Rescuing Equality and Revisiting the Egalitarian Ethos’	38
2.3 Take-aways.....	41
Chapter 3. Free time justice and work justice	43
3.1 Background	43
3.2 Summary of A2: ‘The Value of Time Matters for Temporal Justice’	44
3.3 Take-aways.....	46
Chapter 4. The concept ‘meaningful work’	47
4.1 Background	47
4.2 Summary of A3: ‘Meaningful Work is Work for a Good Reason: A Revisionary Conceptual Analysis of “Meaningful Work”’	47
4.3 Take-aways.....	51
4.3.1 ‘Meaningful work’: Not a useful concept for JQW/RQ(b)	51
4.3.2 Meaningful work as a good work ideal	54
Chapter 5. The ideal of good work: How can work be a good in itself?	57
5.1 Background.....	57
5.2 Summary of A4: ‘Good Work: The Importance of Pro-Sociality’	57
5.3 Take-aways.....	60
Chapter 6. Meaningful work, community and Utopia: Conclusions and outlook ...	63
6.1 Summary of contributions	63
6.2 Concluding outlook: Meaningful work, community and Utopia.....	65

Appendix: Methodology	67
I. Reflective equilibrium reasoning.....	67
I.I How to engage in reflective equilibrium reasoning.....	68
I.II Input: Considered judgements, not intuitions.....	72
I.III What can reflective equilibrium reasoning do for us?.....	80
II. Revisionary conceptual analysis	84
Bibliography.....	89
English Summary	97
Dansk resumé	99

Acknowledgements

I have benefitted from the help of many people while working on this PhD dissertation, and I want express my sincere gratitude. Most of all to my supervisors Kasper Lippert-Rasmussen and Göran Duus-Otterström, for all the comments and supervision with the help of which some of my ideas condensed and matured into a set of papers and a dissertation. It has been a privilege, and often also a lot of fun (at least for me) to discuss my ideas with so competent political philosophers. In many ways I think I have had the privilege of learning from the best.

Next to my supervisors, the people who probably helped me the most with this PhD are Anne-Sofie Greisen Højlund and Lauritz Aastrup Munch. Thank you for your great helpfulness, and for the experiences we shared these years, in and outside of work, in Aarhus and elsewhere – I am glad to have shared this PhD with you.

I am very grateful to the whole of the Political Theory Section, which has been a very friendly, encouraging and stimulating environment to be a part of. I thank Søren Flinch Midtgaard for extraordinary generosity with comments, and for many good discussions about all issues in political theory, and Andreas Brøgger Albertsen for good discussions about all things egalitarianism. I am grateful to Viki Møller Lyngby Pedersen and Didde Boisen Andersen for receiving me so well in your office when I was all new in Aarhus, and to Anna Christine Dorf for a nice semester as office partners. Finally, I want to thank Marion Kathe Godman, Tore Vincents Olsen, Fabio Wolkenstein, Jake Lehrle-Fry, Simone Sommer Degn, Andreas Bengtson, Juha Tuovinen, Renaud-Philippe Garner, Astrid Fly Oredsson and Ida Nørregaard for how you all contributed to making the section a good place to be. I also thank Lasse Nielsen as ‘friend of the section’ for good chats and discussions, especially when we both had offices upstairs in the ‘submarine’ corridor.

I am also deeply grateful to each and every member of the PhD group in this period, including visitors, for being good colleagues that I always looked forward to seeing. I also want to thank you for initiating me to the most important rites and celebrations of Danish culture, which are (if I’ve understood correctly) Tour de Office, Julefrokost and Kappsejlas. I have greatly appreciated being a part of the community, both for work and play. Naturally there are some in the PhD group and the Department with whom I have shared more than others, but you are still too many to mention everyone here – thank you! I always enjoyed going to work at the Department, and in the long periods in which this was not possible, I deeply missed it. I want to express my particular gratefulness to Christoffer Green-Pedersen, for how you supported the PhD

group, especially during the corona lockdowns, and for your support and help with returning to work after a period of sick leave. I thank Helene Helboe Pedersen for taking over so well as PhD coordinator in my last months as a PhD student here.

I also want to thank all other colleagues at the Department of Political Science. I came here from studies in Philosophy, and I have greatly enjoyed this immersion in the world of political science. It is extremely inspiring to be surrounded by the buzz of so many people doing research with so high standards about all aspects of politics.

The members of the administration merit a special acknowledgement for help with language revisions, travel receipts, teaching issues, and a great many other things. I thank Annette Bruun Andersen, Njall Beuschel, Helle M. H. Bundgaard, Maj Thimm Carlsen, Lene Hjøllund, Natasha Elizabeth Perera, Malene Poulsen, Anna Christina Prior, Kate Thulin, Ruth Ramm, Ida Smidt-Jensen, Susanne Vang, Line Kjær Vesterbæk, Ida Warburg and Birgit Kanstrup for always making things run so smoothly.

I thank Robert Huseby and Raino Malnes for facilitating a change of environment in the midst of the lockdown periods to Oslo and the GOODPOL-project at the Center for Advanced Studies at the Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters, although the stay unfortunately ended up shorter than planned. I also thank Tom Parr and Malte Jauch for good discussions and feedback at different points in the process. Finally, I want to thank the assessment committee, Søren Flinch Midtgaard, Tom Parr and Paula Casal for having engaged with my work, for insightful feedback filled with interesting suggestions, and for a lecture question that I look forward to discussing.

There are also people outside the Department who have had a special place in the process of writing this PhD, and to whom I want to express my gratitude. The IC dorm will always be my true home in Aarhus, and I am very grateful to the people with whom I shared it on three occasions. Finally, as things went the last two years, there were some hard times, and I thank my family, Bård Nordseth, Benjamin Røen and everyone else who helped me hold things together and complete this dissertation nevertheless.

Overview

This PhD dissertation consists in this dissertation summary and the following four articles, on which this summary builds.

1. Tyssedal, JJ: “There is No Basis for the Freedom Objection: Rescuing Equality and Revisiting the Egalitarian Ethos” (R&R, *Economics and Philosophy*).
2. Tyssedal, JJ (2021): “The Value of Time Matters for Temporal Justice.” *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice* 24 (1): 183–96.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10677-020-10149-1>.
3. Tyssedal, JJ: “Meaningful Work is Work for a Good Reason: A Revisionary Conceptual Analysis of ‘Meaningful Work’” (R&R, *Journal of Business Ethics*).
4. Tyssedal, JJ: “Good Work: The Importance of Pro-Sociality” (under review).

In the dissertation summary, the articles are referred to as A1-4 respectively. References to material within these articles are made such that A3.4.1 refers to Article 3, Section 4.1.

Introduction

Adult life in modern societies is to a large extent characterized by work – for better or worse. When things go well, work may offer individuals opportunities for self-realization, personal accomplishment and social belonging, while they contribute to the social good. But modern work is often not like that. And there will always be tasks that just have to be done, whether we like to or not. What would be a fair way to share labour burdens, and to share the goods of work, too? These are questions about distributive justice for work, and they are the questions that motivate the project of this dissertation. Another way to put them is the following ‘(distributive) justice question about work’ (JWQ):

JWQ: What characterizes a just distribution of work?

I consider this a distributive justice question of particular importance, for the simple reason that adults spend such a significant amount of their lives at work. Whether one thinks justice is about some fundamental good such as welfare, or about different ‘spheres of justice’, each regulated by their own principle (Walzer 1983), one will want an account of what justice says about this part of life. However, giving a complete answer to JWQ is beyond what can be done within the scope of one dissertation, especially since there is no consolidated view on how to approach the subject of work and distributive justice, and some object to treating work as an object of distributive justice at all. Therefore, this dissertation discusses the questions of whether work should be regulated by a principle of distributive justice and how this should be done, addressing the following research questions:

RQ: (a) Is work an appropriate object for distributive justice, and if so, (b) how should work be approached as an object of distributive justice?

The first of these questions, (a), asks whether we have good reasons to treat work as a good whose distribution should be regulated by a principle of distributive justice. The second, (b), is about how to incorporate work into a theory of justice. One way to do this would be to treat work, or some aspect of work, such as job satisfaction, as a (part of the) metric of justice, but the research question uses the broader notion of ‘how to approach’ work as an object of distributive justice in order to also cover other ways in which this may be done. The dissertation thus contributes to the larger project of JWQ, by collecting insights about some of the most basic questions with which this larger project has to engage.

Here is a brief overview of what follows. Chapter 1 introduces the main concepts and the theoretical background for the dissertation. Section 1.1 introduces the subject matter ‘work’, Section 1.2 presents the political theory literature most relevant to the project of developing a theory of distributive justice for work, and Section 1.3 presents the notion of a ‘good work ideal’.

The next four chapters, Chapters 2-5, together with the accompanying articles A1-A4, make up the main body of the dissertation. Chapter 2/A1 address RQ(a) by addressing and rejecting one established objection to treating work as regulated by distributive justice, the objection from freedom of occupational choice. This paves the way for engaging with RQ(b) in Chapters 3-4. A2 is about the metric of temporal justice, or free time justice, and Chapter 3 shows the relevance of the findings for work justice, and specifically, the possibility of approaching this as distributive justice for work and free time considered as a whole. A3 is about the concept of ‘meaningful work’, and Chapter 4 shows that this concept is not of much use for a theory of distributive justice for work. Finally, Chapter 5/A4 are relevant to both RQ(a&b). A4 develops an account of what it means for work to be a good in itself, and Chapter 5 discusses how this ideal relates to distributive justice.

The final chapter, Chapter 6, summarizes and concludes. As already noted, the main contribution of the dissertation consists in a set of observations that respond to the RQ and are of relevance to JWQ more broadly. The chapter ends with a discussion of a phrase that nicely connects some of the most interesting findings from the dissertation, and which also provides its title:

Utopia is characterized by meaningful work in community.

Utopia must be a society where work is good, not a society without work (Chapter 5). Good work may require community and/or a just distribution of labour burdens and good. While I do not have a finished account of what this is like, Chapters 2-4 make several observations that contribute to such an account, including the observation that in a just society, all work is meaningful work (Chapter 4) – thus the above conclusion.

The dissertation has a section on methodology, which is placed in the Appendix after the conclusion. This section both presents and provides some discussion of the dissertation’s methodology. As it refers to examples from the dissertation, I believe reading the rest of the dissertation first will ease reading the methodology section more than reading the methodology section first will help with reading the rest of the dissertation. I think the way I use the main method of the dissertation, reflective equilibrium reasoning, is entirely standard. Thus, at least for a reader familiar with political theory, there is no need

to read the methodology section first to understand what is going on elsewhere in the dissertation.¹

The reason there is also a discussion of the methodology is that although I believe I use reflective equilibrium reasoning in a standard way, I think what amounts to a standard presentation of this method is mistaken on crucial points, and I would not want to reproduce these confusions myself. Therefore, after a presentation of how I use the method in a standard way in Section I.I, I discuss confusions about the input reflective equilibrium reasoning takes in Section I.II, and what reflective equilibrium can do for us in Section I.III. In Section II of the appendix I then present the second distinct method of the dissertation, i.e. revisionary conceptual analysis.

¹ Even for the potential reader not familiar with political theory, reflective equilibrium reasoning is, I think, fairly easy to follow, even without having an explicit description of the method at hand.

Chapter 1.

Central concepts and background theory: Work, distributive justice and good work ideals

1.1 Work

Many of us know a lot about what work is from our daily lives, and still, one of the most frequently repeated claims about work is that it is hard to define (Michaelson 2021, 415; Cholbi 2018, 1121; Clark 2017, 62; Veltman 2016, 22–26; Muirhead 2004, 4–6; Elster 1986, 110; Govier 1975, 135).² However, there is no way around specifying the subject of this dissertation. Moreover, I think it is possible to give a definition of the class of activities that social and political theory concerned with work should cover.

My understanding of work draws on a well-known passage from Marx, which is worth quoting in full:

[T]he realm of freedom actually begins only where labour which is determined by necessity and mundane considerations ceases; thus in the very nature of things it lies beyond the sphere of actual material production. Just as the savage must wrestle with Nature to satisfy his wants, to maintain and reproduce life, so must civilised man, and he must do so in all social formations and under all possible modes of production. With his development this realm of physical necessity expands as a result of his wants; but, at the same time, the forces of production which satisfy these wants also increase. Freedom in this field can only consist in socialised man, the associated producers, rationally regulating their interchange with Nature, bringing it under their common control, instead of being ruled by it as by the blind forces of Nature; and achieving this with the least expenditure of energy and under conditions most favourable to, and worthy of, their human nature. But it nonetheless still remains a realm of necessity. Beyond it begins that development of human energy which is an end in itself, the true realm of freedom, which, however, can blossom forth only with this realm of necessity as its basis. The shortening of the working-day is its basic prerequisite (Marx 1998, 807).

² Similarly, Gheaus and Herzog (2016, 86 (note 1 to p. 70)) simply say they ‘use a common-sense concept of work’, and Cholbi (2022, para. 1) notes the ‘porousness of the notion of work’.

I think Marx came a good way towards capturing the defining characteristics of work here, though his formulations are not precise enough to serve as a definition of the topic of this study. I will now emphasize and elaborate on what I take to be the main features of work that Marx here identifies.

First, Marx uses the metaphor of ‘wrestling with Nature’. One aspect of this metaphor is that it is suggestive of the familiar fact that work usually requires some effort.³ But it also suggests that work is a response to the fact that nature does not spontaneously provide what humans want from it.⁴ Second, Marx says that work is done to ‘satisfy wants, to maintain and reproduce life’. In the quoted passage, Marx only speaks explicitly about production, but care work is of course just as necessary to maintain and reproduce life, and belongs just as naturally to ‘work’. The third and most significant idea here, I think, is that work is ‘necessary activity’, and is contrasted with a ‘realm of freedom’.

The idea of work as ‘necessary activity’ is in particular need of precisification, as work is both broader and narrower than what is strictly necessary (to maintain and reproduce life). Marx clearly has a broad understanding of necessity in mind, as he includes not only maintaining and reproducing life, but also satisfying wants, which reflects the fact that we can choose to work more than we strictly have to in order to live better.⁵ At the same time, it is also narrower, as there are activities that are necessary to satisfy needs and wants, but which we do not think of as work, such as eating and sleeping. We will thus have to draw some distinctions within ‘the (broad) realm of necessity’.⁶

Here the contrast to the realm of freedom will be of some help. The realm of freedom consists in ‘that development of human energy which is an end in itself’. This contrasts with work, which is necessary to satisfy needs and wants, and thus aims at an end outside itself; or in other words, is *instrumental* activity.⁷ Eating and sleeping are like work in that they are necessary, but like

³ However, obviously, the effort involved in some work can be quite minimal (cp. Marshall 2013, 54, footnote 3).

⁴ The Garden of Eden may be seen as a vision of Nature doing so.

⁵ Roughly, I think of needs as ‘that which is necessary to maintain and reproduce life’ and wants as everything we desire beyond satisfying needs. But as I will always be speaking of ‘needs and/or wants’, I can avoid the thorny issue of drawing a precise distinction.

⁶ Cp. how Goodin et al. (2008, 34–36, 40–51) distinguish between time use in three ‘realms of necessity’: the economic (earning an income), the social (household labour) and the biological (bodily needs). To this may perhaps also be added a fourth domain of ‘moral’ necessity (A2.3, p. 7).

⁷ For other discussions and definitions that also emphasize the instrumental character of work, see Muirhead (2004, 4–6), Marshall (2013, 54), Elster (1986, 110–11) and Van Parijs (1995, 137–38).

ends in themselves in that needs and wants are satisfied in the activity itself: by eating or sleeping, one satisfies the needs and wants that make these activities (broadly) necessary. Work seems to contrast with non-work necessary instrumental activities like eating and sleeping by being *intermediary*, or ‘one step removed’ from satisfying the needs or wants to which it is instrumental. That is, work may itself satisfy needs and wants, as care work often does, but these are then the needs and wants of someone other than the worker.

To summarize this, work satisfies or aims at satisfying needs or wants that are not such that they are needs or wants of the worker that are satisfied by doing the work. This is an intricate phrase, but the idea is quite simple: Work aims at satisfying needs and wants, but is at least ‘one step’ away from the satisfaction of those needs and wants, either because they are satisfied later, or if they are satisfied simultaneously, they are the needs and wants of someone other than the worker. This gives the following definition of work:

Work: Activities that are instrumental and intermediary to the satisfaction of needs and wants.

Another way to say this is that work consists in the things a person has to do, i.e. that are necessary, and which are not in themselves the satisfaction of her own needs and wants.

We have already seen how this includes care work or service work, which typically consists of activities that satisfy the needs or wants of someone other than the worker. It also clearly includes production, in which a product is created that can satisfy the needs or wants of the worker or someone else at a later time. Note that the fact that much work itself satisfies some needs and wants of the person doing it, e.g. for self-realization, recognition, or caring for others, is not a problem for this definition: an activity is work, not in virtue of its not satisfying a need or want for the person doing it, but in virtue of its being intermediary to a need or want which belongs to someone else and/or which is not satisfied by the work activity, and which shapes what the activity is like.⁸

On this definition, ‘work’ picks out a well-defined category of activities that have been present in all human societies as we have ever known them. Therein, the definition contrasts with claims that ‘work’ is a historical or social construction, as is sometimes suggested (Clark 2017, 62; Komlosy 2018, 7). The definition is very broad, and differs in some significant ways from how ‘work’ is used in everyday language. I will therefore end the discussion of this definition by arguing that it is nevertheless the right definition from which to

⁸ Moreover, the definition allows borderline cases: something which is done as an end in itself, but which is also instrumental and intermediary to satisfying the needs or wants of someone else, is both work and leisure.

start thinking about the questions of this dissertation, such as what distributive justice requires of the division of labour.

First, its broadness. The definition covers many obvious cases, such as production, service work and care work. It also includes the ‘second shift’, housework and care work for family members, as I think it should, as well as a lot of things we do for ourselves. Indeed, it is so broad it includes even small things such as turning on the TV, or brewing oneself a cup of tea – and one may well think this makes it too broad. However, I think the category of activities relevant for questions of work and distributive justice is exactly this big. After all, if one is infirm, then getting the TV turned on and a cup of tea brewed may well be a part of someone else’s job. Thus, even these activities at least potentially qualify as ‘work’.

To see the relevance of the broad definition, let us briefly consider the perhaps most obvious alternative: to confine the subject matter of work and distributive justice to that work that takes place in the extra-household social division of labour, i.e. the work that in modern economies is organized by the labour market. It is plausible that there are questions of justice for this work particularly, but clearly, one may also raise questions of justice about what work does and does not belong to the social division of labour.⁹ There is no firm line between work which is and is not potentially relevant for distributive justice. I therefore think the broad definition of work given above is the right point of departure for thinking about work and distributive justice. Drawing further distinctions within this broad category of work, and finding out what principles apply to which parts of it, are rather a part of developing such a theory of justice.

Second, work thus defined is also in at least one significant way narrower than ordinary-language ‘work’, the extension of which arguably covers all paid jobs. David Graeber (2018) documents that many jobs do not contribute to satisfying any need or want at all – he calls these ‘bullshit jobs’. All paid jobs, including ‘bullshit jobs’, resemble work (as defined above) in that for the worker doing them, the job is instrumental and intermediary to satisfying their needs or wants with the salary it provides. However, as the activities in which ‘bullshit jobs’ consist are not instrumental to satisfying needs and wants, ‘bullshit jobs’ are not covered by ‘work’ as this was defined above.

Nevertheless, I think a theory of distributive justice about work should take the definition of work above as its point of departure, rather than the ordinary-language notion.¹⁰ I follow Rawls (2001, 12–13) in thinking that when

⁹ Cp. feminist demands like ‘Wages for housework’ that challenge the distinction between social work and housework (see Weeks 2011, 118–37).

¹⁰ Or a ‘common-sense concept’, pace Gheaus and Herzog (2016, 86 (note 1 to p. 70)).

developing a theory of justice, we are looking for a theory of justice under ideal circumstances. Moreover, I expect that a just, well-ordered society will not contain any ‘bullshit jobs’. The reason is that a part of what I expect a theory of justice to do is to settle what needs and wants should be satisfied, and that work in a well-ordered society will be about satisfying these and only these needs and wants. Therefore, in a well-ordered society, the work to be distributed justly is all work that satisfies needs and wants, and which thus falls under the definition above. The theory of justice does the job of eliminating ‘bullshit’ work. What to do about the existence of ‘bullshit jobs’ under nonideal circumstances is a question in its own right, and I will touch on it in Chapter 4. But RQ is therefore rightly posed as a question about work as instrumental, intermediary activities to the satisfaction of needs and wants.

We now have an introduction of the subject matter of ‘work’. I will next introduce the topic of distributive justice, and what existing theories of distributive justice say about work.

1.2 Distributive justice and work

This section introduces the subject of distributive justice, and some important scholarship on how distributive justice applies to work. Together with the next section, it provides the theoretical background for the research question.

Distributive justice is one of the main topics of contemporary analytical political theory. On Rawls’ view, society as a ‘cooperative venture for mutual advantage’ needs principles of justice to adjudicate conflicts of interests by assigning rights and duties, and to ‘define the appropriate distribution of the benefits and burdens of social cooperation’ (Rawls 1999, 4). A more general description is that distributive justice is a virtue or value that regulates how goods and bads should be allocated between members of societies. Questions about what distributions are just, and why, are questions that belong to distributive justice as a topic.¹¹

This general description must be qualified in at least three respects. Other values or virtues (e.g. generosity, charity) may also matter for what distributions are best, all things considered. But distributive justice is arguably the ‘first virtue’ of distributions, or the ‘most basic’ consideration that applies to distributions. Second, ‘societies’ is intended in a very broad sense: while it is perhaps most common to think of distributive justice as applying to a society delimited by the state, there is a significant debate on whether and to what

¹¹ See also Lamont and Favor (2017).

degree distributive justice also applies beyond state borders. Questions of justice can apply both to larger units (e.g. the EU), and smaller units, such as firms or families.

Third, there is the question of what the goods and bads (or benefits and burdens) relevant to distributive justice are. This is sometimes referred to as ‘the metric of distributive justice’, or simply ‘the distribuendum’, so we may call this question the ‘metric question’ or the ‘distribuendum question’. There is a large debate on the metric question. Some proposals for the most fundamental metric of distributive justice include welfare/utility (e.g. Arneson 1989), resources (Dworkin 2000), capabilities (Sen 1979), a set of primary goods (Rawls 1999; 2001), a complex notion of ‘advantage’ (Cohen 1989) and ‘that which [people] care about non-instrumentally and not unreasonably so’ (Lippert-Rasmussen 2016, 112).

However, there is also a strong precedent for discussing distributive justice for specific goods. This has been done e.g. for health care (Daniels 2017) and for free time (Goodin et al. 2008; Rose 2016a; A2). One reason to do so may be that the distribution of specific goods will matter for the distribution of the most fundamental good. Work will, for example, matter for people’s overall well-being, or for developing and realizing capabilities. A different reason to do so may be Walzer’s (1983) idea that there are different ‘spheres of justice’, each with their own principles of distributive justice. Indeed, Walzer (1983, chap. 6) discusses hard work as one such sphere. In the following, I will discuss different approaches to work and distributive justice, of which some, like Cohen’s, are clearly concerned with work as relevant to a more fundamental good, whereas for others, the extent to which work is a sphere in its own right or matters for some other good is less clear. Many of the observations this dissertation makes about work and distributive justice will be relevant either way, either as observations about a distinct sphere of justice, or as relevant considerations about how to distribute one good that matters for a more fundamental metric.

Finally, philosophers have proposed and endorsed different principles for how their preferred metric should be distributed, i.e. different principles of justice. For example, on a classical *sufficientarian* view, what distributive justice requires is not equality, but that everyone has enough (Frankfurt 1987, 21).¹² Rawls’ influential ‘difference principle’ permits inequalities, as long as these are to the greatest benefit of the least-advantaged members of society (Rawls 2001, 42–43; more on this below). We will see below that as it happens, most scholars on work and distributive justice who are explicit about the distributive principle they endorse are egalitarians, and endorse a version of a

¹² For more sophisticated elaborations of this view, see Casal (2007); Huseby (2020).

principle of equality – but also that some scholars may be (re)interpreted as being one kind of sufficientarians.

I will briefly move on to present how work has been discussed in the literature on distributive justice. But first, to focus our thoughts, I will start by presenting a view that I think is widely shared, including among non-philosophers. I call this view ‘equal income is unfair’ (EIU):¹³

EIU: ‘equal income [is] unfair to the hardworking’ (Olson 2020, ix).

As the view is presented here, it is not specific about what is meant by ‘the hardworking’: it could be those who put in more effort, put in more time, do more dangerous work, do less enjoyable work, and so on.¹⁴ However, I think the underlying notion is clear enough: some people have more burdensome work than others, such that one objects to their not being compensated relative to those with less burdensome work.¹⁵

EIU is interesting, first, as a widely shared, fairly common-sense view about distributive justice for work, and second, because it points clearly to one task that we expect a more elaborate theory of distributive justice for work to do, namely providing an answer to the metric question that can be used to explain what it means to be among the ‘hardworking’, i.e. to be better and worse off with regard to one’s work. I will now proceed to present and discuss some such theories of work and distributive justice, including how they make sense of claims such as EIU.

1.2.1 Work in the classical theories of distributive justice

This and the next subsection presents some theories and approaches to work and distributive justice. In this section, I discuss the place of work in the three

¹³ Kristi A. Olson notes that this view is shared e.g. by leftist philosopher G.A. Cohen, conservative economist Milton Friedman (Olson 2020, ix, 4), and the American Tea Party movement (Olson 2020, 175 (note 2 to p. ix)).

¹⁴ Moreover, it is quite possible that e.g. Cohen and the Tea Party movement would come apart in their views here.

¹⁵ On the other hand, Joseph Carens (1981) defends a view that would entail equal income for everyone regardless of what work one does and whether one likes it or not. However, Carens’ argument for this seems to be that it would be better than what we have, and the best that can be achieved under envisageable circumstances, not that this would be perfectly just in any way (Carens 1981, 156–60; 1985).

leading liberal-egalitarian theories of distributive justice, i.e. the theories of justice of Rawls, Dworkin and Cohen.¹⁶

John Rawls' (1999) theory of justice, *justice as fairness*, is arguably the most influential theory of distributive justice.¹⁷ His two principles of justice read:

- (a) Each person has the same inalienable claim to a fully adequate scheme of basic liberties, which scheme is compatible with the same scheme of liberties for all; and
- (b) Social and economic inequalities are to satisfy two conditions: first, they are to be attached to offices and positions open to all under conditions of fair equality of opportunity; and second, they are to be to the greatest benefit of the least-advantaged members of society (the difference principle) (Rawls 2001, 42–43).

The difference principle mentioned above is given in the second part of (b).¹⁸ According to Rawls, to assess whether a society realizes his principles of justice, we use an index of what he calls five kinds of primary goods. These, or the index of these, may be considered the distributive goods on his theory. The five kinds of primary goods are:

- (i) The basic rights and liberties (...)
- (ii) Freedom of movement and free choice of occupation against a background of diverse opportunities, which opportunities allow the pursuit of a variety of ends and give effect to decisions to revise and alter them.
- (iii) Powers and prerogatives of office and positions of authority and responsibility.
- (iv) Income and wealth (...)
- (v) The social bases of self-respect (Rawls 2001, 58–59).

¹⁶ I only aim to present what these theories say about work and distributive justice specifically, not to give complete presentations of the theories. Some elaborations are given in footnotes.

¹⁷ For a brief introduction, see e.g. Wenar (2021, sec. 4).

¹⁸ Note that Rawls' theory of justice as fairness is what he calls a theory of 'pure background procedural justice'. Thus, his principles of justice describe the outcomes that the basic structure of institutions in a society should realize, and instruct us to modify institutions if there is another set of institutions that will better realize these principles (Rawls 2001, para. 14). Rawls contrasts this with principles regulating how a given bundle of commodities should be distributed; what he calls 'allocative justice' (Rawls 2001, 50).

Work is thus not explicitly on this list, but Rawls is clearly not indifferent to the importance of work for justice, as he includes ‘free choice of occupation against a background of diverse opportunities’ on the list as a part of (ii). The notion of ‘a background of diverse opportunities’ could be taken to imply a sufficiency threshold, or it could be taken to imply that one is better off the more diverse occupational opportunities one has, in terms of the kinds of activities and skills these jobs involve.¹⁹ However, there is no measure of job quality on the list. This is a problem, at least if one thinks job quality is about more than diversity in activities and skills applied: plausibly, a theory of justice should rank a society where people have a choice between diverse, good jobs over one where they have a choice between diverse, bad jobs. Because it lacks a measure of job quality, Rawls’ theory lacks the kind of metric needed to realize a principle like EIU, which requires us to be able to distinguish between jobs that are better or worse to do. Thus, arguably, a theory of justice should say more about work than Rawls did (see also Miller 2010, 246).²⁰

Let us move on to Ronald Dworkin’s *equality of resources* (Dworkin 2000, chap. 2). Dworkin takes resources as the metric of justice. He starts his exposition of equality of resources by imagining a hypothetical auction which yields an *envy-free* distribution of resources as its outcome (Dworkin 2000, 66–70).²¹ ‘Envy-free’ is here a technical term to describe the situation where no one prefers someone else’s bundle to their own (Dworkin 2000, 67).²² However, as Dworkin notes, envy-freeness cannot persist over time if people are to

¹⁹ It arguably cannot be about diversity in job quality, as having a choice between jobs that range from very bad to very good is presumably not better than just having a choice between very good options.

²⁰ Arnold (2012) argues that Rawls’ theory of justice may have more to say about work than it seems, as primary good (iii) ‘powers and prerogatives of office and positions of authority and responsibility’ may be interpreted as being about complex work that is good in several ways. There are at least two problems with this argument. First, if Rawls wanted to include (complex) work on the list of primary goods, I think he could just have done so explicitly. And work can be complex, self-realizing and good without being an ‘office’ or a ‘position of responsibility’. Second, the theory still says nothing about the distribution of bad work, which may be the more crucial question for a theory of justice (especially one in which the distributive principle focuses explicitly on the least advantaged).

²¹ On Dworkin’s auction, see also Heath (2004).

²² This ‘envy test’ is often considered a strong candidate for what it means for bundles of goods to be equal (see e.g. Heath 2004, 333 (note 4 to p. 314); Olson 2020, 176–77 (note 4 to p. 9)). One of its significant strengths is that it provides a test of equality for goods that are not commensurable in any straightforward way. The problem in question is brought out nicely by Arneson: ‘If Smith has a nice house, a clunky car,

be free to make their own choices with their resources, and moreover, it will be undermined by natural contingencies (Dworkin 2000, 71–73). Dworkin ends up interpreting equality of resources as an *ex ante* envy-free distribution of resources, where ‘*ex ante*’ indicates that equality as envy-freeness is realized in a preceding (and in this case, hypothetical) situation, before contingencies both of nature and of individual choices play out. This is achieved by the quite complicated idea of hypothetical insurance against such contingencies (Dworkin 2000, 76–83, 331–40; Olson 2020, chap. 5; Fleurbaey 2008, 172–75). In practice, as life unfolds, people will end up unequally well off, partly because of choices (e.g. hardworking Adrian ends up with more resources than others (Dworkin 2000, 83–85)), and partly because hypothetical insurance does not equal out the effects of contingencies (or brute luck), but rather, smoothens the effects they have (Dworkin 2000, 76–83, 99–102).

Dworkin also gives a thorough discussion of the possibility of including jobs in the initial egalitarian auction (Dworkin 2000, 82–99). If this could be done, it would yield equality of jobs and resources interpreted as envy-free bundles of jobs and resources. This would satisfy EIU at least on one interpretation: to achieve envy-freeness, the less attractive jobs would have to be attached to larger bundles of resources. His discussion, however, finds several difficulties with this idea. First, envy-freeness of job-and-income bundles will typically be impossible to achieve, because there are assignment constraints on jobs:²³ not anyone can do any job, as a job may require specific skills. If someone prefers to do a job they cannot do, envy-freeness of work and resources may thus be impossible (Dworkin 2000, 85).²⁴ Dworkin also discusses the possibility of including not jobs but labour in the auction, but concludes against this because it would lead to what he calls the ‘slavery of the talented’. The labour power of people with high skills would be worth a lot in the auction, and therefore, people with high skills would have little choice but to take up one of their most commercially profitable job options to pay for their own labour (Dworkin 2000, 89–90). In other words, people with high skills would have no, or at least too little, freedom of occupational choice. Ultimately, then, Dworkin lets (*ex ante*) equality in the face of the contingencies of the labour

access to the beach, and a PhD from Yale, whereas Jones has a spectacular house, a Jaguar, no beach access and a high school diploma, who has the greater resources share?’ (Arneson 1990, 192, cited in Olson, 2020, p. ix). The envy test provides a way to compare bundles with goods as different as Ivy League PhDs, Jaguars and beach access.

²³ The notion of assignment constraints is from Olson (2020, 12).

²⁴ For a more detailed introduction to why this is so, see Fleurbaey (2008, 42–44, 101–7). For a brief explanation, see Olson (2020, 12). The problem was first discovered by Pazner and Schmeidler (1974).

market be ensured by the same mechanism that he uses to deal with other contingencies, namely hypothetical insurance (Dworkin 2000, 92–99).

Hypothetical insurance satisfies Dworkin’s notion of ex ante equality, but it will not satisfy someone who supports (something like) EIU, or who is concerned with inequalities in job quality for other reasons. The first reason for this is that Dworkin’s hypothetical underemployment insurance is constructed mainly to insure people against ending up with a very low income (because none of one’s occupational options earn well) (Dworkin 2000, 96–99). Despite Dworkin’s attentiveness to freedom of occupational choice for the talented, his hypothetical insurance does not really protect people, at least not low earners, against having to work hard at an unpleasant job.²⁵ Second, and particularly problematic for a friend of EIU, Olson shows that Dworkin’s insurance scheme will sometimes reward the less hardworking over the hardworking, which makes it even more unfair than equal incomes (Olson 2020, chap. 5, esp. pp. 72–76).²⁶

²⁵ See Brown (2011) for an elaboration of this criticism.

²⁶ There is some ambiguity in Dworkin (2000, 99–102) over whether people are to pay into the hypothetical insurance scheme according to their maximum earning power or their actual earnings, and if the latter, whether this is then as a compromise because the former is hard to assess (Olson 2020, 187 (note 11 to p. 72)). Let us assume the former: people should pay in according to their maximum earning capacity. We can then construct examples in which the harder-working compensate the less hardworking. Here is an example from Olson (2020, 72–73) that shows this: Brigitte’s maximum earning capacity is \$60,000 in a job which is very bad for her. Her other alternative earns \$30,000, but is much more suitable for her. Clara’s job options all earn \$30,000, and some of them are suitable for her. If they both choose to work equally hard at \$30,000 jobs that suit them, then hypothetical insurance will still charge Brigitte more than Clara, as Brigitte is not working at her maximum earning capacity. Because of this, Clara may be able to work somewhat less than Brigitte and still earn more. This is unequal income in favour of the less hardworking. What is clear is that Dworkin (2000, 102) suggests that people will only be compensated according to maximum earning power. Thus, even assuming that premiums will be according to actual earnings above the compensation threshold, situations like (or worse than) the above can arise below the threshold. That is, assume Brigitte’s maximum earning power is at the compensation threshold, while Clara’s is below it (the threshold may be \$60,000). Brigitte will then receive no compensation, whereas Clara will, even though neither is working harder than the other. Indeed, Clara may end up better off than Brigitte, even in some cases where Clara is working part time and Brigitte works full time. Thus, Dworkin’s hypothetical insurance will endorse instances of unequal income in favour of the less hardworking, and be very far from realizing EIU.

The third and final liberal-egalitarian theory of distributive justice in general that I will present is that of G. A. Cohen (2008). As we have seen, both Rawls and Dworkin ultimately include work in their theories of justice in rather indirect ways, either via a concern for occupational choice over a range of options, or through hypothetical insurance with ex ante equal resources. Cohen (2008) stands out by emphasizing that the metric of equality should be sensitive to labour burdens – indeed, he thinks not including labour burdens in the metric of justice is ‘flatly absurd’ (Cohen 2008, 106). Cohen (2008, 370) seems to take welfare as the fundamental metric of justice,²⁷ and this metric is sensitive to labour burden (or job satisfaction), which presumably may be measured in welfare. Cohen is also quite clear in specifying how labour burden should be taken into account, namely that people’s job-and-income bundles should be equal in welfare terms (other things equal) (Cohen 2008, 181, 184, 200, 370). That is, Cohen supports the following egalitarian principle, which I call ‘equality of work and income’ (EWI) (see A1.1):

EWI: Justice requires that people are equal with regard to work and income considered as a whole.

A society that realizes EWI would also realize EIU, where EIU is interpreted in welfare terms: people with less job satisfaction are compensated by more income satisfaction.

An implication of EWI is that some people will be better off than they would have been in a system more like a free market. Others will be worse off, because they may have a bargaining position that in a free market would allow them to negotiate their way to both nicer jobs and higher incomes than most people have (Cohen 2008, 206–7). A major criticism of Cohen’s view is that it thereby allegedly violates freedom of occupational choice, especially as his principle would require some people to work as something other than what they would most prefer (Cohen 2008, chap. 5, esp. pp. 184–185).²⁸ I return to this objection in Chapter 2/A1.

This concludes my presentation of what the most influential theories of distributive justice say about work. I will now present some more recent theories and approaches that focus not just on distributive justice in general, but on distributive justice for work specifically.

²⁷ Cohen (1989), however, took the metric of justice to a more complex notion of ‘advantage’. I will not discuss what Cohen’s considered view on the metric of justice may have been.

²⁸ For some versions of this objection, see Casal (2013; 2017), Otsuka (2008), Kukathas (2015), Jenkins (2019), Thrasher and Hankins (2015), Lang (2016) and Mackay (2016).

1.2.2 Recent scholarship on distributive justice for work

This section presents some recent scholarship on justice in the distribution of work. I present four approaches in total, whereof the two first are theories within the liberal-egalitarian paradigm of the theories presented above, and the latter two depart from this paradigm.

First, Kristi A. Olson has recently published a highly sophisticated approach to distributive justice for work and income (Olson 2020), which stands in direct relation to the theories of Dworkin and Cohen presented above. Like Dworkin, Olson thinks the envy test is a promising approach to equality. However, Olson introduces and argues for a distinction between envy that is only based on one person's preferences, which she calls 'personal envy', and 'impersonal envy', which is envy that can be mutually justified (Olson 2020, 21–26).²⁹ Her novel proposal is a criterion of fairness that only requires eliminating (avoidable) impersonal envy (Olson 2020, 22). The case for this proposal

²⁹ Here is the example Olson gives to show how impersonal envy contrasts with personal envy, i.e. envy that cannot be mutually justified (Olson 2020, 14, 24–25). Suppose Adam prefers oranges, and Eve prefers apples, and there is one orange and one apple to allocate. Consider the following three allocations:

- 1) Adam: Orange; Eve: Apple
- 2) Adam: Orange and apple; Eve: Nothing
- 3) Adam: Apple; Eve: Orange

1 is free of all envy. But assume the apple has already been irrevocably assigned to Adam. We then have a choice only between 2 and 3. Unlike 1, 3 is not envy-free: both Adam and Eve prefer the bundles of the other. But the envy in 3 is personal envy: Adam envies Eve for the orange because of his personal preference for oranges, and Eve conversely because of her preference for apples, but no one is in possession of a bundle for which envy is mutually justified, i.e. no one has a bundle which both agree is preferable. Hence, there is no impersonal envy in 3.

Contrast this with 2. In 2, Eve envies Adam, who gets both the apple and the orange, while Adam does not envy Eve. But unlike the envy in 3, Eve's envy in 2 is mutually justifiable: both Adam and Eve would envy the bundle of the apple and the orange over the empty bundle. The criterion of impersonal envy-freeness tells us that 3 is fair, while 2 is not. The criterion of envy-freeness cannot differentiate between 2 and 3, as both include envy, and may even, at least *prima facie*, seem to prefer 2 to 3, as there at least in one sense is less envy in 2 (one envy relation from Eve to Adam, as opposed to two envy relations in 3).

Let us again compare the two options that satisfy the criterion of impersonal envy-freeness, i.e. 1 and 3. 1 is more efficient, but when there is an assignment constraint, such as the apple already being assigned to Adam, 1 is impossible. However, 3 is still possible, and is recognized as fair by the criterion of impersonal envy-freeness. This result is very significant, because the reason Dworkin gave up applying the envy test to work and resources is that such assignment constraints typically make an envy-

is that only impersonal envy violates equality as mutual justifiability. Personal envy cannot be justified to everyone, but is based on one person's preferences, so the existence of personal envy does not give rise to mutually justifiable claims, whereas the existence of impersonal envy does (Olson 2020, 24–26).

Olson then goes on to show how the impersonal envy-freeness criterion can be used to run a version of the work-and-resources auction Dworkin discussed. However, Olson's new criterion of fairness, impartial envy-freeness, avoids the problems Dworkin ran into.³⁰ Moreover, its outcome has a plausible claim to be a realization of an equal distribution of work and income (Olson 2020, chap. 3). That is, it has a plausible claim to satisfying EIU, and to being a reasonable interpretation of Cohen's EWI, but with impersonal envy-freeness as the criterion of 'equal in work and income considered as a whole'. Olson's approach can thus be seen as a refinement of these liberal egalitarian approaches, especially that of Dworkin, although Olson argues that her 'solidarity solution' is ultimately a relational egalitarian approach, because it understands equality as mutual justifiability (Olson 2020, chap. 4).³¹

Olson's approach is a highly sophisticated approach to work and distributive justice. At the same time, it is situated at a very high level of abstraction, and is really an approach to equality suited to comparing any kinds of bundles that are not straightforwardly commensurable. In this, it contrasts with Gheaus and Herzog's (2016) 'goods of work' approach, which is also broadly liberal-egalitarian, but stands out for being particularly sensitive to the specific ways in which work can be good.

Gheaus and Herzog (2016) approach labour market justice as being about a set of what they call the 'goods of work'. These are goods which people often

free allocation of work and resources impossible. That is, only people with talents for a job such as hockey player or brain surgeon can be assigned that job, even if the brain surgeon prefers playing hockey, and vice versa. Impersonal envy-freeness of work and resources will nevertheless be possible. Moreover, just like envy-freeness (unqualified), impersonal envy-freeness has the significant strength that it can work as a test of equality between goods that are not straightforwardly commensurable, such as beach access, Jaguars and degrees from Yale, or playing hockey at income x and brain surgery at income y .

³⁰ See the last paragraph of the previous footnote.

³¹ I.e. the strand of contemporary egalitarianism pioneered by Elizabeth Anderson (1999). Specifically, the solidarity solution satisfies the kinds of mutually justifiable demands that it is natural to expect that relational egalitarians would impose on distributive resource bundles: 1) last place diversity; 2) nondomination; 3) individually choice-worthy bundles; and 4) jointly choice-worthy bundles (in order of increasing strength) (Olson 2020, 62).

find very valuable, which are hard to realize outside of work (at least in contemporary society) and which are suitable objects of distributive justice, because their distribution is regulated by public institutions (Gheaus and Herzog 2016, 70). Gheaus and Herzog identify four such goods: excellence (realizing abilities and virtues), making a social contribution, community (as working towards a common goal with colleagues) and earning social recognition (Gheaus and Herzog 2016, 74–79). At the same time, their approach remains within the liberal tradition, which resists privileging goods of work over goods of leisure (Arneson 1987, 526). They do not claim that the goods of work have any special importance and should be provided to everyone, but rather that ‘employees whose conceptions of the good life include (some of) these goods should all have at least sufficient opportunities to realize them’ (Gheaus and Herzog 2016, 82).³²

Thus, Gheaus and Herzog provide a distinct and original approach to the metric question with regard to work, namely that this is a set of goods of work. Of the approaches above, it is perhaps most similar to that of Rawls, and could be read as an extension of Rawls’ list of primary goods, adding a set (or maybe an index) of goods of work to the list of primary goods and thus providing a measure of job quality, which we recall that Rawls’ own list is lacking.

I will now move on from liberal-egalitarian approaches to present two further approaches. First, Paul Gomberg (2007; 2018) has developed a theory of justice that puts work right at the centre, which he calls a theory of ‘contributive justice’. On his view, what makes life go well are things we do, and in particular developing our abilities and contributing them for the good of others (Gomberg 2018, 518; 2007, 45–46, 51). Therefore, on his view, justice should be concerned with opportunities to contribute to society, develop personal abilities and thereby earn esteem (Gomberg 2007, 66–70, 73, 149–55). He contrasts this with the liberal-egalitarian tradition and Rawls in particular, on

³² See also the justice claims in Gheaus and Herzog (2016, 73, 79–80). Discussing liberal neutrality, Gheaus and Herzog (2016) say that they assume a ‘mild perfectionism’, but I think they need not do so. I think their claims can be interpreted as a set of conditionals saying that ‘if an employee cares about the goods of work, and what we say about them is otherwise true in a specific society (i.e. hard to realize these goods outside of work, access is regulated by public institutions), the employee should have access to them at work as a matter of justice’. As I think these conditionals are true in our society, Gheaus and Herzog succeed in making a strong, liberal-egalitarian argument that justice requires access to the goods of work in our society, without basing the importance of these goods in a mildly perfectionist account of flourishing. It is based instead on what people themselves value, and the fact that the role of public institutions in regulating access to these goods makes them suitable objects of distributive justice.

which justice is about a set of distributive goods that are typically in limited supply (Gomberg 2007, 45–46; 2018, 518).³³ However, Gomberg points out, not all work develops our abilities, nor earns much esteem: Gomberg thinks complex work does so, whereas non-complex work typically does not (Gomberg 2007, 70–73). From this follows the two-fold labour-sharing norm of contributive justice (Gomberg 2007, 83–84):³⁴

1. Everyone should do their share of routine, non-complex ('bad') work.³⁵
2. Everyone should share the complex ('good') work.

On Gomberg's view then, work as a distribuendum of justice is really two distribuenda. The first is complex work, which is the good people want, and which we need to share fairly. The second is routine work, which is a bad that people tend to try to avoid, and which must also be done by all, so that all have the opportunity to share in the good work.³⁶ This approach thus also realizes something like EIU, as it recognizes that equal work for all without attention to work complexity (i.e. Gomberg's notion of work quality) will be unfair to those who work harder at routine work and do less or no complex (good) work.³⁷

³³ However, this criticism is not entirely fair to Rawls, who also recognizes that having good work may be more important than material goods (cp. Rawls 1999, 257). Moreover, Gomberg is arguably constructing a false dichotomy here: people may care both about what they do and about material goods. That said, as I also suggest in the discussion of Rawls above, the point that Rawls, despite his attentiveness to the importance of having good work, does not really incorporate a way to ensure that people get this into his theory is well taken.

³⁴ See also the fuller formulation of the norms of contributive justice in Gomberg (2007, 152–55).

³⁵ Sharing hard work is indeed the classical solution to the problem of hard work. It is the solution recommended by Utopian socialist Charles Fourier (1971, 314–15), is discussed also by Mill (1965, vol. 2, bk. II.i.3, pp. 206–207; 1967, 744), and more recently by e.g. Walzer (1983, chap. 6).

³⁶ Gomberg does not spend time on the obvious objection that complexity is a matter of degree, but arguably, there is no fatal objection to his approach here. Since the fundamental concern is in part with developing abilities and earning esteem, we can draw the line where work no longer achieves any of these. Or, if developing abilities and earning esteem also are matters of degree, we can treat 'self-realization-conducive and esteem-earning complexity of work' as the fundamental metric here, and treat it as scalar, and collapse the two norms into one: everyone should have equal opportunity for 'self-realization-conducive and esteem-earning work complexity'.

³⁷ I say 'something like EIU' because according to Gomberg (2007, 154), in a just society, people are not working for money. Thus, his approach rather embraces

Finally, several scholars make claims about work and justice as claims about ‘meaningful work’ (see Arneson 1987; 2009; Roessler 2012, 91–93; Veltman 2015; 2016, chap. 5; Walsh 1994; Murphy 1993, 4, 228). Although no one has developed an elaborate theory (à la Gomberg or Olson) of justice and meaningful work, judged by the number of scholars, this actually seems to be the most popular approach. However, behind the apparently shared interest in ‘meaningful work’, the scholars mentioned understand this concept, and discuss work and justice, in very different ways. This approach is the subject of Chapter 4, and I postpone the detailed discussion until then.

1.2.3 Distributive justice and work: A summary

Here is a summary of the points from the above introduction to work and distributive justice most relevant to the dissertation:

- Work has a place in all of the three most influential liberal-egalitarian theories of distributive justice, although what place differs substantially. Only Cohen (2008) is directly concerned with job quality, whereas Dworkin (2000) treats work justice as a matter of insurance against very bad labour market options, and Rawls’ (1999; 2001) theory of justice mainly protects freedom of occupational choice.
- Freedom of occupational choice is a recurrent objection to making strong claims about work and justice.
- Existing approaches differ widely on the metric question. Proposed metrics or distribuenda are: job satisfaction (welfare); work-and-income bundles; goods of work; complex and routine work; meaningful work. Moreover, the same distribuendum may be assessed in different ways, as when Cohen and Olson assess fairness for work-and-income bundles using different criteria (welfare vs. impersonal envy-freeness).

In the next section I present an alternative to approaching work as a matter of distributive justice, namely that of presenting a good work ideal.

1.3 Good work ideals

The presentation has so far focussed on the subject of work and distributive justice, as this is the topic of the dissertation. However, the strand of political theory that has engaged the most with work as a topic is arguably the socialist

something like ‘equal work without attention to the distribution of work complexity is unfair to those who do most of the routine work’, and seeks to realize its egalitarian corollary, i.e. something like ‘justice requires equality of work complexity’.

tradition.³⁸ Moreover, there is in this tradition a precedent for approaching work in a quite different way, i.e., not as a matter of distributive justice, but by presenting what I call a *good work ideal*, an ideal that work should satisfy. In this section, I introduce good work ideals as an alternative to a theory of work and distributive justice, show how they can be reinterpreted as theories of distributive justice, and argue that they nevertheless present a challenge to thinking of work mainly in terms of distributive justice.

I will first give two examples of how good work ideals can be thought of as alternatives to theories of distributive justice for work. The first is the Marxist ideal of unalienated work, which I will discuss through the lens of G. A. Cohen (1995) and Jan Kandiyali (2020). In a discussion of Marxism, self-ownership and distributive justice, Cohen suggests that the belief that abundance can be achieved through technological development together with the idea that work will thereby become ‘life’s prime want’ has been used by Marxists as a reason (or excuse) to avoid the subject of distributive justice (Cohen 1995, chap. 5).³⁹ If all work is enjoyable, there is no need for a theory of justice about how labour burdens should be shared: people will work because they enjoy it, and that will be enough to give people an abundance of the goods they want (Cohen 1995, 116, 122–26). Attributing this view to Marx and Marxists is at least not entirely unfounded, as Marx’s famous claim that work one day will be ‘life’s prime want’ is made as a part of the context for what will make it possible to cross ‘the narrow horizon of bourgeois right’ (Marx 1989, 87).

Thinking of work primarily in terms of an ideal can be found again in more recent Marxist discussions of work, such as Kandiyali’s account of Marx’s account of unalienated work:

fully unalienated production can be defined as work that (1) involves self-realization, that is, the exercise, development, and manifestation of our individual powers; (2) satisfies another’s need; (3) is conducted with the intention of satisfying another’s needs; (4) is used and appreciated by that other; and (5) is performed freely (Kandiyali 2020, 571).

Kandiyali’s discussion of the idea of unalienated work is careful and nuanced. On his account, (un)alienation is a matter of degree, as work can ‘tilt towards alienated labor or unalienated production’ (Kandiyali 2020, 571). Moreover, Kandiyali is very clear that some alienated drudgery will always have to be

³⁸ There is of course also overlap between the socialist tradition and philosophers working on distributive justice as this is understood in contemporary analytical political theory; G.A. Cohen is a notable example.

³⁹ Cohen doubts the possibility of abundance, and his point is therefore that Marxists have to discuss distributive justice.

done, and holds that this should be shared (Kandiyali 2020, 578–81). However, the ideal seems to be work that is ‘fully unalienated’ (e.g. Kandiyali 2020, 573). Indeed, the idea that unalienated work is at least to some extent an absolute ideal and not only (or all the way down) a matter of degree is also implicit in the need for a separate principle for what to do about alienated drudgery.

The second example of a socialist good work ideal that I will present is Utopian socialist Charles Fourier’s ideal of ‘attractive work’, drawing on John Stuart Mill’s (1967) analysis. Mill, discussing Fourier’s socialism, gives an appraisal that reminds of the comment Cohen made on Marxists above: ‘The great problem he [Fourier] grapples with is how to make labour attractive, since, if this could be done, the principal difficulty of socialism would be overcome’ (Mill 1967, 747). Mill does not say exactly what he views as the ‘principal difficulty of socialism’, but from the context (Mill 1967, 743–48), it seems to have to do with the distribution of work. The idea Mill attributes to Fourier thus seems similar to the one Cohen attributes to Marx(ists) above: if all work is attractive, we would not need theories of justice to allocate resources and labour burdens. People would spontaneously want to do all the work needed to produce all the goods we want.

Again, when we examine Fourier’s approach to work more carefully, we see that the attribution is not unwarranted. What is characteristic of Fourier’s approach to work is that it consists of what we may perhaps best describe as range of schemes and ideas for making work attractive. The first of these is variation (Fourier 1971, 275–78).⁴⁰ Moreover, people are organized into work groups, ‘the Series’, in order to facilitate team spirit, friendship and the excitements of rivalry and competition (Fourier 1971, 279–83). People are stimulated to appreciate the craftsmanship aspect of doing work such as cooking well (Fourier 1971, 287). Attraction will be added to work by making workshops themselves beautiful (Fourier 1971, 295). Service work is attractive because it is organized such that people are (almost) always serving a friend or romantic associate (Fourier 1971, 311–14). Dirty work will be done by those children who think that playing with dirt is fun anyway (Fourier 1971, 315–22). And so on. Fourier also acknowledges that some drudgery will always remain, and

⁴⁰ Consider Mondor’s day in the summer: he hunts (5:30-7:00), fishes (7:00-8:00), gardens (9:00-10:00) and breeds pheasants (10:30-11:30) in the morning, works in the greenhouse (2:30-4:00), grows exotic plants (4:00-5:00), and does some aquaculture (5:00-6:00) in the afternoon, and raises sheep in the evening (6:30-8:00). He has time for Mass, newspapers and five meals in between, and amusements later in the evening (and only sleeps 4.5 hours because he prefers his attractive work) (Fourier 1971, 277).

this work is rotated, and accompanied by privileges such as better food (Fourier 1971, 314–15). His general approach to work is thus to come up with some scheme or another to make it attractive in the straightforward sense that it is enjoyable, and that people genuinely want to do it.

Thus, while it is true that neither Fourier nor Marx and Marx scholars such as Kandiyali can avoid questions of the distribution of bad work entirely, their main approaches to work are to specify a good work ideal that work should satisfy, and in Fourier's case also to go quite far in speculating on how this may be realized. Moreover, this approach is seen as an alternative to developing a theory justice for the distribution of work – or at least, sympathetic critics have read it this way. These good work ideals thus pose a challenge to approaching work as an object of distributive justice, as contemporary political theory would tend to (and this dissertation also does), which I will call the 'good work, not just work' thesis (GWNJ):

GWNJ: Good work, not justice, is the ideal, and realizing good work makes justice in the distribution of work superfluous.

On the one hand, I think any contemporary political theorist can dismantle this challenge quite easily. First, if all work really becomes good ('life's prime want'), it will presumably be a scarce good. Recall from Section 1.1 that the work there is to be done depends on people's wants and needs, and for each who works, there has to be someone to consume. Thus, we will instead have to ask questions of justice about how good work should be shared, and who gets access to this good. When we also take Kandiyali's and Fourier's remarks about the persistence of some drudgery into account, we have a theory of justice that resembles that of Gomberg (in 1.2.2): one principle for access to good work, and one principle for sharing the bad work.

Second, good work ideals can easily be reinterpreted as a kind of *high-threshold sufficiency theory of distributive justice for work* (HTSW):

HTSW: All work should satisfy a given good work ideal as a matter of justice.

Finally, the ideal of work can be seen as an independent, but not competing ideal (in contrast to GWNJ). Thus, there is no inherent conflict between affirming a good work ideal and treating work as an object of distributive justice.

Still, I think it is interesting to maintain that good work ideals pose a challenge to the idea of distributive justice for work for two reasons. The first is that at least some orthodox Marxists reject theories of justice as bourgeois fictions, and it may in some cases be valuable to engage with that view on its own

terms.⁴¹ Second, and perhaps more importantly, in my opinion, there is some rhetorical force to demanding good work, rather than ‘merely’ a fair distribution of labour burdens.⁴² The latter ideal challenges us to share what is good and what is bad about work in a fair way, and is satisfied when we have done so. Good work ideals challenge us to demand more: to make all work good, and to not be satisfied until we have done so. Good work ideals are thus of interest for both parts of the research question: for RQ(a) when taken as a challenge to approaching work as a matter of distributive justice, and for RQ(b) either as a part of a high-threshold sufficiency theory of distributive justice for work, or as views on how work can be good more generally. I therefore return to good work ideals in Chapter 4.3.2 and in Chapter 5.

Before presenting the research in the dissertation, starting in the next chapter, I will provide a summary of this chapter.

1.4 Summary

Here is a summary of some main claims and observations made in this chapter:

- 1) Work (definition): Activities that are instrumental and intermediary to the satisfaction of needs and wants (1.1).
- 2) EIU: Equal income is unfair to the hardworking (1.2).
- 3) EWI: Justice requires that people are equal with regard to work and income considered as a whole (1.2).
- 4) Theories of distributive justice treat work in very different ways and propose very different answers to the metric question for work and distributive justice (1.2).
- 5) There is an objection from freedom of occupational choice to treating work as regulated by principles of distributive justice (1.2).
- 6) GWNJ: Good work, not justice, is the ideal, and realizing good work makes justice in the distribution of work superfluous (1.3).
- 7) HTSW: All work should satisfy a given good work ideal as a matter of justice (1.3).

⁴¹ On the debate over whether Marx thought capitalism was unjust, see Geras (1984), who concludes against the orthodox position to which the main text here refers.

⁴² Of course, a theorist of distributive justice can again just reformulate this as demanding ‘high-threshold sufficiency, rather than mere equality’ – and would thereby, I think, prove the point about rhetorical force being lost.

The motivation for RQ(a) about whether work is an appropriate object for distributive justice is Points 5) and 6). The motivation for RQ(b) about how to approach work as an object of distributive justice is motivated by the different approaches reflected in Points 2), 3), 4) and 7).

The next four chapters introduce and present the findings in the four articles of the dissertation, and show how each addresses or sheds light on some aspect of the research questions.

Chapter 2.

The objection from freedom of occupational choice

2.1 Background

We recall from Section 1.2 that freedom of occupational choice is often invoked as an objection to treating work as an object of distributive justice. If freedom of occupational choice prohibits interfering with individual occupational options, this would potentially preclude the possibility of a theory of distributive justice for work. Political theorists who discuss work and distributive justice therefore have to address this objection, and often do so at length (Cohen 2008, chap. 5; Olson 2020, chap. 9; Carens 1981, 90–93; 1986, 34–47).⁴³ Much of the recent debate has focussed on Cohen’s (2008, chap. 5) ‘ethical’ response to the freedom objection, and this is the debate addressed in A1.

By discussing and ultimately rejecting an important objection to treating occupational options as regulated by principles of distributive justice, A1 and this chapter thus address RQ(a), whether work is an appropriate object for such regulation. Of course, rejecting an objection to a certain view – in this case, the view that work is an appropriate object of distributive justice – is not the same as establishing that view. But in this case, I think there is a strong *prima facie* case for the view in question. As I mentioned in the introduction, work is such a central part of adult life that it would be strange if it did not matter to distributive justice. And work is clearly a part of both the benefits and burdens of cooperation. As we saw in 1.2, all three major liberal-egalitarian theories of distributive justice say something about work, although only Cohen ultimately includes it in the metric of distributive justice. Moreover, EIU is widely held, and implies treating work as subject to principles of distributive justice. Some, like Cohen, go as far as to say that it is absurd to have a metric of justice which is not sensitive to labour burdens. Thus, I take it that there is a strong *prima facie* case for treating work as an object of distributive justice, but that the objection from freedom of occupational choice remains a significant objection to doing so. I therefore focus on this objection in A1.

⁴³ See Moon (1983, 149–50) for a freedom objection to Carens. On freedom of occupational choice and distributive justice, see also Stanczyk (2012).

2.2 Summary of A1: ‘There is No Basis for the Freedom Objection: Rescuing Equality and Revisiting the Egalitarian Ethos’

Cohen (2008) affirms the principle of justice that I introduced as EWI in Section 1.2 (A1.1):

EWI: Justice requires that people are equal with regard to work and income considered as a whole.

His ‘ethical’ reply to the freedom objection goes as follows: distributive justice (i.e. equality and Pareto)⁴⁴ and freedom are compatible if people freely choose to act as distributive justice requires, i.e. act from an ‘egalitarian ethos’ – and if they are egalitarians, this is indeed what they will do (A1.1; Cohen 2008, chaps. 1, 5; 2000, chaps. 8–9). Another way to think of this is that people may use their freedom of occupational choice in just and unjust ways. They should do the former, and if they are egalitarians, this is also what they are committed to by their values.

Critics have been unconvinced with this response, and A1 addresses a particular criticism – what I call the ‘stronger freedom objection’ – which provides a Rawlsian rationale for rejecting Cohen’s ‘ethical’ reply: certain freedoms, hereunder freedom of occupational choice, have priority over distributive justice, because of their importance for citizens’ capacity to form, revise and pursue a conception of the good. Cohen’s reply to the freedom objection assumes that people can use their freedom of occupational choice in more and less just ways. It is therefore impotent against this version of the objection, which gives a rationale for why the way people choose to use their freedom of occupational choice is not subject to demands of distributive justice (Lang 2016; Mackay 2016; A1.2). To resist this version of the freedom objection, Cohen’s appeal to the egalitarian ethos is therefore not enough: he needs a substantive argument that his theory of distributive justice does not impose constraints on individual occupational choices that conflict with people’s freedom, and with their full exercise of the capacity to form, revise and pursue a conception of the good (A1.2). This is what A1 provides, by arguing that Cohen’s theory of distributive justice never violated freedom of occupational choice in the first place – and thus, did not really need the egalitarian ethos, either.

⁴⁴ That is, equality at a high level of welfare which satisfies the weak Pareto requirement that ‘condemns preserving a state of affairs in which everyone can be made better off’ (Cohen 2008, 184).

Cohen’s and subsequent discussion turn on the case of the Doctor-Gardener (hereafter, DG), who faces the following job options (A1.3, p. 11; Cohen 2008, 184–85):

Table 1: Cohen’s DG’s choice, A1.3, p. 11

Option	Description of doctor-gardener’s relative situation	Doctor-gardener’s preference ranking	Social preference ranking
Doctor at £50,000	Much better income, much higher job satisfaction	1	2
Gardener at £20,000	Equal income, very much higher job satisfaction	2	3
Doctor at £20,000	Equal income, much higher job satisfaction	3	1

Cohen’s theory of justice is taken to demand that DG work as a doctor at £20,000. Arguably, however, Cohen’s own DG case is not entirely aligned with his own principle of equality, which requires ‘that no one is *substantially* better off than others with respect to *both* income and job satisfaction’ (Cohen 2008, 184, emphasis in original). As the example is specified, DG is much (or very much) better off than most others in job satisfaction, regardless of which job she takes – and thus, arguably, none of her options are really equal. An option set that satisfies Cohen’s own principle of equality might therefore rather look like this (A1.3):⁴⁵

Table 2: DG’s Equal choice, A1.3, p. 13

Option	Description of doctor-gardener’s relative situation	Doctor-gardener’s preference ranking	Social preference ranking
Doctor at £12,000	Much lower income, much higher job satisfaction, equal overall	1	1
Gardener at £10,000	Half the average income, very much higher job satisfaction, equal overall	1	2

A substantial part of the argument that follows turns on the possibility of creating such equal option sets. When this is possible, the freedom objection seems to lose much of its force, for DG no longer prefers another option to the socially preferred option. Thus, a ‘minimally pro-social ethos’ (MPSE) that requires her to use benefits to society as a tie-breaker will do to make her choose

⁴⁵ The numbers are chosen for presentational purposes, to make the point that for options to be equal by Cohen’s own definition, the option that gives more job satisfaction should be accompanied by less income.

to work as a doctor.⁴⁶ This ethos is so weak that it arguably does not count as a principle of distributive justice over which freedom of occupational choice takes priority (A1.4, pp. 15-16). But just as importantly, the revised option set also shows us another way to avoid a conflict between individual and social preferences: we could tweak options a tiny bit more, so that working as a doctor is also DG's personally preferred option, while keeping it equal with the options other people get. Then DG will prefer to do what equality and Pareto require, and no ethos is needed (A1.4, p. 16).

However, as A1.5 recognizes, it may not always be possible to create egalitarian option sets such as those in Table 2. Some people may have very strong vocational preferences for doing a particular job.⁴⁷ It seems plausible that freedom of occupational choice should protect the pursuit of vocations, so presumably, if distributive justice required some people to abandon their vocations, this should be considered a violation of freedom of occupational choice. However, this is not necessary to satisfy Pareto, because people with vocations will not be moved by incentives, either. If there is a problem for Cohen here, it is that some people with vocations may get so much job satisfaction from their job that they end up better off than everyone else in terms of income and job satisfaction, so that equality is violated. I suggest that Cohen can accept this presumably minor deviation from equality (which is also not a conflict with freedom) (A1.5, pp. 19-20).

Thus, it is largely possible to realize equality and Pareto without an egalitarian ethos and without any conflict with freedom, at least in ideal theory. This means that the differences between Cohen's view of distributive justice and the view defended by Rawlsian critics of Cohen cannot be as great as it is often made out to be. Submitting occupational options to principles of distributive justice does not conflict with people's full pursuit of a conception of the good. And moreover, neither is there anything in Cohen's theory of justice that suggests it should conflict with people's capacity to form and revise a conception of the good (A.1.6).

A1.7-8 therefore suggests that the real and major disagreement between Cohen and Rawls(ians) is not that one allows incentive inequalities, whereas the other does not, or that one requires an egalitarian ethos. Rather, the main disagreements have to do with other and more fundamental aspects of their theories. Cohen thinks principles of justice are independent of empirical facts, is less concerned with matters of implementation, and therefore adopts a wel-

⁴⁶ See Olson (2017, 291).

⁴⁷ On the importance of vocations for work and distributive justice, see Wilkinson (2000, 21, 34).

farist metric of justice. Rawls' rejection of metrics that are not publicly recognizable makes it hard for him to incorporate an indicator of job quality into his metric of justice. His theory thus protects occupational interests in a more indirect way, through freedom of occupational choice. However, both theories of justice care about how well citizens' working lives go (see also Casal 2017). And therefore, Rawlsians do not really have any basis for raising a freedom objection against a theory of justice like that of Cohen, which also protects occupational interests, but in a different way, namely by incorporating them into the metric of justice.

2.3 Take-aways

A1 goes far in disarming the objection from freedom of occupational choice against one theory of distributive justice for work, that of Cohen (2008). On the way, it provides some support for EWI as a principle of justice for the distribution of work and income. Moreover, it makes the observation of more general relevance that the freedom objection loses much or all of its force against a theory of justice which protects citizens' occupational interests by treating work as an object of distributive justice. This paves the way for moving on to RQ(b), and discussing how to approach work as a subject of distributive justice. Cohen does this by discussing justice as being about work-and-income bundles, whereas the next chapter discusses another opportunity, namely that of seeing work and free time justice as closely connected.

Chapter 3.

Free time justice and work justice

3.1 Background

This chapter explores the possibility of approaching distributive justice for work as connected to justice in the distribution of free time. There are two main reasons why I think this is a promising approach. First, distributive justice claims about work, or goods of work, are sometimes rejected on the grounds that a liberal (or even a reasonable, moderately perfectionist) state should be neutral between good work and good free time (Arneson 1987, 524–26).⁴⁸ But this assumes that people should have at least one or the other, and thus supports, rather than undermines, the project of making claims of distributive justice about work and free time considered as a whole.

Second, there is a strong precedent in socialist thinking for the idea that bad work should be compensated with free time. This idea is developed elaborately by Edward Bellamy (1982, 72), and also suggested by authors such as Bernard Shaw (1929, 78–79) and William Morris (1993, 305). Recent work on compensation for differences in work quality in general seems to assume that this will be in the form of income (Olson 2020; Cohen 2008; Lamont 1997; Dick 1975), but this obviously need not be so. Gheaus and Herzog (2016) suggest that our concern with the goods of work is in part grounded in the fact that working people in today's society do not have the time to realize goods like self-realization outside of work. If they are right about this, then compensation with free time may be more appropriate than monetary compensation, as time compensation may enable self-realization outside of work, whereas more money may not do so. We can reformulate the two principles EIU and EWI from Chapter 1 as principles about work and free time instead:

EFTU (Equal Free Time is Unfair): Equal free time is unfair to the hard-working.

EWFT (Equality of Work and Free Time): Justice requires that people are equal with regard to work and free time considered as a whole.

⁴⁸ Note that Arneson later revisited and revised many of the claims made in Arneson (1987); see Arneson (2009).

The main topic of Article A2 is not the possibility of a connection between free time justice and work justice, but rather what we should really be concerned with, when we are concerned with temporal justice. However, as we will see below, the upshot of the argument supports seeing work and free time justice as closely connected

3.2 Summary of A2: ‘The Value of Time Matters for Temporal Justice’

There is a small but quite coherent recent literature on the topic of free time justice or temporal justice, pioneered by Robert Goodin et al. (2008) and Julie Rose (2016a; 2016b; 2014).⁴⁹ This literature has developed a concept of ‘free time’ that serves as the metric of temporal justice (Rose 2016a, 39–43, 58–60; A2.2).⁵⁰ The underlying idea is, I think, quite simple: There are some things we just have to do, which take time, such as meeting basic needs by working, and by taking care of house and family and our own bodies. Thus, some of our time use is just given, independently of our choices; this is non-free, or ‘necessary’ time. The way we use the rest of time seems ‘up to us’ in a different way, and this is our free time.⁵¹ Here is Rose’s definition (2016a, 58) of free time:

Free time is the time beyond that which it is objectively necessary for one to spend to meet one’s own basic needs, or the basic needs of one’s dependents, whether with necessary paid work, household labor, or personal care.

A2 criticizes this ‘free time’ concept’, and argues that temporal justice is really about the value of time, or about units of time with a certain value. It makes two main criticisms of the the established ‘free time’ concept referred above.

The first of these criticisms is that ‘free time’ as this has been defined does not succeed in tracking discretion over time, temporal autonomy, or ‘time for what we will’, the kinds of concerns that are supposed to make it morally relevant. This general challenge is made through a set of more specific challenges in A2.3. The first of these is that the border between free and necessary time

⁴⁹ For more recent contributions, see Malte Jauch (2020; 2021).

⁵⁰ Rose’s free time concept builds on the concept of ‘discretionary time’ developed by Goodin et al. (2008, 4–5, 34–52). There are some differences between these two concepts with regard to how they settle how much and what time is non-free, or ‘necessary time’, as Goodin et al. (2008, 36) call it, but these are not important for our discussion here. For more on these differences, see Goodin et al. (2008, 36–53), Rose (2016a, 53–58), Goodin (2017, 40–42) and Rose (2017, 106–8).

⁵¹ The same idea is found in Brown (1970, 176) and Shaw (1929, 77, 320–21).

is unstable because of discretionary choices, such as choices about work, relationships and whether to have children. Thus, discretion or autonomy is not unique to ‘free time’, but is to some degree exercised over all of our time (A2.3, p. 8).⁵² This takes us to the second point, namely that discretion itself seems a scalar concern, as we can have more and less discretion over both free and necessary time (A2.3, pp. 8-9). Third, time itself, and not just free time, is a resource, and there are questions of temporal justice that seem to be about time, rather than about free time (A2.3, pp. 9-10). For example, some people do not have enough necessary time: they may not have enough time to take proper care of their households, because their labour market options are so poor that they have to do several jobs.

The first criticism undermines the idea that ‘free time’ has particular moral relevance (A2.3, pp. 10-11). The second criticism goes one step further, by arguing that the value of time, and not ‘free time’ per se, is what should matter to temporal justice (A2.4). The argument turns on the following two cases, suggested by Rose (2017, 110; 2016a, 142–43):

Retail employee: Ann has a fair amount of free time, but because of her working hours, she is at work when others are free in the evening and weekends, and she is free when most others are at work.

Live-in housekeeper: Beth has a fair amount of free time, but because of the kind of work she does, her free time occurs in small windows between other tasks, and what she can do with it is very limited (A2.4, pp. 11-12).

Something seems to go wrong in these cases, and it is stipulated that nothing is wrong with the amount of free time Ann and Beth have. I propose the abductive inference that time varies in use value, and that what goes wrong in these cases is that Ann’s and Beth’s free time is poor in use value (A2.4, pp. 13-14). The deeper problem with the free time metric is that it categorizes time in a dichotomous way, as free or unfree, when the real underlying concern seems to be with the use value of time, which is scalar, and moreover applies to both free and non-free time.

The rest of the paper then makes a positive contribution by developing and discussing an account of the use value of time. It proposes the following account:

The value of a time period is determined by the prospects of this time period (A3.4, p. 16).

⁵² A preceding, minor point is that there may be a fourth kind of necessary time that Goodin et al. and Rose have overlooked, namely ‘morally necessary time’ (A2.3, p. 7; D. G. Brown 1970, 176) – but this is a minor revision to the concept, nothing more.

Prospect here refers to ‘the activities one may engage in and the states one may be in within that time period – that is, anything one can do or be in that time period’ (A2.5, p. 15). The most fundamental concern for temporal justice must therefore be with ‘hours of time with a certain value’, or ‘hours of time with certain prospects’, and not with shares of (free) time (tout court) (A2.5, p. 17). A2.6 sheds more light on the account by showing how time varies in use value with factors such as the amount of time one has to allocate (A2.6.1), the pattern of time that may be allocated (A2.6.2), and access to other resources (A2.6.3).

The last section, A2.7, responds to two objections to this account of the value of time: that it is not workable in practice (A.2.7.1), and that time with a certain value is a mixed resource, and not the kind of metric that resourcist distributive justice should operate with (A2.7.2). In reply, A2 appeals to the envy test as a way to compare time allocations without an exact measure of the value of different time periods, and which makes it possible to make such comparisons before (or perhaps as) time is ‘mixed’ with resources (A2.7.1-2, pp. 24-25). Thereby, A2.7 suggests an approach to temporal justice which resembles Dworkin’s equality of resources as envy-freeness, or Olson’s solidarity solution as impersonal envy-freeness.

A2.8 concludes that a complete theory of temporal justice must be concerned with both free time and with what happens in people’s non-free time. This implies that it will also incorporate work justice, as work (or at least necessary work) is a part of necessary time. This points to the kind of theory of work and free time justice sketched in Section 3.1 above.

3.3 Take-aways

The main interest of A2 is arguably the observations it makes about temporal justice. In the context of this dissertation, its importance is that it breaks down the barrier between free time justice and work justice. Thus, it supports approaching work justice as a matter of work and free time justice, and suggests that principles like EFTU and EWFT may be as just plausible as the more familiar EIU and EWI.

A natural next step would be to further pursue such an approach. However, that must be for another time. The next chapter explores a different, but more common approach to work and distributive justice, namely that of seeing this as being about ‘meaningful work’.

Chapter 4.

The concept ‘meaningful work’

4.1 Background

This chapter continues the project of RQ(b) by examining whether the notion of ‘meaningful work’ provides a promising approach to distributive justice for work. As noted in Section 1.2, for what is it worth, the most frequent way to make claims about work and distributive justice are as claims about distributive justice and meaningful work (see Arneson 1987; 2009; Roessler 2012, 91–93; Veltman 2015; 2016, chap. 5; Walsh 1994; Murphy 1993, 4, 228).

However, this does not mean that there is an established meaningful work approach to work and distributive justice. While there is a large literature on meaningful work, hardly any two scholars mean the same thing by this concept – indeed, Martela and Pessi’s (2018) recent review article finds 36 different definitions of ‘meaningful work’ in use (and proposes a 37th). I therefore believe any attempt to build a theory of distributive justice for work around the notion of ‘meaningful work’ has to start by examining this notion itself. Whether or not the notion of ‘meaningful work’ provides a good approach to the question of work and distributive justice depends, I think, on whether the best definition we can give of ‘meaningful work’ is such as to provide a promising approach to work and distributive justice.

Therefore, in A3, I engage in a form of conceptual analysis that aims at assessing and improving the concept ‘meaningful work’, i.e. a revisionary conceptual analysis (the detailed presentation of this method is found in Section II of the appendix). In Section 4.3.1 below I use the result to argue that it is misguided to construct a theory of justice for the distribution of meaningful work. To see why this is so, we first have to think carefully about what meaningful work is, and how we should use this concept, which is done in A3.

4.2 Summary of A3: ‘Meaningful Work is Work for a Good Reason: A Revisionary Conceptual Analysis of “Meaningful Work”’

Article A3 conducts a revisionary conceptual analysis of the concept ‘meaningful work’ and argues for the ‘reasons account’ of meaningful work: meaningful work is work that is done for a good reason.

There are different possible criteria for what counts as a conceptual improvement, so in practice, settling on what criteria to use will be a substantial part of the revisionary analysis itself (Appendix, Section II). A3 draws on two kinds of criteria: first, the idea of looking for a concept that is both more precise and more fruitful, from Carnap's (1950, chap. 1) idea of 'explication', and second, the idea of looking for 'the point' of a concept, or what task the concept should do, from Haslanger's (2012, 223–24, 385–87) idea of 'ameliorative analysis' (A3.1, pp. 3–4).

Reasoning with these criteria in mind, I propose two revisionary desiderata for a concept of 'meaningful work'. The first is introduced in the preliminaries, where I suggest that 'the point' of calling some work 'meaningful' is that it is not just good in one way or another, but good as in 'meaningful' in the sense in which this is used when we talk of 'meaning in life' (A3.1, p. 5).⁵³ The second conceptual revision takes more substantial argument (A3.2). The novel claim is that it is interesting to distinguish between cases where work itself is meaningful, and other ways in which one can have 'meaning at work'. This is the distinction between 1) and 2) below:

- 1) Lab technician 1 takes her job to be meaningful because developing a new vaccine – the project of her research group – is meaningful.
- 2) Lab technician 2 takes her job to be meaningful because she has meaningful friendships with her colleagues (A3.2, p. 6).

In 1 the lab technician work itself is meaningful. In 2, nothing is said about the meaningfulness of the work itself, but instead, it is noted that the work gives rise to meaningful social relationships. Now, let's say the lab technician in 1 also has meaningful relationships from her work. Then she is well off in terms of meaningfulness in a way in which the lab technician in 2 is not. The distinction between meaning at work (2) and meaning of work itself (1) captures this difference.

I think ordinary-language use of 'meaningful work' will tend to say that both 1) and 2) are instances of meaningful work, so I provide more argument for making this distinction. A first reason for doing so is to have the terminology to describe what goes better when someone has both meaning at work, e.g. in the form of good relationships with colleagues, but also has work that is meaningful in itself (A3.2, pp. 6–8). The second, and main, reason, however,

⁵³ This may seem obvious, but I think it is not entirely obvious: I think some scholars, e.g. Arneson (1987), use 'meaningful work' as a convenient shorthand for work with a set of good properties that do not have any clear or specified connection to meaning in life (cp. the definition of 'meaningful work' in Arneson 1987, 522).

is that most interesting questions about ‘meaningful work’ as a distinct topic are about work that itself is meaningful, or ‘the narrow concept’ of meaningful work (as opposed to the broad concept, which covers both meaning of work and at work). As any source of meaning in life found at work is a source of meaning at work, there is not really a distinct question about how work can be meaningful in the broad sense: this just asks for a list of sources of meaning in life that may occur at work. Thus, ‘the point’ of asking ‘What is meaningful work?’ must be that one wants to know what meaningful work is in the narrow sense; that is, how work itself can be meaningful (A3.2, pp. 8-9).⁵⁴

A3 then goes on to develop and defend an account of meaningful work that satisfies these desiderata, i.e. that is about how work itself can be a source of meaning in life. To do so, the article draws on Višak’s (2017) reasons account of meaning in life (A3.3). Višak (2017) argues that different accounts of meaning in life disagree only at the surface, whereas at a deeper level, they turn out to be about reasons for action. This makes the reasons account of meaning in life a promising point of departure for an account of meaningful work, as it avoids tying the latter account to one specific account of meaning in life, but instead ties it to a common element of such accounts. Višak’s reasons account of meaningful work goes as follows:

S’s life is meaningful if and only if and to the extent that S acts overall according to normative reasons for action (Višak 2017, 517; A3.3, p. 10).

Based on that account, I propose the following, somewhat simpler reasons account of meaningful work:

Work is meaningful when (and to the extent that) it is done for a good reason (A3.3, p. 10).

The reasons account is then discussed using three cases:

1. Sisyphus: ‘The gods had condemned Sisyphus to roll, ceaselessly, a rock to the top of a mountain, from where the stone would fall down by its own weight. They had thought, and with some reason, that there is no punishment more terrible than useless work without hope’ (Camus 1942, 163, author’s translation; A3.3, p. 10).⁵⁵
2. Care home leisure activity coordinator: ‘Most of my job was to interview residents and fill out a recreation form that listed their preferences. That form was then logged on a computer and promptly forgotten about

⁵⁴ While the argument thus most explicitly makes use of the idea of looking for the point of the concept ‘meaningful work’, the two desiderata identified also satisfy the criterion of allowing a more precise characterization of ‘meaningful work’.

⁵⁵ See also Taylor (1970), Wolf (2010, 16–25).

forever. (...) A lot of the time, I would complete a form for a short-term resident, and they would check out the next day. I threw away mountains of paper. The interviews mostly just annoyed the residents, as they knew it was just bullshit paperwork, and no one was going to care about their individual preferences' (Graeber 2018, 45; A3.3, pp. 10-11).

3. Meaningful assembly line: Consider work on the assembly line at a weapons factory. I (too) think this typically amounts to meaningless work. However, assume that a war against someone like Hitler – an existential threat to the community – breaks out. Arguably, the judgement on the meaningfulness of this work flips. Under these circumstances, this work is meaningful because there are very weighty reasons to do it, although it is presumably just as dull, monotonous, lacking in self-realization and autonomy and so on as before (A3.3, p. 12).

I think 1 and 2 are paradigmatic cases of meaningless work. The reasons account explains this, and also explains Taylor's (1970, 258–59) observation that Sisyphus' work at least seems to become meaningful if the stone stays put, and Sisyphus can use it to build a temple – that is, if Sisyphus gets a reason to do this work. The care home leisure activity coordinator's work is meaningless in a somewhat different way: there is a good reason for this job to exist, but not for doing what she is doing at her job, if the goal is to give residents better leisure (A3.3, p. 11). The third example is particularly interesting, because the assembly line is often taken to be a paradigmatic example of meaningless work.⁵⁶ The case shows that even this work can be meaningful if there is a good reason to do it – as the reasons account suggests (A3.3, pp. 11-12). Good reasons to work typically have to do with how well the work satisfies some need or want (A3.3, p. 13).⁵⁷ Finally, the reasons account fits well with the observation that disagreements about what work is meaningful often mirror disagreements about what work there is a reason to do, or more generally, what ends there is a reason to pursue (A3.3, pp. 13-14).

⁵⁶ Discussed, e.g. in Schwartz (1982) and Veltman (2016, chap. 3).

⁵⁷ This may seem to make the account of meaningful work somehow near-circular in light of the account of work in Section 1.1: work is meaningful to the extent that it satisfies needs and wants; that is, to the extent that it really is work. But if this is circularity, I think it is just circularity of a good kind: I think it is plausible that an activity really is more meaningful as work the better it succeeds in being work well done. Cp. Korsgaard's view that acting badly really is acting defectively (Korsgaard 2009, chap. 8).

The case for the reasons account is supplemented by a discussion which rejects other common accounts of what makes work meaningful, namely subjective meaningfulness⁵⁸ (A3.4.1), self-realization⁵⁹ (A3.4.2), alienation⁶⁰ (A3.4.3), autonomy⁶¹ (A3.4.4), the unity of conception and execution⁶² (A3.4.5), the greater good⁶³ (A3.4.6), and Veltman's (2016) four-dimensional account of meaningful work as central to flourishing (A3.4.7). For each of these it is argued either that they are about meaningful work in the broad sense, rather than the narrow sense, or that they have some other connection to meaningful work, without being what makes work itself meaningful. The greater good account is the account that gets the closest, but it fails to recognize that there are cases in which work can be more and less meaningful, without it contributing to the greater good.

Thereby, A4 demonstrates the usefulness of applying the method of revisionary conceptual analysis to the concept of 'meaningful work', shows the usefulness of focussing on meaningful work in the narrow sense (work that itself is meaningful) and proposes and argues for the reasons account of meaningful work.

4.3 Take-aways

4.3.1 'Meaningful work': Not a useful concept for JQW/RQ(b)

Having carefully examined the notion of 'meaningful work', we can now examine its relevance for a theory of distributive justice for work. We have already seen that many scholars do make claims about work and distributive justice as claims about meaningful work, but in the following, I show that on the understanding of 'meaningful work' argued for above, this is a misguided approach to distributive justice for work. The argument goes as follows:

⁵⁸ Michaelson (2021), Pratt and Ashforth (2003), Allan, Autin and Duffy (2014), Martela and Pessi (2018, 3).

⁵⁹ The idea that self-realization understood as developing skills and talents is what makes work meaningful is quite common, but expressed in different ways. Here is a list of some authors who make this claim, including the term they use to refer to (some aspect of) self-realization: Murphy (1993, 225–28), Bowie (1998, 1083: 'develop rational capacities'), Roessler (2012, 87–88), Veltman (2016, 118–19: 'develop and exercise human capabilities'), and Martela and Pessi (2018, 7).

⁶⁰ Roessler (2012, 87–88).

⁶¹ Roessler (2012); Bowie (1998); Schwarz (1982).

⁶² Murphy (1993, 8–9, 227); Walsh (1994, 241–44)

⁶³ Martela and Pessi (2018, 6–7).

- 1) Work is meaningful when (and to the extent that) it is done for a good reason. (A3)
- 2) In a well-ordered (i.e. just) society, all work satisfies needs and wants that should be satisfied. (1.1)
- 3) Satisfying needs and wants that should be satisfied is a good reason to work.
- 4) Therefore, all work in a well-ordered society is meaningful work. (1,2,3)

Thus, if there are work inequalities in a well-ordered society, they are not about meaningful work. The task of a theory of distributive justice for work must be about the fair distribution of other benefits and burdens related to work, but will not be about distributive justice for meaningful work. Another way to say this is that the question of the distribution of meaningful work in a well-ordered society is just the question of the distribution of work in that society. Focussing on meaningful work is therefore of no use for a theory of justice about work.

We can still ask whether there are interesting questions about the distribution of meaningful work under non-ideal circumstances. Egalitarians would presumably find the following plausible: other things equal, it is unjust that some people have more meaningless work than others. However, one interesting observation we can now make is that in the first place, distributive justice matters for whether work is meaningful. Meaningless work exists when and because there are injustices which have the effect that someone works for no good reason (e.g. unjust inequalities mean that rich people can buy more goods and services than they [as a matter of justice] are entitled to, whereas poor people do not have basic needs satisfied). That is, the existence of inequalities in work meaningfulness have to do with other distributive injustices, and responding to meaningless work will involve addressing the injustices that create the meaningless work in the first place. There may well be more to say about what justice requires with regard to the distribution of meaningless work under non-ideal circumstances, but as this is not my main topic, I will not discuss this further here.

Moreover, we can still ask whether meaning at work is a proper subject for distributive justice, even if meaningful work as meaning of work itself is not. We recall that meaning at work comprises all other sources of meaning in life that may be had while working. Hence, a theory of distributive justice for meaning at work would be a part of a theory of distributive justice for meaning in life overall. Interestingly, established theories of distributive justice do not include meaningfulness in their metrics (see Section 1.2), and classical accounts of meaning in life do not tend to raise questions about its just distribu-

tion (cp. e.g. Wolf 2010; Metz 2013b; 2013a). This may of course just be oversights on each of their parts – but again, this is a question that I will not pursue further here.

I have argued that the notion of ‘meaningful work’ is not useful for a theory of distributive justice for work. This may seem surprising, given how common claims about distributive justice and meaningful work are. I therefore think it is worth supporting this conclusion with some reflections on how such claims may arise. I will suggest two ways in which one may easily be led to make distributive justice claims about meaningful work.

First, assume someone is interested in work and distributive justice, and looking for a way to approach this topic (RQ(b)). One quickly realizes that work can be good and bad in several ways. This may lead one towards a complex approach concerned with several goods and bads of work (cp. Gheaus and Herzog 2016). One may then want a convenient shorthand for this complex notion of how work matters for distributive justice, and as ‘meaningful work’ is a familiar term from everyday language, one may just take that one. I think this may be what Arneson (1987, 522) does in his definition of meaningful work. Moreover, as at least some of the goods in this complex notion may also be a part of what makes work meaningful in the broad sense, the shorthand may seem roughly appropriate. As the ordinary-language notion of ‘meaningful work’ is arguably not very clearly defined, this also makes appropriating the concept easier.

Another reasonable response to the complexity of how work can be good and bad is to try to subsume this under a more general metric, such as welfare, as I believe Cohen (2008) does when he speaks of ‘job satisfaction’. However, treating work justice as a matter of welfare may come across as somewhat shallow. Work is serious business, after all. Consider one of Marx’s verdicts on Fourier’s schemes to make work attractive: ‘This does not mean that labour can be made merely a joke, an amusement, as Fourier naïvely expressed it in shop-girl terms. Really free work is at the same time damned serious...’ (Marx 2000, 403). Scholars of meaning in life tell us that meaning cannot be reduced to happiness, and may even trump the latter (Luper 2014, 207; Metz 2013a, 5, 60–62). If that is so, and work really can be meaningful, then job satisfaction may fail to get at an important, deeper aspect of how work can be good. I am sympathetic to this: happiness, satisfaction and fun are good things, and may also be the right metric for assessing e.g. the quality of a party. But I think we want something more from work. And as this deeper something more may well have to do with meaningfulness, and the term ‘meaningful work’ is floating around anyway, it is easy just to assume that this is what distributive justice for work should be about.

What I argue, however, is that even though we are right to be concerned that people should have meaningful work, this is not because meaningful work belongs in the metric of distributive justice for work. Having meaningful work is good and important, but we would achieve this if we can realize a society with distributive justice more generally, and distributive justice for work concerns other aspects in which work can be good and bad.

The two suggestions above are of course just conjectures, but I think they may have some plausibility as explanations of a very common confusion in recent analytical philosophy on the topic of distributive justice and work, namely that this is about meaningful work. That said, in the next section I will suggest that at least some discussions of meaningful work can be charitably reinterpreted as being about a good work ideal of the kind discussed in 1.3. Moreover, none of this is to suggest that there are no important and interesting questions about meaningful work – I think there are, but that they are not about meaningful work as the distribuendum of a theory of distributive justice. What I suggest is that the term ‘meaningful work’ should be used for the important purposes for which it is appropriate, such as diagnosing and criticizing work which there is no good reason to do, but less for everything else.

4.3.2 Meaningful work as a good work ideal

I will end my discussion of meaningful work and distributive justice by proposing what I, in light of the above, think may amount to a charitable reinterpretation of at least some claims about meaningful work and distributive justice. The reinterpretation I propose is to see these as good work ideals that are the basis for high-threshold sufficiency claims about work (HTSW, cp. Section 1.3). I will argue for the plausibility of such a reinterpretation of Veltman’s discussion of distributive justice (or social justice) and access to meaningful work (Veltman 2015; 2016, chap. 5) .

Veltman develops the following four-dimensional account what makes work meaningful (discussed in A3.4.7):

- (1) Developing or exercising the worker’s human capabilities, especially insofar as this expression meets with recognition and esteem;
- (2) Supporting virtues including self-respect, honor, integrity, dignity, or pride;
- (3) Providing a personal purpose or serving a genuinely useful purpose for others, and especially producing something of enduring value; or
- (4) Integrating elements of a worker’s life, such as building or reflecting personal relationships and values or connecting a worker to an environmental or relational context with which she deeply identifies (Veltman 2016, 117, cited in A3.4.7, p. 24).

This seems to be a demanding ideal, and this is also reflected in the way Veltman thinks about meaningful work and justice.⁶⁴ She argues that we should not give up the ideal of meaningful work, even if it is unlikely that meaningful work (on her account) will ever be available to all (Veltman 2016, chap. 5; 2015).

As I argue in A4.3.7, it is unclear whether Veltman's account of meaningful work is an account of meaningful work in the broad sense, or perhaps rather of how work may matter for human flourishing. Moreover, in light of the argument in Section 4.3.1 above, to the extent that it is an account of meaningful work, it is not an account of distributive justice for work. The reinterpretation I propose is instead to understand Veltman's account as a good work ideal, an ideal of how work should be, presumably grounded in a concern with human flourishing. This is a charitable reinterpretation, because it means that we can still make sense of Veltman's claims about justice and work by understanding them as claims about an ideal of work and flourishing, rather than about meaningful work: these claims make sense as a high-threshold sufficientarianism about work (HTSW). I think similar reinterpretations may be made of at least some other accounts of meaningful work and distributive justice (Arneson 1989; Roessler 2012; Walsh 1994).

Thus, we see that some accounts of distributive justice for meaningful work may be reinterpreted as theories of distributive justice based on a good work ideal. The next chapter engages with the idea of good work, and discusses what it takes for work to be a good in itself.

⁶⁴ Unfortunately, Veltman never tells us how the four dimensions are to be understood: are they necessary conditions, or different sources of meaning? They all seem to be scalar, but do they have to be satisfied to a certain degree for work to be meaningful? However, her claim that meaningful work will not be available to all suggests that meaningful work requires that at least several dimensions are realized to a high degree (as it is not likely that work that realizes at least one dimension to a small degree is not available to all).

Chapter 5.

The ideal of good work: How can work be a good in itself?

5.1 Background

We recall from Section 1.3 that in the political theory of work, good work ideals have often been considered as alternatives to treating work as an object of distributive justice: what matters is rather that work is good or attractive or unalienated (GWNJ, 1.3). Understanding how work can be good will also be of interest for a theory of distributive justice for work, whether that theory is based on a good work ideal or not. Hence, the notion of ‘good work’ is relevant both to RQ(a&b). Chapter 5 and A4 examines what it takes for work to be a good in itself.

5.2 Summary of A4: ‘Good Work: The Importance of Pro-Sociality’

A4 examines what it means for work to be a good in itself without assuming any specific theory about the good life, human flourishing or man’s ‘species being’ that would be unacceptable to liberals. Instead, A4 starts from an account of what characterizes work itself as an activity, equivalent to that elaborated above in Section 1.1, and based on this understanding of work, develops an account of how this activity can be a good in itself. It argues that this requires two-order pro-sociality: appreciating doing something good for others. Hence, the argument does not assume a specific conception of the good life, but yields the conclusion that work’s being a good in itself typically requires a conception of the good that incorporates two-order pro-sociality.

As an instrumental, intermediary activity, work contrasts with those activities that are by their very nature ends in themselves. For this reason, Marxists have considered work to be subject to a problem of work, freedom and necessity: unlike those activities that are ends in themselves, work belongs to the realm of necessity (Marx 1998, 807; Kandiyali 2014; 2017; James 2017; A4.1, p. 5).⁶⁵ I argue that the problem Marxists here identify is actually a problem of

⁶⁵ Specifically, Kandiyali (2014) discusses whether this conflicts with the positive view of work Marx expresses elsewhere, whereas James (2017) discusses whether work thus represents a kind of unfreedom, including under communism.

general interest and relevance: how can work, as an activity that is not done for its own sake, be a good part of a good life, and not just something that has to be done before the good part of life starts? Put another way, how can we come to will work itself, given that the content of work is given by needs and wants (A4.1, p. 6)?

One response popular among socialist writers is pro-sociality – wanting to do something for others (Fourier 1966; Marx 1975; Kandiyali 2017; 2020) – and A4.2 examines this response, arguing for the following three pro-sociality theses:

1. Two-order pro-sociality makes work itself good (in one way).
 2. Two-order pro-sociality may make work a good in itself.
 3. Pro-sociality is necessary to make work a good in itself (in most cases)
- (A4.2, p. 8).

The point of Thesis 1 is that pro-sociality must be two-order to make work itself good. That is, one must both appreciate the good of others (pro-sociality), and appreciate doing something for that good (second-order pro-sociality) – the latter is what makes work itself good. Thesis 1 is a modest thesis. It only says that two-order pro-sociality makes work better than it otherwise would be, and nothing is said about how much better. Moreover, the thesis is intended as a plausible thesis, not only as a hypothetical possibility. The possibility of pro-sociality as communal reciprocity is invoked to support its plausibility, as reciprocity is often considered a more common form of pro-sociality than e.g. altruism (A4.2.1, pp. 8-12).

Thesis 2 is a more ambitious thesis, which states that under favourable conditions, two-order pro-sociality not only makes work better, but that it may be enough to make work a good in itself, i.e. something people want as a part of the good life. As the argument for Thesis 1 shows, two-order pro-sociality makes work itself good, and if considerations about the goodness of doing some work are otherwise not too unfavourable – maybe the work is quite interesting, or maybe there is not too much of it – then two-order pro-sociality may tip the balance in favour of work. This means that at least under favourable conditions, work may actually be a part of the best life – a radical thesis, given that much of the history of philosophy considers free time to be better than work,⁶⁶ and that work is often contrasted with visions of Paradise.⁶⁷ It is also good news, at least if one believes, as I do, that there will always be some

⁶⁶ E.g. Aristotle (2002, bk. X.8-9), Kandiyali (2014, 118).

⁶⁷ Cp. the Expulsion from the Garden and Hesiod's *Works and Days* (2006, l. 90ff.).

work that has to be done. Collective freedom from work is not possible,⁶⁸ but collective good work may be – and that is good news indeed (A4.2.1, pp. 12-14).

Thesis 3 then states that pro-sociality is in most cases also necessary to overcome the problem of work, at least if work is to be a good in itself in general in a society (A4.2.2). The argument turns on examining five other ways in which work can be good:

- 1) Intrinsically (inherent interest and goodness)
- 2) Extrinsically (realizes extrinsic goods such as self-realization, social relationships)
- 3) Earning money
- 4) Earning recognition
- 5) Manipulated preferences

Of these, 3-5 do not really make work good. In case of 3, it is money, not work, that is good. Recognition may make work good in some cases, but not in all cases, and similarly, recognition, not work, seems to be what is good in these cases. Finally, manipulation of preferences would be a bad way to make work good, if it can even be said to do so in the first place (A4.2.2, pp. 18-21).

On the other hand, it is granted that work can be genuinely good, such that we may will it for its own sake, in the ways described by 1 and 2. However, such cases will be few and far between: it will take an enormous fluke for the things that need to be done to correspond exactly to something someone wants to do for its own sake, or for the extrinsic goods it yields. What will be more common is work that is quite good in one of these ways. Moreover, we may know of some jobs that are very good, but arguably, these would typically not correspond to any real job in a well-ordered society. This is why, in almost all cases, it will take at least some two-order pro-sociality to overcome the problem of work. Here is another way to state this point: if one wants e.g. self-realization, this can be had at work, but typically, may be better achieved outside of work. Only if one is also two-order pro-social (i.e. wants self-realization and appreciates doing something for others) will self-realizing work be what one really wants to do (A4.2.2, pp. 15-18).

Finally, A4.3 shows how the above argument implies a critique of some established accounts of how work can be good: these focus too much on how work can be good for the person doing it, but ignore the special importance of two-order pro-sociality, that is, the importance of whether the person cares

⁶⁸ See Kandiyali (2020, 581). The notion of ‘collective freedom’ is from Cohen (1983, 11–12).

about doing something for others. I first show this for Gheaus and Herzog's (2016) goods of work approach. I do not claim that anything they say is wrong – indeed, they are right in including pro-sociality on their list of goods of work (as 'making a social contribution'). But it is a shortcoming of their account that it misses the special importance of pro-sociality: this is typically needed to overcome the problem of work, and to really will other goods of work such as self-realization, as they are realized at work. Moreover, I believe this shortcoming is not particular to Gheaus and Herzog, but rather that it is inherent to the liberal-egalitarian paradigm within which they write, which resists acknowledging some goods as special (A4.3, pp. 22-24).

Interestingly, Marxist accounts tend to make much the same mistake. They focus mainly on how work can be good for the person who does it, but with particular attention to goods like self-realization, rather than neutrality across a set of goods of work (James 2017; Elster 1985). Indeed, I argue that this holds even for the Marxist account of good, or unalienated, work, which goes the furthest in recognizing the importance of pro-sociality, that of Kandiyali (2017; 2020). However, while Kandiyali recognizes the importance of pro-sociality, on his view, unalienated work always also requires self-realization, and the importance of pro-sociality seems to be in part indirect, as important for this self-realization. Kandiyali therefore thinks not all work can be good, but the argument for Thesis 2 suggests otherwise (A4.3, pp. 25-27).

None of this is to say that other ways in which work can be good do not matter. I argue that pro-sociality only goes so far in making work good. The point is that pro-sociality nevertheless does make work into a real good in important ways that I think most people would regret missing out on. This is why it deserves a special place in our understanding of how work can be good, and why it may be sufficient to overcome the problem of work under favourable conditions.

5.3 Take-aways

A4 shows the special importance of pro-sociality, both how this makes work itself good, may be enough to overcome the problem of work and make work a good in itself, and moreover, matters for the goodness of the other goods of work. Moreover, it shows that while work that is a good in itself is a distinct ideal from that of just work, it cannot be an alternative to aiming for distributive justice for goods and bads associated with work. The reason for this is the following: good work requires two-order pro-sociality, and the most plausible form of pro-sociality is a form of community, communal reciprocity. This form of community, in virtue of being a principle of reciprocity, needs a principle of burden sharing – that is, a theory of distributive justice for labour burdens

and goods of work.⁶⁹ Thus, realizing the ideal of work that is a good in itself turns out to require a theory of distributive justice for work. This ideal cannot be used to support a thesis like GWNJ.⁷⁰

A4 allows us to make an interesting observation about the kind of role work may have in a just and well-ordered society: in a just society, work may be appreciated as acts of caring, and as the basis of community as communal reciprocity. This contrasts strikingly with unjust work, which drives resentment and both demonstrates and exacerbates the failure of community. It also supports the idea that Utopia is characterized by good work in community, not by freedom from work (in contrast to the Garden).

I will end this chapter by briefly describing the difference between the idea of good work developed in this chapter, and that of meaningful work from the previous chapter. Recall that work is meaningful if there is a good reason to do it. Such meaningfulness is a way in which work can be good, but work can be meaningful without being a good in itself, as we may perfectly well not have a will to do what there is good reason to do. Moreover, and perhaps somewhat counterintuitively, on the ideals developed here, it seems that work can be a good in itself without being meaningful work in the narrow sense, if we appreciate doing more good for certain others (say, one's children) than one has a reason to.⁷¹

⁶⁹ What I say here goes beyond, and to some extent conflicts with, what Cohen (2009) says about community, as he thinks an important role of the value of community is to temper the outcomes of (luck-egalitarian) justice (Cohen 2009, 34). So I diverge from what Cohen says here, but I think I am right to do so. Reciprocity implies burden-sharing, presumably fair burden-sharing.

⁷⁰ The ideal of work that is a good in itself is of course only one possible such good work ideal, and we have seen examples of other such ideals in 1.3 and 4.3.2. I focus on this specific ideal, as I think it is a particularly interesting ideal that I think has broad appeal without relying on a specific conception of the good, see A4.1, p. 6.

⁷¹ Perhaps this work is nevertheless a source of meaning in life in another way. Also, the notion of doing more good for someone than one has a reason to may seem somewhat strange. Here is an example of what I have in mind: Kim is a good parent and his children are doing very well. Many other children in their city are not doing well, and there are good reasons why Kim should make a greater social contribution in some of the many ways he can do this to benefit these children. However, Kim instead focusses on working in ways that give his own children further and unreasonable advantages relative to other children. For example, we can imagine that he works at a private school that gives his own (and a few other) children unreasonable advantages relative to what most children get. Kim is then not doing the work he should do on the balance of reasons, but instead does work which the balance of reasons is against, which benefits his children. Assuming he is two-order pro-social towards his children, this work may well be good work for him.

Nevertheless, we recall that in a just and well-ordered society, all work is meaningful work. Moreover, a lot of meaningful work has the potential to be a good in itself, for meaningful work typically consists in doing something for others which there is a reason to do. Thus, work in a well-ordered society therefore typically has the potential to be a good in itself, as well as meaningful. Thus, while the two ideals are different and have been developed independently of one another, in a well-ordered society, there may be a connection between them: meaningful work for others in a well-ordered society always has the potential to be a good in itself, and when it is, this is so because one appreciates doing something good for others which there is a good reason to do – that is, because one appreciates doing meaningful work.

Chapter 6. Meaningful work, community and Utopia: Conclusions and outlook

The main body of this dissertation consists in four articles which were motivated by the same overarching research interest, but which are nevertheless on quite different topics, and as a result, the findings do not lend themselves well to one unifying conclusion. In lieu of that, I will first provide a summary of the findings, and then a brief further discussion.

6.1 Summary of contributions

I summarize what I take to be the most important findings for RQ/JWQ, and for other questions that were touched on directly in A1-A4, in the table on the next page.

Table 3: Overview of main contributions

Chapter/ Article	Contributions to RQ/JQW	Other significant contribution
2/A1	<p>The objection from freedom of occupational choice has little if any force against a theory that protects people's occupational interests as a matter of distributive justice</p> <p>Some support for Cohen's EWI: justice requires that people are equal with regard to work and income considered as a whole</p>	<p>The disagreement between Cohen and Rawls(ians) may be more about their conceptions of justice than about incentive inequalities</p>
3/A2	<p>Thinking of work and free time justice as a whole may be a good approach to distributive justice for work.</p> <p>Compensation in free time may be more appropriate than compensation with income</p>	<p>Temporal justice must be sensitive to variations in the value of time.</p> <p>Free time is not the metric of temporal justice.</p> <p>Hours of time with a certain value is the metric of temporal justice</p>
4/A3	<p>'Meaningful work' is not a useful notion for a theory of distributive justice for work</p> <p>Some discussions of meaningful work and distributive justice may be best interpreted as describing a good work ideal, and using that good work ideal as a high sufficiency threshold for work quality (HTSW)</p>	<p>Distinction: meaning at work/meaning of work itself</p> <p>Meaningful work (in the narrow sense): work is meaningful if and to the extent that it is done for a good reason</p>
5/A4	<p>Good work may require justice in the distribution of work (because it may require communal reciprocity)</p> <p>The ideal of work that is a good in itself is not an alternative to a theory of distributive justice for work</p>	<p>The three two-order pro-sociality theses: two-order pro-sociality (1) makes work itself good in one way; (2) may overcome the problem of work and make work a good in itself; (3) is typically necessary to overcome the problem of work</p> <p>The most plausible form of the pro-sociality thesis relies on community as communal reciprocity</p>

6.2 Concluding outlook: Meaningful work, community and Utopia

I will end by summarizing how this dissertation responds to the research questions, and with some further reflection on the findings.

With regard to RQ(a), the dissertation rejects one objection to treating work as an object of distributive justice, the objection from freedom of occupational choice (A1/Chapter 2). Moreover, it casts some doubt on good work ideals as an alternative to a theory of justice (GWNJ), both when discussing this alternative approach (1.3), and by developing a good work ideal that turns out to require a theory of distributive justice (Chapter 5/A4). With regard to RQ(b), the dissertation explores two approaches. Approaching distributive justice for work as being about meaningful work is shown to be misguided (Chapter 4/A3), whereas Chapter 3/A2 is favourable to treating work and free time justice as closely connected. Moreover, Chapter 5/A4 shows how the ideal of good work may require a just distribution of work, but is a distinct ideal.

If I should try to summarize the findings of the dissertation into one claim, it would be the following:

Utopia is characterized by meaningful work in community.

This claim connects the main themes of the dissertation. Utopia is about good work, not freedom from work (A4/Chapter 5). Good work is done in community, and requires a just distribution of work (A4/5.3). Just work is meaningful work (4.3.1/A3), and A1-2/Chapters 2-3 provide some significant observations for a theory of a just distribution of work, and a just distribution of free time. Thus, Utopia is characterized by good and meaningful work in community with labour burdens, goods of work and free time shared fairly. Of course, work is not all there is to Utopia, which is presumably also rich in free time – the point of this claim is to highlight the finding that the best life is a life with good (and just) work, not a life free from work.

The second reason I emphasize this claim is that I think it is the most interesting and radical claim from this dissertation. As A4.2.2 points out, it goes against the leading view in the philosophical canon – but just as interestingly, I think it goes against the zeitgeist in and outside of philosophy. As I am finishing up this dissertation, the ‘hot topic’ is arguably not good work, nor just

work, but anti-work.⁷² That may be understandable, given the injustice of the contemporary labour market, and it may also be a reasonable form of protest. But as a vision and ideal, I think it is neither reasonable, nor as desirable as it may seem. As Kandiyali observes, there is no collective freedom from work.⁷³ Consider all the tasks that have to be done to sustain a person from cradle through adulthood to grave. There is no way all of those activities will ever be automatized, nor would a society where they were be a very nice place to live. Any vision of Utopia that is to be a utopia for all will contain work.⁷⁴ This is why the project of a theory of justice for work is inescapable, and the possibility that work may be a good in itself such good news. Work today may often be a site of exploitation and domination, but it holds the potential to be an arena for living out goods of caring and community. This is why Utopia is not the Garden, and why the kind of visions we need are not of a society without work, but of how we get to a society characterized by meaningful work in community.

⁷² For example, the forum thread ‘Antiwork: Unemployment for all, not just the rich!’ (r/antiwork n.d.) on the popular online forum reddit is gaining such a following as to catch the attention of the conservative press (Rogers 2022; Bernsen 2021). Anti-work is also the topic of recent work in philosophy (Weeks 2011). A classic anti-work manifesto is Bob Black’s ‘The Abolition of Work’ (Black 1986).

⁷³ Specifically, he observes: ‘There is no collective freedom from drudgery’ (Kandiyali 2020, 581).

⁷⁴ Therefore, while it may be that a lot of people have good reasons to stop working and engage in anti-work politics, I do not think ‘anti-work politics and post-work imaginaries’ are valuable philosophical projects, pace Weeks (2011).

Appendix: Methodology

This is a dissertation in political theory which addresses normative and conceptual questions. In this appendix, I present the two methodological approaches I have applied: reflective equilibrium reasoning (I) and revisionary conceptual analysis (II).

I. Reflective equilibrium reasoning

Reflective equilibrium is arguably the most widely used methodology in contemporary political theory (Knight 2017, 46; Tersman 2018, 1).⁷⁵ The natural goal for the methodology section of a dissertation such as this one would be to present this methodology and describe how it has been applied in the dissertation above. The latter I will do, but with regard to the former, I find that ‘standard’ presentations of this methodology are unfortunately so unclear on crucial points that it is not really possible to just give a standard presentation. The presentation will have to be accompanied with some discussion of these unclarities.

Here is what I think amounts to a fair, one-sentence description of reflective equilibrium reasoning: reflective equilibrium reasoning in normative theory is a method of normative reasoning that proceeds by examining considered views (or considered judgements) about what to do in specific cases, and considered views at a more general level, such as views about moral principles, and tries to bring these into coherence (cp. Knight 2017, 46; Daniels 2016; Tersman 2018, 2). I think this brief presentation raises at least the following questions:

- 1) What are ‘considered views’, or ‘considered judgements’?
- 2) What is coherence, and what does it mean to make considered judgements coherent?
- 3) How is this different from just thinking – and is it sufficiently distinct to merit being called a ‘methodology’?

With regard to 2, coherence is traditionally taken to mean that the propositions in question are logically consistent and, moreover, ‘support’ each other

⁷⁵ However, note that the approach is not unique to political philosophy or normative theory, and has its origins in Goodman’s work on the justification of logic (Goodman 1983; Daniels 2016, para. 2.1).

(Olsson 2021, para. 3). Specifying what ‘support’ amounts to (over and above consistency) is where it gets hard to be precise about what coherence means, and this is a large debate (see Olsson 2021, paras. 3–4). I will not have much more to say about this, beyond giving some examples of such thicker supporting relations as we go along.

With regard to 1, if reflective equilibrium reasoning is how we should proceed to make progress on normative questions, it is very important that we be able to specify the kind of input reflective equilibrium reasoning takes, i.e. what considered judgements are. It is therefore all the more worrying that presentations of reflective equilibrium often do so by invoking the unclear notion of ‘intuitions’, which, moreover, turns out to be understood in different ways by different normative theorists. I therefore discuss the question of inputs in I.II.

With regard to 3, I think the suspicion that the brief description reasonably may give rise to has two sources. First, the emphasis on coherence, which is of course not sufficient to make a method, as coherence (and consistency) is just a feature of thinking done well. Second, and perhaps more importantly, I think reflective equilibrium reasoning really just is a way of thinking. However, as we get a more detailed description in I.I and I.II, I think it will become clearer that it is a sufficiently structured and distinct way of thinking that it may merit being called a methodology.

It is also worth noting that reflective equilibrium is at the same time a method of reasoning and a method of justification. That is, the outcome of reflective equilibrium reasoning is also considered justified in virtue of the coherence relations that this process of reasoning uncovers and establishes (Rawls 1999, 18–19).⁷⁶

Finally, any inquiry is under obligation to justify its use of method, and noting that a method is standard or widely used is not much of a justification. I therefore discuss what reflective equilibrium reasoning can do for us in I.III.

I.I How to engage in reflective equilibrium reasoning

As noted above, reflective equilibrium reasoning proceeds by examining and adjusting considered judgements about normative questions to bring these

⁷⁶ At least those coherence relations that have been found and established as we approach ‘wide reflective equilibrium’ (Rawls 2001, 31–32) – I will explain what characterizes wide reflective equilibrium below.

into coherence, or a state of equilibrium (I return to the question of what ‘considered judgements’ are in I.2 below). Here, I will describe more elaborately what engaging in reflective equilibrium reasoning amounts to.⁷⁷

According to Rawls, we make ‘considered political judgements at all levels of generality’: about the actions of individuals, about the (in)justice of specific institutions or policies and at the level of general moral principles (Rawls 2001, 30). Hence, reflective equilibrium reasoning involves examining and adjusting views at all these levels. The easiest way to describe this may be as a dialectic between judgements about what to do in specific cases, and judgements about general principles. Here is an example of coherence of judgements at different levels:

Description of situation: Anna’s job is worse than Paul’s job in a morally relevant way (e.g. less job satisfaction, there is impersonal envy, less goods of work, less complex work, etc., cp. Section 1.2).

Judgement about particular case: Anna should be paid more than Paul.

Relevant general principle: EIU (Equal income is unfair to those who are more ‘hardworking’ in a morally relevant way).

Here, the judgement about the particular case is coherent with the relevant general principle, both by being consistent, and in virtue of the fact that the judgement about the particular case, while it may have been made independently, may also be inferred from the general principle together with the description of the specific situation. Such derivability of the particular judgement amounts to one example of the kind of ‘thicker’ ‘support’ that may be a part of coherence (Brun 2014, 240).

However, a close examination of our normative judgements must be expected to reveal that they are not all coherent. Here is an example of how this may go, resuming the case from above:

Judgement about particular case: Paul should compensate Anna because her work is worse in a morally relevant way.

General principle 1: EWI (Justice requires that people are equal with regard to work and income considered as a whole).

General principle 2: Freedom of occupational choice (Freedom of occupational choice prohibits interfering with occupational options).

⁷⁷ The presentation that follows draws heavily on Rawls (2001, para. 10; 1999, para. 9), Daniels (2016) and Knight (2017).

Here, the two general principles are inconsistent with each other, and the judgement about the particular case is (or seems) coherent with the first general principle, but not with the latter.⁷⁸ In response, one may drop one of the inconsistent principles, or seek to revise one or both principles and/or the judgement about the particular case in order to remove the inconsistency. It is an important feature of reflective equilibrium reasoning that judgements at all levels of generality are considered and may be revised (Knight 2017, 47; Daniels 2016, para. 1). Indeed, the metaphor of ‘equilibrium’ suggests this notion of a dynamic coherence that is continuously adjusted as new (and presumably more well-founded) judgements are made.

The case above is a good illustration how reflective equilibrium is used in this dissertation, as A1 is about whether there is an inconsistency between these two general principles, and how it may be resolved. Cohen (2008) has argued that a third principle, the egalitarian ethos, removes the inconsistency, whereas scholars like Mackay (2016) and Lang argue that it does not. A1 examines carefully what the two principles above really imply. It argues that when EWI is interpreted correctly, little or none of the perceived inconsistency remains. Thus, the first principle is reinterpreted, and the second is reexamined, and perhaps moderately revised, and the result is a newfound coherence.

In a similar way, A2 brings forward a set of judgements about temporal justice which cannot be explained using Goodin et al.’s (2008) and Rose’s (2016a) free time metric. There are strong elements of internal critique in A2, i.e. showing that Goodin et al.’s and Rose’s descriptions of free time are incoherent with what they say about temporal justice elsewhere. The conclusion that coherence can be achieved by revising the metric of justice to ‘hours of time with a certain value’ is proposed as an abductive inference, another ‘thicker’ form of ‘support’ relation that may hold between judgements.

We have thus seen some examples of how judgements related to specific issues are examined and revised through reflective equilibrium reasoning in this dissertation. Rawls calls a reflective equilibrium achieved with the fewest revisions to our initial judgements a ‘narrow reflective equilibrium’ (Rawls 2001, 30). The ideal end-state of reflective equilibrium reasoning, however, is

⁷⁸ Perhaps it is not obvious that EWI and freedom of occupational choice are incoherent – after all, I also argue that they are not in A1. One may then instead imagine a version of EWI that prescribes that good and bad work should be shared equally, à la Gomberg, and a judgement in the Anna-Paul case that says that Paul should do some of Anna’s bad work and let her do some of his nice work, which is more likely to be incoherent with a pre-reflective notion of freedom of occupational choice.

not just a set of such narrow equilibria, but what is called ‘wide’ or ‘full’ reflective equilibrium, i.e. a reflective equilibrium that has been reached via wide-ranging reflection in which one has considered leading alternative conceptions of justice (or relevant moral principles) and the arguments for them (Rawls 2001, 31). It is in wide or full reflective equilibrium that our views are considered justified, as only here have we considered how all (or at least many of) our views fit together, and also tested them against other leading views. Thus, only in wide reflective equilibrium have we found what Rawls calls ‘[t]he most reasonable political conception for us’ – which is also the best we can do (Rawls 2001, 31).⁷⁹

Wide reflective equilibrium is thus very demanding, and it may be best to think of it as an ideal to be approached (Knight 2017, 49–50). It is not something that can be achieved within one paper, nor what I do in this dissertation. Indeed, I think most of what philosophers do is really finding such narrow reflective equilibria on restricted issues, and the papers in this dissertation are typical examples of this. Some width may be claimed from the fact that the papers partake in larger ongoing debates, such as the Rawls-Cohen debate for A1, or building on Višak (2017), who surveys several accounts of meaning in life in A3. The hope is that the sum of such restricted deliberations and debates over time can approximate wide reflective equilibrium, and that this dissertation and the papers it consists of each make their contribution to that project.

Thus, we have at least two reasons to believe that normative judgements that have been subject to reflective equilibrium reasoning are better than those which have not. The first is coherence, which protects us from theoretical and practical mistakes. Theoretically, it protects us from affirming propositions that are mutually incoherent, and practically, it may protect us from acting against our principles or values in specific cases, or from holding on to misguided principles or values. The second is the notion of wide reflective equilibrium, and the hope that the more of our own judgements and of alternative views that we consider, the harder it will be to hold on to misguided views.

In I.III, I return to the question of what reflective equilibrium can do for us as a method. Before that, I will discuss what input reflective equilibrium takes, hereunder, the notion of ‘considered judgements’.

⁷⁹ At least on Rawls’ view, reflective equilibrium provides a ‘nonfoundationalist’ justification of our normative views: their whole justification lies in their coherence in reflective equilibrium (Rawls 2001, 31). The alternative view is that some views are foundational, i.e. either self-evidently true, or at least justified in some other way than by coherence (Olsson 2021, para. 1).

I.II Input: Considered judgements, not intuitions

On a standard presentation of the methodology of political theory, the input that goes into normative reasoning generally, and reflective equilibrium reasoning specifically, is typically said to be one of two things: either ‘intuitions’ or considered judgements. However, the two are also often conflated, so that it is not clear whether there is a disagreement about the kind of input reflective equilibrium reasoning takes, or whether there are just two words for the same thing. List and Valentini (2016, 541), for instance, seem to conflate them, speaking of ‘intuitive judgements’, and Knight says that ‘[j]udgements are our intuitions’ (Knight 2017, 46). Rawls, too, equivocates between speaking of considered judgements, and accounts that are ‘intuitively appealing’ (Rawls 1999, 42).

In the following, I will first discuss the idea that reflective equilibrium reasoning relies on intuitions. I argue that it is unclear both what philosophers thereby mean, and that what they might thereby mean actually picks out a suitable input for reflective equilibrium reasoning. I take some care to show that arguments that may be interpreted as appeals to intuitions in this dissertation are not best understood that way. I then explain the notion of a considered judgement, which is a better take on the kind of input reflective equilibrium reasoning requires.

A fundamental problem with the claim that reflective equilibrium reasoning relies on intuitions is that it is very unclear what philosophers thereby mean, and indeed, a quick examination will show that they mean very different things. Here are two examples:

1. Shelly Kagan (2001, 44) thinks intuitive reactions to cases are central to moral thinking. He admits that he does not have a ‘general characterization’ of intuitions, but I commend him for trying to describe what intuitions are, even at some length (in Kagan 2001, 45, footnote 1).⁸⁰ He thinks intuitions are ‘something more like a disposition to believe’, with two characteristic qualities:
 - i. Immediate, spontaneous, not dependent on conscious inference.
 - ii. Simply ‘appear’ to be the case.

⁸⁰ The problem that it is unclear what philosophers mean by intuitions is exacerbated by the fact that many philosophers make claims about intuitions without specifying what they thereby mean, or at least without giving any careful characterization. Thus, in this respect, Kagan stands out favourably.

2. Rawls (1951, 183): In an early description of considered judgements, Rawls says these are intuitive, as in not ‘determined by a conscious application of principles so far as this may be evidenced by introspection’. However, he contrasts this with ‘impulsive’ or ‘instinctive’, and says judgements can be intuitive after thorough investigation.

These two accounts have one commonality: intuitions are not consciously inferred. Indeed, Georg Brun’s study of a wide range of accounts of intuitions suggests this is also the only common denominator (if there is one) across various accounts of intuitions (Brun 2014, 244).⁸¹ The comparison also reveals a major difference: Kagan thinks that intuitions are spontaneous and immediate, whereas Rawls thinks they are not impulsive or instinctive, but can follow from a thorough examination. I think this is such a substantial difference that we may question whether Kagan and Rawls are using the same input and method at all.⁸² But for now, let us note that we here have two accounts of intuitions:

Kagan intuitions: Not consciously inferred, immediate/spontaneous.

Rawls intuitions: Not consciously inferred, not impulsive/may follow investigation.

⁸¹ For another useful review of several accounts of intuitions, see Cappelen (2012, 7–12), which will reveal many further differences in how intuitions are described and what they are taken to be: some say a belief, some a disposition or inclination to believe, some a *sui generis* mental state, some say they are accompanied by special phenomenology.

If someone experiences special phenomenology when introspecting for intuitions, I can see how this may be a useful distinguishing feature, but personally, I never have special phenomenology when reasoning about political philosophy. I am at least relieved to hear that I am in the company of Cappelen (2012, 117–18). Moreover, if a theorist wants to affirm that intuitions are characterized by a special phenomenology, she faces the observation that not all people have special philosophy-related phenomenological experiences (indeed, not even all people who at least appear to engage in philosophy do so). Moreover, to claim that only people with such experiences can properly engage in reflective equilibrium reasoning (because only they can identify intuitions) would in my eyes be such a strange way to say who can and cannot do philosophy as to be a *reductio*.

⁸² Admittedly, Kagan is discussing what he describes as the method of thinking about cases, and thus, is not explicitly describing reflective equilibrium reasoning here. The comment may thus apply more appropriately to someone who either engages in reflective equilibrium reasoning using Kagan intuitions, or who engages with Kagan (and thus with conclusions which are said to be based on Kagan intuitions) as a part of the process of searching for wide reflective equilibrium.

I will now reject both of them as appropriate input into reflective equilibrium reasoning.

First, the idea that the input to reflective equilibrium reasoning should be immediate and spontaneous appears particularly strange to me, and if it is anywhere close to correct, I think it would also put reflective equilibrium reasoning in a very bad light. At least for most purposes, immediate and spontaneous judgements are the least reliable judgements to be had. When making up our minds about mundane matters such as what to have for dinner or where to go on holiday, we do not have to rely on our spontaneous judgements, but can spend some more time thinking and reasoning, and often find that decisions get better by doing so. That surely holds when reasoning about philosophy, too. I am not sure whether anyone would claim that immediate judgements takes precedence over later, more reasoned judgements. After all, we recall from above that one of the distinctive features of reflective equilibrium reasoning is that all judgements may be revised as we go along. However, I still think Kagan's suggestion that immediate, spontaneous judgements have a central place – indeed, that they have any place – in moral reasoning is so strange that I find it hard to take him at his word.⁸³ Indeed, I agree with Cappelen that it would be uncharitable towards philosophers to suggest that this is how they are really reasoning (Cappelen 2012, 82). If signs of more thorough reasoning can be found – as I think will (almost) always be the case in a philosophical text – it seems more charitable to think that the philosopher is actually reasoning carefully, regardless of what she perhaps takes herself to be doing.

Second, I also think the idea that the input to reflective equilibrium reasoning should be not consciously inferred is highly dubious. The main problem with this idea is that I cannot see how being or not being consciously inferred should matter for whether a judgement is appropriate as input to reflective equilibrium reasoning. Take a simple, well-known case like the trolley problem.⁸⁴ Thomson (1985, 1395) says everyone with whom she has discussed the case agrees that it is permissible to redirect the trolley, and I think so, too.

⁸³ Of course, there is a sense in which, if we react to a moral problem with a spontaneous, immediate judgement, then we have no other option than to start our reasoning from there (as this judgement is now a part of our reasoning, whether we like it or not). However, this is very different from saying that the kind of input philosophers look or should look for consists in these kinds of judgements.

⁸⁴ Imagine you are driving a trolley which is on its way to hit and kill five people. Is it permissible to divert the trolley onto a side-track where it will only kill one person? (Thomson 1985, 1395; Foot 1967).

I do not need to reason consciously to make this judgment, it comes to me quite immediately and spontaneously. But if I do try to reason about the case consciously, I find that I make this judgement because I, very conventionally, think the death of one is less bad than the death of five. I just cannot see any reason why the not-consciously inferred judgement should have any more interest than the consciously inferred judgement. On the contrary, I am inclined to put more faith in the consciously inferred judgement, as it is explicit about the reason that backs it up. Moreover, I find it at least not unlikely that when I make the corresponding not consciously inferred judgement, the same reasoning is behind my judgement, only that it happens too quickly for me to notice it consciously. After all, the judgement that one dying is less bad than five dying seems to me a very easy call to make.

The second problem with this idea, I think, is that I am not sure whether there really is a coherent category of not consciously inferred judgements. Presumably, the judgements that I can make without conscious reasoning today draw on whatever is stored in my memory, hereunder both consciously and not consciously inferred judgments. Therefore, I think the following may well happen: you present me with an ingenious thought experiment that I have never heard before. The case is, however, perfectly analogous to a case that I have reasoned about consciously and carefully quite recently, and I immediately and unconsciously notice the similarity and make a judgement. The judgement is unconscious, but relies (unconsciously) on a conscious judgement. Or more probably, it relies on a range of conscious and unconscious judgements, as I suspect most of our judgements do.

Thus, I doubt that there is a coherent category of not consciously inferred judgements. But even if there is, I doubt that there is any reason to be more attentive to these than to consciously inferred judgements. As ‘not consciously inferred’ is the common denominator of different accounts of intuitions, I thus doubt that ‘intuitions’ as philosophers use this refers to anything, but if it does, I doubt that it picks out a category that is particularly suited as input to reflective equilibrium reasoning. I conclude that the claim that reflective equilibrium reasoning relies on intuitions is unclear, and, whatever it means, also implausible.

I will anticipate at least two objections to the points I make above. The first objection asks: what are the starting points, or is it all a big circle? The second objection asks what happens when we make apparently basic, non-inferred evaluative judgements, such as looking out at Aarhus University Park, and judging: ‘It’s beautiful!’, or feeling pain, and judging: ‘Bad!’. I will not try to answer these questions, beyond noting that coherentists about justification see no problem with the idea that it is all a big network of beliefs (Olsson 2021), and that the second question is really the difficult metaethical question

of the status of moral and evaluative judgements. For my purposes, it suffices to point out that ‘intuitions’ would be a very bad answer to either question, for at least the following reasons, demonstrated above:

1. It is unclear what intuitions are, so this answer would not explain much.
2. Given different views about what intuitions are, agreeing on ‘intuitions’ as an answer to these questions would be a merely verbal agreement.
3. Whatever intuitions are, they do not seem to be more appropriate as starting points than consciously inferred judgements are.

Of course, any actual reflective equilibrium reasoning will have to start from somewhere. The point is that these starting points need not have a non-inferred status, and we can reason in all directions from them.

I will briefly move on to discuss the notion of considered judgements as not based on intuitions, but first, I want to emphasize that although I reject the claim that philosophical reasoning relies on intuitions, I do not think that most philosophy which claims to be based on intuitions is therefore worthless. Instead, I follow Cappelen in thinking that writers like Kagan, who say that they rely on intuitions, and perhaps think they do so, too, misdescribe, and perhaps misunderstand, what is going on in these philosophical arguments (cp. Cappelen 2012, 162–63). To support this claim, Cappelen provides an interesting set of case studies in which he examines a range of influential arguments from recent analytical philosophy, and argues that the kind of reasoning involved does not in fact involve any intuitions (whatever these are) (Cappelen 2012, chap. 8).⁸⁵ What Cappelen finds in his case studies are not (many) appeals to intuitions, but rather, thorough reasoning. Cappelen does find the word ‘intuitively’ being used frequently by philosophers, but also shows that such ‘intuition-talk’ may be interpreted charitably in other ways (Cappelen 2012, chaps. 3–4, esp. pp. 61–71). That is, he finds a common practice of what he calls ‘unreflective “intuition”-talk’, but underneath the talk, intuitions are not really being used to support claims, or at least, talk of intuitions can be reasonably interpreted in other ways (Cappelen 2012, 58–60).

Cappelen’s case studies are well worth reading, though there is no point in my repeating them here. Instead, I will present a similar case study from the dissertation, to show how what may appear to be appeals to intuitions are best

⁸⁵ For readers of this dissertation, the most familiar of these arguments will probably be Thomson’s violinist case and Foot and Thomson’s trolley and transplant cases (Cappelen 2012, chap. 8.3–8.4).

interpreted in other ways. The case I will discuss is the argument for the reasons account of meaningful work in A3.3 (or Section 4.2 above). As intuitions are especially associated with discussions of cases (Cappelen 2012, 6, 130; Kagan 2001), I focus precisely on an argument that revolves around cases, as this is presumably where we would expect to find appeals to intuitions, if there were any.

A3 develops an account of meaningful work and then presents three cases that support it: ‘Sisyphus’, ‘Care home leisure activity coordinator’ and ‘Meaningful assembly line’ (4.2, A3.3). The claim that the first two are cases of meaningless work is not based on an intuition. Sisyphus is generally recognized as an instance of meaningless activity in the literature on meaning in life, and the second example is from a book about ‘bullshit jobs’. Hence, I take it to be in the common ground shared by author and readers that these are cases of meaninglessness; this is not meant to be settled by an intuition. The discussion of ‘Meaningful assembly line’, however, may seem like an instance of unreflective intuition-talk, or at least of unreflective ‘judgement’-talk: I claim that if assembly line work contributes to a war effort, ‘our judgment of this work flips [to meaningful]’ (A3.3, p. 12). Those more liable to intuition-talk will perhaps interpret this as synonymous with the claim that ‘our intuitions about this work flip’. However, I think the most reasonable way to interpret this claim is not as a spontaneous and/or not consciously inferred judgement. Instead, I think it is a judgement that relies on how we think about war efforts more generally, and especially, the fact that we are used to thinking of other disagreeable forms of war efforts as nevertheless meaningful.

Moreover, note that the argument uses a set of three cases. This is an invitation to compare and look for commonalities, which is an at least somewhat demanding kind of reasoning (and not something that is typically done spontaneously). Cappelen’s study shows that such use of cases in a group is typical for how philosophers tend to use cases in reasoning (Cappelen 2012, 189). Note also that the case for the ‘reasons account’ of meaningful work is not based on cases only. The account is developed from a specific account of meaning in life that has been argued for at length elsewhere (Višak 2017).

Finally, it does not make much sense to think that the point of presenting the three cases is to generate three intuitions with which the account is coherent. One counterexample may be enough to reject a theory, but three coherent instances do not count for much as support. Rather, the point of presenting these cases is that they help us think through the reasoning behind the account, by giving us the task of applying it to different cases. We then see that Sisyphus is meaningless in one way, and Care home leisure activity coordinator in another way. Thereby, we better understand the proposed account, and perhaps consciously or unconsciously see how it also fits with a range of other

cases we can think of. There are no intuitions involved here – or at least, what goes on may easily be described as not involving intuitions.⁸⁶

As noted above, I think the main implication of this critique of the role of ‘intuitions’ in standard presentations of reflective equilibrium reasoning is not that philosophers are doing philosophy wrong, but that they are wrong in their descriptions of what they are doing. As the point of this appendix is to describe how I have been using reflective equilibrium reasoning, and given how widespread confusion about the importance of intuitions is, the discussion above is necessary for a sound description of what I do. Moreover, while the main implications of this discussion may be for how philosophy should be described, I do think that getting rid of unreflective intuition-talk has some positive effects for how we do philosophy as well. It directs us to be more attentive to the basis of the different claims around which we build our arguments. Of course, not every claim can or should be argued for on every occasion, but I think philosophers may do well to pay more attention to where their claims come from: which are assumed to be commonly held in a specific society, which are considered probably true, which are assumed as axiomatic, which are abductive inferences, and so on. Getting rid of the idea that we can harvest interesting claims from ‘intuitions’, whatever these are, forces this attentiveness on us, and I think that can only be a good thing.

The alternative to describing the input to reflective equilibrium reasoning as intuitions is to speak of ‘considered judgements’, as I do above. I have already noted that these are also often conflated with intuitions, including by Rawls himself, but from here, I will ignore this potential problem. Here is how Rawls (1999) characterizes considered judgements:

considered judgements (...) enter *as those judgements in which our moral capacities are most likely to be displayed without distortion*. Thus, in deciding which of our judgements to take into account we may reasonably select some and exclude others. For example, we can discard those judgements made with hesitation, or in which we have little confidence. Similarly, those given when we are upset or frightened, or when we stand to gain one way or the other can be left aside. All these judgements are likely to be erroneous or to be influenced by an excessive attention to our own interests. Considered judgements are simply *those rendered under conditions favourable to the exercise of the sense of justice*, and therefore in circumstances where the more common excuses and explanations for making a mistake do not obtain. The person making the judgment is presumed, then, to have the ability, the opportunity, and the desire

⁸⁶ I could go through other discussions of cases, examples and counterexamples in the dissertation – there are many – but I think this would get tedious, and I trust that the reader will be able to reinterpret these along the same lines as I suggest in this paragraph, or along the lines demonstrated by Cappelen (2012) more generally.

to reach a correct decision (or at least, not the desire not to). Moreover, the criteria that identify these judgments are not arbitrary. They are, in fact, similar to those that single out considered judgements of any kind. And *once we regard the sense of justice as a mental capacity, as involving the exercise of thought, the relevant judgments are those given under conditions favourable for deliberation and judgment in general* (Rawls 1999, 42, emphasis added).

I think two ideas are a part of the characterization given here.

1. To be a considered judgement, the judgment has to be made under those kinds of conditions in which we know that people tend to think and reason well.⁸⁷
2. People have a moral capacity for a sense of justice, which is a part of (and result of) our general mental capacities.

The first of these, 1, suggests that considered judgements are nothing mysterious (like intuitions may appear to be on some characterizations of these). Considered judgements are just the upshots of thinking under conditions favourable to good thinking.⁸⁸ It does not matter whether or not they are inferred, or can be inferred, from other judgements. This also supports the claim that I made above, that reflective equilibrium just is a way of thinking – but thinking done carefully and systematically, as described above.

The second of these, 2, postulates that our mental capacities include (or amount to) a moral capacity, a sense of justice, such that we can actually answer normative questions by thinking and reasoning about them. In one

⁸⁷ Knight (2017, 56–57) gives a nice characterization of these.

⁸⁸ A corollary of this view is that there is no such thing as a ‘method of (thinking about) cases’ in philosophy, although some philosophers do indeed speak of such a ‘method’ (e.g. Horvath and Koch 2021; I think Kagan 2001 would also endorse this view, although he does not use the term ‘method of cases’ explicitly). There is undoubtedly a lot of thinking about cases going on, but this is, I think, just using cases as a useful device or heuristic for one’s thinking (cp. Cappelen 2012, 132). Philosophers rely on all sorts of other heuristics as well, of course, such as reading up on empirical facts, reading literature or watching movies that engage with problems similar to those they are interested in, and so on. Cases may, however, be a particularly useful heuristic: they are more detailed than abstract principles, but still often so short that they can be thought up and described quickly. The latter features also make them very convenient for presentational purposes, which I suspect is the reason why they are the perhaps preferred presentational device in philosophical literature. Of course, reading e.g. Camus’ (1942) full reflections on the myth of Sisyphus may yield more thoughts and insights than the brief summary of it cited in A3.3, but in the context of the paper, rendering the quick summary has to do, and arguably, does well enough.

sense, we have no choice but to hope that this is true: if not, it seems we could not have normative knowledge at all. Still, I think it is not obvious that 2 is true, so I will discuss it more carefully in the next section.

I.III What can reflective equilibrium reasoning do for us?

As I mentioned earlier, any inquiry should be able to give an account of why the methods it uses are suited to the purposes of the inquiry. While this is a general requirement, it is perhaps a particularly pressing challenge to any normative inquiry, because there is an established epistemological challenge to the possibility of knowing about or discovering normative facts. A classical presentation of this challenge is found in Mackie (1977, 38–39), who questions how we can be aware of ‘prescriptivity’.⁸⁹ A more recent discussion is given by Enoch, who thinks the strongest form of the challenge is how to explain the correlation between normative judgements and normative truths, as an unexplained correlation would be too good to be true (Enoch 2010, 421–22).⁹⁰ Thus, it is at least not obvious that our mental capacities provide us with a sense of justice, as Rawls puts it. In this section, I therefore discuss what reflective equilibrium reasoning about normative questions can do for us. My goal is not to refute the challenge entirely, but rather to show that different kinds of replies are possible, and that there are different reasons why one may find normative reasoning by reflective equilibrium a worthwhile project.

The first point to make here is that the epistemological challenge is a challenge in particular to moral realists, i.e. those who think there are normative facts in virtue of which our normative judgements may be correct or incorrect, and that these facts are independent of how we think about morality (Sayre-McCord 2006, 40). There are other metaethical positions that can avoid this

⁸⁹ As he adds, “a special sort of intuition” is a lame answer’ (Mackie 1977, 39), but as should be clear from the above, I think there are no intuitions, hereunder no ‘special’ ones, in normative reasoning.

⁹⁰ Note that this is different from another common objection to reflective equilibrium reasoning, which doubts the value of the specific judgements (or intuitions) humans make, as these are assumed to be influenced by the evolutionary history of our species, perhaps together with other religious and cultural influences (e.g. Singer 1974). This is often referred to as the objection from evolutionary debunking. In reply, we can note that some kinds of judgements are presumably more likely to be shaped by our evolutionary history than others, and that we are able to reason critically both about this kind of influence, and that which may derive from religion and culture (Tersman 2018, 3–4; Knight 2017, 54–56). Mackie’s objection is more fundamental, as it doubts not just whether it so happens that our judgements are shaped in ways that make them bad at tracking normative facts, but whether we could have access to such facts by thinking and reasoning in the first place.

challenge, and I will now show how, for the position known as constructivism, there is no problem in justifying reflective equilibrium reasoning about normative questions.

Sharon Street (2010, 366–67) gives a concise characterization of metaethical constructivism, which goes through the following steps: the question of what value is seems puzzling, at least pre-theoretically, but valuing is nevertheless real; we know that the world is full of creatures that are also valuers. Constructivists use the term ‘the practical point of view’ for the practice of valuing, for judging something as good, bad, pretty, ugly, and so on. The practical point of view is the most basic notion of constructivist metaethics. On this view, there are truths about value, and these amount to truths about what is valued; that is, truths about what is ‘entailed from within the practical point of view’ (Street 2010, 367). On metaethical constructivism, then, the point of making judgements about normative questions is not to discover truths about values and ethical principles. Rather, the truth that there are such values and principles consists in the fact that they are selected in normative, practical reasoning (Street 2010, 365). If you will, values are not discovered, but created, through judgements.⁹¹ Korsgaard puts this as follows: ‘The person who acts for a reason, like God in the act of creation, *declares* that what he does is good’ (Korsgaard 2008, 229).

Metaethical constructivism comes in different versions. Kantian constructivists think that through coherent reasoning from the practical point of view one will recognize that other people are valuers and ends in themselves just like one is oneself, and thereby one will be taken to Kant’s categorical imperatives (Korsgaard 2009). Kantian constructivism thus gives a kind of moral universalism. Humean constructivists, on the other hand, deny that reasoning from the practical point of view will give particular conclusions, and therefore think the morality one ends up with will depend on the values with which one somehow came to start from (Street 2010, 370). This gives us a kind of relativism. Finally, Rawls’ theory of justice can be read as a ‘restricted constructivist view’, namely the view that truth about the restricted domain of social and political justice in a liberal democratic society is what follows from his original position procedure (Street 2010, 368).⁹²

⁹¹ Presumably, something like this could also be what happens in the case of apparently basic evaluative judgements such as those mentioned in the previous section.

⁹² This is a procedure which, according to Rawls, describes ‘a point of view from which a fair agreement between free and equal persons can be reached’, and which can be used to ‘extend the idea of a fair agreement to an agreement on principles of political justice’ (Rawls 2001, 15–16).

Constructivism may seem a strange view when one first encounters it, and a detailed discussion of the view is beyond the scope of this appendix. Suffice it to say that I am quite sympathetic to it, as I think it provides the best answer available to what I think may well be ‘the central task of metaethics’, namely ‘the task of reconciling our understanding of normativity and normative discourse with a naturalistic understanding of the world’ (Street 2010, 375). As Korsgaard (2009, chap. 1) puts it, it is our plight as humans that we have to act, acting entails choosing, and choosing implies valuing that which is chosen. This may not be an intuitive account of value, but I do think it may be as good an account as any. The main point for our purposes, however, is the following: there is a view of metaethics, namely metaethical constructivism, on which there is no worry about whether reasoning and judgements give us access to the normative; the normative is what results from those judgements.

Thus we have one answer to what reflective equilibrium reasoning can do for us: according to metaethical constructivism, values may not only be discovered, but also created, as we revise and refine our judgements towards reflective equilibrium. From here on, I want to sketch some reasons why reflective equilibrium reasoning may be of interest that do not rely on accepting metaethical constructivism.

Rawls (1975) suggests a very different rationale for engaging in reflective equilibrium reasoning about normative questions. He makes the point that moral theory is largely independent from other fields of philosophy, such as epistemology. Specifically, he points out that reflective equilibrium does not presuppose that there is one correct moral conception (Rawls 1975, 9). Indeed, it seems very plausible that discovering whether or not there is one correct moral conception, and whether we can have access to it, may also depend on results that are made by engaging in moral theory. It is not the case that a certain epistemological question has to be answered first. This may be enough to justify reflective equilibrium reasoning about normative questions, at least as long as it has not conclusively been shown that there are no interesting facts about normative questions.

A related approach may be to think of reflective equilibrium as a descriptive project, one that aims to describe our moral sensibilities (cp. Tersman 2018, 2). Moral sensibilities are a part of life, and perhaps one thinks, with Socrates (Plato 2014, 38a), that ‘the unexamined life is not worth living’, or perhaps less dramatically, that the examined life is better and more interesting. One challenge to this approach is the question of why we would not then be content just to describe incoherencies in our moral views. The whole process of rectifying such incoherencies suggests that we care too much about our moral views to just describe them – we want to improve them, too. This is

arguably a fact about how most people think and feel about their moral sensibilities. Thus, I doubt that such a project would be able to stay descriptive very long. Perhaps it would turn into a kind of conditional, prescriptive project, of the type: 'I do not know whether there are moral facts, but I know that I/we as a society care about a set of values'. This amounts to a kind of de facto Humean constructivism: one may not be asserting that values are that which is valued, but one does thus act and think.

This is also a kind of relativism, and perhaps Rawls may be read as endorsing a relativism of this kind, when he describes his project of starting his investigation from 'fundamental ideas' found in the 'public political culture of a democratic society'. Rawls' examples of such ideas include 'the idea of society as a fair system of social cooperation over time from one generation to the next', 'the idea of citizens as free and equal persons', and 'the idea of a well-ordered society' (Rawls 2001, 5). This may be read as a kind of relativism that nevertheless applies at least to societies with the values of western liberal democracies.

Finally, even a 'mere' descriptive approach could get some value from what Rawls calls the 'reconciliation' role of political philosophy. Rawls suggests that political philosophy plays this role in two ways. The first is when it reconciles us with the society we live in, despite its injustices, by showing that there is some rationality to how it has developed. However, this seems to me rather a role for political history. The second is when political philosophy reconciles us to living together with other members of our society, despite the deep disagreements we may have, by helping us see the reasons behind the different views others hold (Rawls 2001, 3–4). This is clearly a role for political philosophy, and one even a descriptive normative project can fulfil.⁹³

With this, I rest my case for the worthwhileness of normative inquiry using reflective equilibrium reasoning. I have shown that there is a metaethical view on which this reasoning is unproblematic. But I have also argued that reflective equilibrium does not require an account of value or normative facts to be of interest. It may be a part of the project of discovering whether there are such facts, or a part of the project of living an examined life, or a part of any project of being a person or a society with certain values, as I think most of us and most societies are. Or it may be valuable as a part of a project of reconciliation which involves examining and understanding both one's own value systems and those of others.

⁹³ And presumably, such a descriptive project could not be content with merely describing incoherencies, but would have to engage in rectifying them through reflective equilibrium reasoning, or it would not really show how different views may seem reasonable.

II. Revisionary conceptual analysis

The second main method used in this dissertation, revisionary conceptual analysis, may be less familiar to political philosophers. Put briefly, a revisionary conceptual analysis is a conceptual analysis that aims not at describing or defining how a concept is actually used, but at revising and improving the concept (Cappelen 2018, 3). Here follows a more elaborate description, and an explanation of why I use this method in A3.

What I call ‘revisionary conceptual analysis’ is also referred to as ‘conceptual engineering’ (Cappelen 2018) and ‘conceptual ethics’ (Cappelen and Plunkett 2020).⁹⁴ These are general and quite recent terms coined to capture the observation that a range of people, hereunder a range of philosophers, have, in different ways, engaged in projects that aim at assessing and improving how concepts are used. Paradigmatic instances of revisionary conceptual analysis are analyses that are both aware of and explicit about the fact that they aim at conceptual revisions. Two such paradigmatic cases are Carnap’s ‘explication’ and Haslanger’s ‘ameliorative analysis’ (Carnap 1950, chap. 1; Haslanger 2012; Cappelen 2018, 11–14).⁹⁵

The observation that different scholars engage in different kinds of revisionary projects, and the fact that there is no consensus on a specific way to do revisionary conceptual analysis, may lead one to doubt whether revisionary conceptual analysis really qualifies as a methodology, rather than just being a kind of project one can engage in. I think anyone would agree that at the time of writing, this is not a well-defined methodology, but I still think it is sufficiently distinct as an approach to concepts to merit being called a methodology. The fact that one aims at improving concept use will have significant implications for how one conducts the conceptual analysis involved. One will have to start with saying something about criteria for conceptual improvement. Moreover, in the analysis itself, examples that show how a concept is

⁹⁴ Cappelen uses ‘conceptual engineering’, but also thinks this is a bad term (Cappelen 2018, 3, footnote 2). Moreover, he also describes the practice in question as ‘revisionist projects’ (Cappelen 2018, ix), and I think this term gets the meaning across well, therefore I use a version of this term. Moreover, Cappelen thinks there is no such thing as a concept, and therefore prefers to speak of ‘representational devices’ (Cappelen 2018, 3), but this is of little importance for my revisionary project, so I ignore this complication here.

⁹⁵ However, any attempt at changing word meaning, and any project that changes word meanings, even without intending or even knowingly doing so, will count as an instance of conceptual engineering or revision. Cappelen mentions debates over and changes in the meanings of words like ‘marriage’ and ‘rape’ as examples of conceptual engineering outside philosophy (Cappelen 2018, 28–29).

actually being used will matter much less than in a descriptive analysis. Focus will instead be on reasoning about how some ways to use a concept satisfy the chosen criteria better and thus amount to an improvement.

Finally, even if revisionary conceptual analysis is not an established and well-defined methodology, there are well-defined projects that fall under this general category, such as explication and ameliorative analysis. Thus, there are some established and well-defined approaches to thinking about concepts that are forms of revisionary conceptual analysis and which it seems less controversial to refer to as methodologies. However, I do not think this is a reason to choose one such well-defined approach and stick to it. Rather, the observation that there are different revisionary projects with a similar aim, namely conceptual improvement, may be taken as an invitation to keep thinking about what counts as conceptual improvement, and to borrow criteria from different established approaches if this seems reasonable – at least as long as the nascent literature on conceptual engineering has not converged on an account of what counts as conceptual improvement (see Cappelen 2018, chap. 2, esp. pp. 33–36).

I will now briefly introduce Carnap's explication and Haslanger's ameliorative analysis, the two established forms of revisionary conceptual analysis on which I draw in A3. First, what Carnap calls 'explication' is a revisionary project that starts with a less exact and well-defined term as it is found in everyday language or earlier scientific concept development, the 'explicandum', and transforms it into a more well-defined 'explicatum' (Carnap 1950, 2–3; Cappelen 2018, 11–12). Carnap proposes four criteria for improvement of concepts: 1) similarity to the explicandum (it must still be the same concept); 2) exactness; 3) fruitfulness; and 4) simplicity (Carnap 1950, 5–7; Cappelen 2018, 11). His example of a successful explication is when 'fish' was transformed so as to no longer cover whales (Carnap 1950, 6). A nice way in which explication has been described is the following: an explication proposes 'a "good thing to mean" by the term in a specific context for a particular purpose' (Gupta 2021, para. 1.5; Belnap 1993, 110). To a certain extent, this may also describe revisionary conceptual analyses more generally: they are about improving how we use a concept, either generally, or for specific purposes, such as when explication focuses on scientific concept development (Cappelen 2018, 36).

Second, Haslanger has suggested the idea of engaging in 'ameliorative analysis' or 'ameliorative projects' (Haslanger 2012, 367–68, 376, 385–86; Cappelen 2018, 12–14). This kind of project asks:

What is the point of having these concepts? What cognitive or practical tasks do they (or should they) enable us to accomplish? Are they effective tools to accomplish our (legitimate) purposes; if not, what concepts would serve these

purposes better? (...) on an analytical approach, the questions “What is gender?” or “What is race?” require us to consider what work we want these concepts to do for us; why do we need them at all? The responsibility is ours to define them for our purposes. (...) My priority in this inquiry is not to capture what we do mean, but *how we might usefully revise what we mean for certain theoretical and political purposes* (Haslanger 2012, 224, emphasis added, see also pp. 367-368, 376).

Again, the project is clearly about revising how concepts are used, or what they mean. But the criteria for conceptual improvement are quite different from those of Carnap. Haslanger in general leaves it quite open what the point of a concept may be, but also emphasizes that political purposes may be a part of it. On her view, a concept can be improved both by helping us with cognitive tasks, and by putting us in a better position to achieve political goals.

A3 and Chapter 4 examine the concept ‘meaningful work’ and whether distributive justice for work should be concerned with this idea. As noted in Chapter 4, the concept ‘meaningful work’ is defined and used in very different ways by different scholars. I therefore needed a methodology for assessing concepts, and the notion of revisionary conceptual analysis provides a very general approach to this.

As we have seen, once one decides to engage in a revisionary project, the next step is to settle on criteria for improvement. Here, as mentioned, I borrowed from the paradigmatic approaches of Carnap and Haslanger. From explication, I took the focus on exactness, as the value of exactness is generally appreciated in analytic philosophy. From ameliorative analysis I took the idea that there may be a specific task that we want a concept to do, ‘a point’ of having the concept. If concepts do have a point, then how well a concept fulfils that point seems a good way to adjudicate between proposed meanings. In A3, both the notion of the point of ‘meaningful work’ and the criterion of exactness support both desiderata for the concept of ‘meaningful work’ in which the analysis results, i.e. that it is about meaningfulness, rather than just any form of goodness, and concerns how work itself can be a source of meaning in life.

Revisionary conceptual analysis consists in making an argument for revising our use of a specific concept. The revisionary project itself is only successful if usage actually changes in the way the revisionist (or conceptual engineer) argues for. In my case, it is thus successful if people, or at least theorists, start to use ‘meaningful work’ for meaningful work in the narrow sense, where work itself is meaningful; or at the very least, take care to distinguish between when they mean this, and when they are talking about meaningful work in the broad sense. Cappelen argues that we are not really in control of word meaning, and it may be very hard to change (Cappelen 2018, 73–74, 75–77). This may make revisionary conceptual projects seem pointless, but Cappelen thinks they are

not. He thinks they are a bit like other projects of social change: typically, they depend on factors beyond our control, but we still try to do our bit, and there is a sense in which we have to keep trying (Cappelen 2018, 74–75). To this, I want to add that I think usage in theoretical discourse may be easier to change than ordinary-language word meaning.

Bibliography

- Allan, Blake A., Kelsey L. Autin, and Ryan D. Duffy. 2014. "Examining Social Class and Work Meaning Within the Psychology of Working Framework." *Journal of Career Assessment* 22 (4): 543–61.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1069072713514811>.
- Anderson, Elizabeth S. 1999. "What Is the Point of Equality?" *Ethics* 109 (2): 287–337. <https://doi.org/10.1086/233897>.
- Aristotle. 2002. *Nichomachean Ethics*. Translated by Christopher Rowe. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Arneson, Richard J. 1987. "Meaningful Work and Market Socialism." *Ethics* 97 (3): 517–45. <https://doi.org/10.1086/292864>.
- . 1989. "Equality and Equal Opportunity for Welfare." *Philosophical Studies* 56 (1): 77–93.
- . 1990. "Liberalism, Distributive Subjectivism, and Equal Opportunity for Welfare." *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 19 (2): 158–94.
- . 2009. "Meaningful Work and Market Socialism Revisited." *Analyse & Kritik* 31 (1): 139–51.
- Arnold, Samuel. 2012. "The Difference Principle at Work." *Journal of Political Philosophy* 20 (1): 94–118. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9760.2010.00393.x>.
- Bellamy, Edward. 1982. *Looking Backward: 2000-1887*. Penguin Classics. London: Penguin Books.
- Belnap, Nuel. 1993. "On Rigorous Definitions." *Philosophical Studies* 72 (2–3): 115–46. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF00989671>.
- Bernsen, Markus. 2021. "Færdigt arbejde." *www.weekendavisen.dk*, December 9, 2021, sec. Kultur. <http://www.weekendavisen.dk/content/item/41932>.
- Black, Bob. 1986. "The Abolition of Work." In *The Abolition of Work and Other Essays*, 16–33. Port Townsend, WA: Loompanics Unlimited.
- Bowie, Norman E. 1998. "A Kantian Theory of Meaningful Work." *Journal of Business Ethics* 17 (9–10): 1083–92.
- Brown, Alexander. 2011. "The Slavery of the Not So Talented." *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice* 14 (2): 185–96. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10677-010-9236-9>.
- Brown, Donald G. 1970. "The Value of Time." *Ethics* 80 (13): 173–84.
- Brun, Georg. 2014. "Reflective Equilibrium Without Intuitions?" *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice* 17 (2): 237–52. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10677-013-9432-5>.
- Camus, Albert. 1942. *Le Mythe de Sisyphe: Essai Sur l'absurde*. Paris: Gallimard.
- Cappelen, Herman. 2012. *Philosophy without Intuitions*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- . 2018. *Fixing Language: An Essay on Conceptual Engineering*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Cappelen, Herman, and David Plunkett. 2020. "Introduction: A Guided Tour of Conceptual Engineering and Conceptual Ethics." In *Conceptual Engineering*

- and Conceptual Ethics*, edited by Alexis Burgess, Herman Cappelen, and David Plunkett, 1–26. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780198801856.003.0001>.
- Carens, Joseph H. 1981. *Equality, Moral Incentives, and the Market: An Essay in Utopian Politico-Economic Theory*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- . 1985. “Compensatory Justice and Social Institutions.” *Economics and Philosophy* 1 (1): 39–67. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0266267100001887>.
- . 1986. “Rights and Duties in an Egalitarian Society.” *Political Theory* 14 (1): 31–49.
- Carnap, Rudolf. 1950. *Logical Foundations of Probability*. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.
- Casal, Paula. 2007. “Why Sufficiency Is Not Enough.” *Ethics* 117 (2): 296–326.
<https://doi.org/10.1086/510692>.
- . 2013. “Occupational Choice and the Egalitarian Ethos.” *Economics and Philosophy* 29 (1): 3–20. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0266267113000059>.
- . 2017. “Mill, Rawls and Cohen on Incentives and Occupational Freedom.” *Utilitas* 29 (4): 375–97. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0953820816000297>.
- Cholbi, Michael. 2018. “The Duty to Work.” *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice* 21 (5): 1119–33. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10677-018-9942-2>.
- . 2022. “Philosophical Approaches to Work and Labor.” In *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, edited by Edward N. Zalta, Spring 2022. Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University. <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2022/entries/work-labor/>.
- Clark, Samuel. 2017. “Good Work.” *Journal of Applied Philosophy* 34 (1): 61–73.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/japp.12137>.
- Cohen, G. A. 1983. “The Structure of Proletarian Unfreedom.” *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 12 (1): 3–33.
- . 1989. “On the Currency of Egalitarian Justice.” *Ethics* 99 (4): 906–44.
- . 1995. *Self-Ownership, Freedom, and Equality*. Studies in Marxism and Social Theory. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- . 2000. *If You’re an Egalitarian, How Come You’re So Rich?* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- . 2008. *Rescuing Justice and Equality*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- . 2009. *Why Not Socialism*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Daniels, Norman. 2016. “Reflective Equilibrium.” In *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, edited by Edward N. Zalta, Summer 2020. Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University. <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2020/entries/reflective-equilibrium/>.
- . 2017. “Justice and Access to Health Care.” In *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, edited by Edward N. Zalta, Winter 2017. Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University. <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2017/entries/justice-healthcareaccess/>.

- Dick, James C. 1975. "How to Justify a Distribution of Earnings." *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 4 (3): 248–72.
- Dworkin, Ronald. 2000. *Sovereign Virtue: The Theory and Practice of Equality*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Elster, Jon. 1985. *Making Sense of Marx*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- . 1986. "Self-Realization in Work and Politics: The Marxist Conception of the Good Life." *Social Philosophy and Policy* 3 (02): 97–126.
<https://doi.org/10.1017/S0265052500000327>.
- Enoch, David. 2010. "The Epistemological Challenge to Metanormative Realism: How Best to Understand It, and How to Cope with It." *Philosophical Studies* 148 (3): 413–38. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11098-009-9333-6>.
- Fleurbaey, Marc. 2008. *Fairness, Responsibility, and Welfare*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:osobl/9780199215911.001.0001>.
- Foot, Philippa. 1967. "The Problem of Abortion and the Doctrine of the Double Effect." *Oxford Review* 5: 5–15.
- Fourier, Charles. 1966. "Théorie de l'Unité Universelle: Troisième Volume." In *Œuvres Complètes*, edited by Simone Debout-Oleszkiewicz. Vol. 4. Paris: Editions Anthropos.
- . 1971. *The Utopian Vision of Charles Fourier*. Edited and translated by Jonathan Beecher and Richard Bienvenu. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Frankfurt, Harry. 1987. "Equality as a Moral Ideal." *Ethics* 98 (1): 21–43.
- Geras, Norman. 1984. "The Controversy about Marx and Justice." *Philosophica* 33: 33–86.
- Gheaus, Anca, and Lisa Herzog. 2016. "The Goods of Work (Other Than Money!)." *Journal of Social Philosophy* 47 (1): 70–89.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/josp.12140>.
- Gomberg, Paul. 2007. *How to Make Opportunity Equal: Race and Contributive Justice*. 1st ed. Malden, MA: Blackwell.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/9780470692431>.
- . 2018. "Work." In *The Oxford Handbook of Distributive Justice*, edited by Serena Olsaretti, 513–32. Oxford Handbooks. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Goodin, Robert E. 2017. "Freeing Up Time." *Law, Ethics and Philosophy* 5 (0): 37–46. <https://doi.org/10.31009/LEAP.2017.V5.04>.
- Goodin, Robert E., James Mahmud Rice, Antti Parpo, and Lina Eriksson. 2008. *Discretionary Time: A New Measure of Freedom*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Goodman, Nelson. 1983. *Fact, Fiction and Forecast*. 4th ed. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Govier, Trudy. 1975. "The Right to Eat and the Duty to Work." *Philosophy of the Social Sciences* 5 (2): 125–43. <https://doi.org/10.1177/004839317500500202>.
- Graeber, David. 2018. *Bullshit Jobs: A Theory*. London: Allen Lane.

- Gupta, Anil. 2021. "Definitions." In *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, edited by Edward N. Zalta, Winter 2021. Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University. <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2021/entries/definitions/>.
- Haslanger, Sally. 2012. *Resisting Reality: Social Construction and Social Critique*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Heath, Joseph. 2004. "Dworkin's Auction." *Politics, Philosophy & Economics* 3 (3): 313–35. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1470594X04046244>.
- Hesiod. 2006. "Works and Days." In *Hesiod, Vol. I: Theogony Works and Days Testimonia*, edited and translated by Glenn W. Most, 86–153. Loeb Classical Library 57. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Horvath, Joachim, and Steffen Koch. 2021. "Experimental Philosophy and the Method of Cases." *Philosophy Compass* 16 (1): e12716. <https://doi.org/10.1111/phc3.12716>.
- Huseby, Robert. 2020. "Sufficiency and the Threshold Question." *The Journal of Ethics* 24 (2): 207–23. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10892-020-09321-7>.
- James, David. 2017. "The Compatibility of Freedom and Necessity in Marx's Idea of Communist Society." *European Journal of Philosophy* 25 (2): 270–93. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ejop.12209>.
- Jauch, Malte. 2020. "The Rat Race and Working Time Regulation." *Politics, Philosophy & Economics*, May. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1470594X20927894>.
- . 2021. "Free Time Across the Life Course." *Political Studies*, April, 00323217211000733. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00323217211000733>.
- Jenkins, Joyce. 2019. "Debate: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly Standard Case for Incentive Inequalities." *Journal of Political Philosophy* 27 (3): 388–99. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jopp.12186>.
- Kagan, Shelly. 2001. "Thinking about Cases." *Social Philosophy and Policy* 18 (2): 44–63.
- Kandiyali, Jan. 2014. "Freedom and Necessity in Marx's Account of Communism." *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 22 (1): 104–23. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09608788.2013.863753>.
- . 2017. "Marx on the Compatibility of Freedom and Necessity: A Reply to David James." *European Journal of Philosophy* 25 (3): 833–39. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ejop.12289>.
- . 2020. "The Importance of Others: Marx on Unalienated Production." *Ethics* 130 (4): 555–87. <https://doi.org/10.1086/708536>.
- Knight, Carl. 2017. "Reflective Equilibrium." In *Methods in Analytical Political Theory*, edited by Adrian Blau, 1st ed., 46–64. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781316162576.005>.
- Komlosy, Andrea. 2018. *Work: The Last 1,000 Years*. Translated by Jacob K. Watson and Loren Balhorn. London: Verso.
- Korsgaard, Christine M. 2008. "Acting for a Reason." In *The Constitution of Agency: Essays on Practical Reason and Moral Psychology*, 207–30. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- . 2009. *Self-Constitution*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Kukathas, Chandran. 2015. "The Labor Theory of Justice." In *Distributive Justice and Access to Advantage*, 35–48. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Lamont, Julian. 1997. "Incentive Income, Deserved Income and Economic Rents." *Journal of Political Philosophy* 5 (1): 26–46. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9760.00022>.
- Lamont, Julian, and Christi Favor. 2017. "Distributive Justice." In *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, edited by Edward N. Zalta, Winter 2017. Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University. <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2017/entries/justice-distributive/>.
- Lang, Gerald. 2016. "Rawlsian Incentives and the Freedom Objection." *Journal of Social Philosophy* 47 (2): 231–49. <https://doi.org/10.1111/josp.12149>.
- Lippert-Rasmussen, Kasper. 2016. *Luck Egalitarianism*. 1st ed. London: Bloomsbury Academic. <https://doi.org/10.5040/9781474219792>.
- List, Christian, and Laura Valentini. 2016. "The Methodology of Political Theory." In *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophical Methodology*, edited by Herman Cappelen, Tamar Szabó, and John Hawthorne, 525–53. Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press.
- Luper, Steven. 2014. "Life's Meaning." In *The Cambridge Companion to Life and Death*, edited by Steven Luper, 198–212. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CCO9781139149129.015>.
- Mackay, Douglas. 2016. "Incentive Inequalities and Freedom of Occupational Choice." *Economics and Philosophy* 32 (1): 21–49. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0266267115000292>.
- Mackie, John Leslie. 1977. *Ethics: Inventing Right and Wrong*. New York: Penguin Books.
- Marshall, Alfred. 2013. *Principles of Economics*. 8th ed. Palgrave Classics in Economics. London: Palgrave Macmillan UK. <https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137375261>.
- Martela, Frank, and Anne B. Pessi. 2018. "Significant Work Is About Self-Realization and Broader Purpose: Defining the Key Dimensions of Meaningful Work." *Frontiers in Psychology* 9: 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2018.00363>.
- Marx, Karl. 1975. "Comments on James Mill, 'Éléments d'économie Politique.'" In *Marx Engels Collected Works*, 3:211–28. London: Lawrence & Wishart.
- . 1989. "Critique of the Gotha Programme." In *Marx Engels Collected Works*, 24:75–99. London: Lawrence & Wishart.
- . 1998. "Capital, Vol. III." In *Marx Engels Collected Works*, 37:25–871. London: Lawrence & Wishart.
- . 2000. "Grundrisse." In *Karl Marx: Selected Writings*, edited by David McLellan, 2nd ed., 379–423. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Metz, Thaddeus. 2013a. *Meaning in Life*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199599318.001.0001>.
- . 2013b. "The Meaning of Life." In *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, edited by Edward N. Zalta, Summer 2013. Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford

- University. <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2013/entries/life-meaning/>.
- Michaelson, Christopher. 2021. "A Normative Meaning of Meaningful Work." *Journal of Business Ethics* 170 (3): 413–28. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-019-04389-0>.
- Mill, John Stuart. 1965. *Principles of Political Economy with Some of Their Applications to Social Philosophy, Books I-II*. Edited by J.M Robson. Vol. 2. 33 vols. The Collected Works of John Stuart Mill. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- . 1967. "Chapters on Socialism." In *Essays on Economics and Society*, edited by J.M Robson, 5:703–53. The Collected Works of John Stuart Mill. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Miller, Richard W. 2010. "Relationships of Equality: A Camping Trip Revisited." *The Journal of Ethics* 14 (3–4): 231–53. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10892-010-9079-6>.
- Moon, J. Donald. 1983. "Review: Equality, Moral Incentives, and the Market by Joseph Carens." *Ethics* 94 (1): 146–50. <https://doi.org/doi:10.1086/292520>.
- Morris, William. 1993. "Useful Work versus Useless Toil." In *News from Nowhere and Other Writings*, 285–306. London: Penguin Books.
- Muirhead, Russell. 2004. *Just Work*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Murphy, James Bernard. 1993. *The Moral Economy of Labor: Aristotelian Themes in Economic Theory*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Olson, Kristi A. 2017. "Solving Which Trilemma? The Many Interpretations of Equality, Pareto, and Freedom of Occupational Choice." *Politics, Philosophy & Economics* 16 (3): 282–307. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1470594X17704401>.
- . 2020. *The Solidarity Solution: Principles for a Fair Income Distribution*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Olsson, Erik. 2021. "Coherentist Theories of Epistemic Justification." In *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, edited by Edward N. Zalta, Fall 2021. Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University. <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2021/entries/justep-coherence/>.
- Otsuka, Michael. 2008. "Freedom of Occupational Choice." *Ratio* 21 (4): 440–53. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9329.2008.00412.x>.
- Pazner, Elisha A., and David Schmeidler. 1974. "A Difficulty in the Concept of Fairness." *The Review of Economic Studies* 41 (3): 441–43. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2296762>.
- Plato. 2014. "Apology." In *PLATO, Euthyphro. Apology. Crito. Phaedo. Phaedrus*, edited by Jeffrey Henderson, translated by Harry North Fowler, 61–146. Loeb Classical Library 36. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. <http://www.loebclassics.com/view/LCL036/1914/volume.xml>.
- Pratt, Michael G., and B. E. Ashforth. 2003. "Fostering Meaningfulness in Working and at Work." In *Positive Organizational Scholarship: Foundations of a New Discipline*, edited by K.S. Cameron, J.E. Dutton, and R.E. Quinn, 308–27. San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler.

- r/antiwork. n.d. "Antiwork: Unemployment for All, Not Just the Rich!" Forum. Reddit. Accessed February 3, 2022. <https://www.reddit.com/r/antiwork/>.
- Rawls, John. 1951. "Outline of a Decision Procedure for Ethics." *The Philosophical Review* 60 (2): 177–97.
- . 1975. "The Independence of Moral Theory." *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Association* 48: 5–22.
- . 1999. *A Theory of Justice*. Rev. ed. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.
- . 2001. *Justice as Fairness: A Restatement*. Edited by Erin Kelly. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.
- Roessler, Beate. 2012. "Meaningful Work: Arguments from Autonomy." *Journal of Political Philosophy* 20 (1): 71–93. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9760.2011.00408.x>.
- Rogers, Taylor Nicole. 2022. "Reddit 'Antiwork' Forum Booms as Millions of Americans Quit Jobs." *Financial Times*, January 9, 2022. <https://www.ft.com/content/1270ee18-3ee0-4939-98a8-c4f40940e644>.
- Rose, Julie L. 2014. "Money Does Not Guarantee Time: Discretionary Time as a Distinct Object of Distributive Justice." *Journal of Political Philosophy* 22 (4): 438–57. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jopp.12021>.
- . 2016a. *Free Time*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- . 2016b. "Freedom of Association and the Temporal Coordination Problem." *Journal of Political Philosophy* 24 (3): 261–76. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jopp.12098>.
- . 2017. "Justice and the Resource of Time: A Reply to Goodin, Terlazzo, von Platz, Stanczyk, and Lim." *Law, Ethics and Philosophy* 5 (0): 105–22. <https://doi.org/10.31009/LEAP.2017.V5.09>.
- Sayre-McCord, Geoffrey. 2006. "Moral Realism." In *The Oxford Handbook of Ethical Theory*, edited by David Copp, 39–62. Oxford Handbooks in Philosophy. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Schwartz, Adina. 1982. "Meaningful Work." *Ethics* 92 (4): 634–46.
- Sen, Amartya. 1979. "Equality of What?" In *The Tanner Lectures on Human Values*, 197–220. Stanford University.
- Shaw, Bernard. 1929. *The Intelligent Woman's Guide to Socialism and Capitalism*. Popular Edition. London: Constable and Company.
- Singer, Peter. 1974. "Sidgwick and Reflective Equilibrium." *The Monist* 58 (3): 490–517.
- Stanczyk, Lucas. 2012. "Productive Justice." *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 40 (2): 144–64. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1088-4963.2012.01212.x>.
- Street, Sharon. 2010. "What Is Constructivism in Ethics and Metaethics?" *Philosophy Compass* 5 (5): 363–84. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1747-9991.2009.00280.x>.
- Taylor, Richard. 1970. "The Meaning of Life." In *Good and Evil: A New Direction*, 256–68. New York, NY: The Macmillan Company.

- Tersman, Folke. 2018. "Recent Work on Reflective Equilibrium and Method in Ethics." *Philosophy Compass* 13 (6): e12493. <https://doi.org/10.1111/phc3.12493>.
- Thomson, Judith Jarvis. 1985. "The Trolley Problem." *The Yale Law Journal* 94: 1395–1415.
- Thrasher, John, and Keith Hankins. 2015. "When Justice Demands Inequality." *Journal of Moral Philosophy* 12 (2): 172–94. <https://doi.org/10.1163/17455243-4681035>.
- Tyssedal, Jens Jørund. 2021. "The Value of Time Matters for Temporal Justice." *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice* 24 (1): 183–96. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10677-020-10149-1>.
- Van Parijs, Philippe. 1995. *Real Freedom for All: What Can Justify Capitalism?* Oxford Political Theory. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Veltman, Andrea. 2015. "Is Meaningful Work Available to All People?" *Philosophy & Social Criticism* 41 (7): 725–47. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0191453714556692>.
- . 2016. *Meaningful Work*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780190618179.001.0001>.
- Višak, Tatjana. 2017. "Understanding 'Meaning of Life' in Terms of Reasons for Action." *The Journal of Value Inquiry* 51 (3): 507–30. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10790-017-9591-z>.
- Walsh, Adrian J. 1994. "Meaningful Work as a Distributive Good." *Southern Journal of Philosophy* 32 (2): 233–50.
- Walzer, Michael. 1983. *Spheres of Justice: A Defense of Pluralism and Equality*. New York: Basic Books.
- Weeks, Kathi. 2011. *The Problem with Work: Feminism, Marxism, Antiwork Politics, and Postwork Imaginaries*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Wenar, Leif. 2021. "John Rawls." In *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, edited by Edward N. Zalta, Summer 2021. Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University. <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2021/entries/rawls/>.
- Wilkinson, T.M. 2000. *Freedom, Efficiency and Equality*. Houndmills, Basingstoke: Macmillan.
- Wolf, Susan. 2010. *Meaning in Life and Why It Matters*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

English Summary

Adult life in modern society is to a large extent characterized by work. When things go well, work gives individuals opportunities for self-realization, accomplishment, and belonging while they make a social contribution. But a lot of work is burdensome and nevertheless has to be done, whether we like to or not. This dissertation studies what a theory of distributive justice should say about the distribution of labour burdens and goods of work. More specifically, it studies whether work should be regulated by principles of distributive justice, and how work should be approached as an object of distributive justice. This is done by examining and assessing certain important approaches and objections to work as an object of distributive justice found in the existing political theory literature on this topic.

First, freedom of occupational choice is discussed. It is a common view that freedom of occupational choice poses a strong objection to treating work as regulated by principles of distributive justice. This is often presented as a Rawlsian objection to theories of justice such as that of G.A. Cohen. The dissertation rejects this objection and argues that a theory of distributive justice concerned with work can protect occupational interests just as well as freedom of occupational choice does.

Second, two approaches to work and distributive justice are examined. The first is the idea of treating work justice as a matter of temporal justice, that is, justice in how our time is spent. Established accounts of temporal justice approach this as being about the distribution of free time only. The dissertation argues that all time, i.e. free time, work time and otherwise non-free time, should be considered as time with a certain value. It therefore makes good sense to view distributive justice for work as justice in the distribution of shares of work and free time considered as a whole, where more burdensome work is compensated with more free time. Indeed, this may make more sense than established accounts of compensatory justice, where more burdensome work is compensated with income.

The second approach considers work justice as being about the distribution of meaningful work. The dissertation argues that a careful examination of the concept 'meaningful work' shows that work is meaningful when it is done for a good reason. An implication of this is that in a just and well-ordered society, all work is meaningful work. Therefore, the idea that distributive justice for work has to do with access to meaningful work rests on confusions, including flawed understandings of meaningful work. Distributive justice for work is not about access to meaningful work but about the distribution of the other goods and bads that characterize meaningful work.

Finally, the dissertation examines what it takes for work to be a good in itself. An ideal of this kind is sometimes taken as an alternative to a theory of distributive justice for work, and sometimes as the basis for such a theory. The dissertation argues that work can be a good in itself if people are two-order pro-social, that is, appreciate doing something good for others. This ideal of good work is distinct from the ideal of just work, but its realization may also require that work is just. All in all, the dissertation supports the conclusion that the best life, or utopia, if you will, is not a life without work, as classical visions such as that of the Garden suggest, but rather a life with meaningful work carried out in a spirit of community, and with labour burdens and goods of work shared fairly.

Dansk resumé

Voksnes liv i det moderne samfund er i høj grad præget af arbejde. Når ting går godt, giver arbejdet den enkelte muligheder for selvrealisering, for at opnå noget og for at høre til, samtidig med at man yder et bidrag til samfundet. Men meget arbejde er besværligt og skal alligevel gøres, hvad enten vi ønsker det eller ej. Denne afhandling undersøger, hvad en teori om fordelingsretfærdighed skal sige om fordelingen af byrder og goder ved arbejde. Mere specifikt undersøger den, om arbejde skal underlægges principper for fordelingsretfærdighed, og hvilken tilgang en teori om fordelingsretfærdighed skal have til arbejde. Dette gøres ved at undersøge og vurdere tilgange til, og indvendinger mod, arbejde som genstand for fordelingsretfærdighed i politisk teorilitteraturen om dette emne.

Først diskuteres erhvervsfrihed. Det er en udbredt opfattelse, at erhvervsfrihed indebærer en stærk indvending mod at betragte arbejde som værende underlagt principper for fordelingsretfærdighed. Dette præsenteres ofte som en rawlsiansk indvending til Cohen-inspirerede tilgange til fordelingsretfærdighed. Afhandlingen argumenterer mod denne indvending og argumenterer i stedet for, at en teori om fordelingsretfærdighed, der tager hensyn til arbejde, kan varetage borgernes erhvervsinteresser lige så godt som et princip om erhvervsfrihed.

Derefter undersøges to tilgange til fordelingsretfærdighed for arbejde. Den første tilgang behandler fordelingsretfærdighed for arbejde som et spørgsmål om "tidsmæssig retfærdighed", det vil sige retfærdighed i, hvordan vores tid bruges. Etablerede syn på tidsmæssig retfærdighed betragter udelukkende dette som et spørgsmål om fordeling af fritid. Afhandlingen argumenterer for, at al tid – fritid, arbejdstid og anden ikkefri tid – bør betragtes som tid med en vis værdi. Det giver derfor god mening at tilgå fordelingsretfærdighed for arbejde som retfærdighed i fordelingen af arbejde og fritid set under et, hvor mindre attraktivt arbejde kompenseres med mere fritid. Dette kan faktisk give bedre mening end etablerede kompensationsbaserede tilgange til fordelingsretfærdighed, hvor mindre attraktivt arbejde kompenseres med indkomst.

Den anden tilgang, der undersøges, betragter fordelingsretfærdighed for arbejde som et spørgsmål om fordeling af meningsfuldt arbejde. Afhandlingen argumenterer for, at en grundig undersøgelse af begrebet "meningsfuldt arbejde" viser, at arbejde er meningsfuldt, når det udføres af en god grund. En følge af dette er, at i et retfærdigt og velordnet samfund er alt arbejde meningsfuldt arbejde. Derfor hviler idéen om, at fordelingsretfærdighed for arbejde har med meningsfuldt arbejde at gøre, på et fejltagtigt grundlag, herunder mis-

forståelser af hvad meningsfuldt arbejde er. Fordelingsretfærdighed for arbejde handler ikke om tilgangen til meningsfuldt arbejde, men om fordelingen af andre goder og byrder ved meningsfuldt arbejde.

Til sidst undersøger afhandlingen, hvad der skal til, for at arbejde kan være et gode i sig selv. Et sådant ideal betragtes nogle gange som et alternativ til en teori om fordelingsretfærdighed for arbejde, og nogle gange som udgangspunkt for en sådan teori. Afhandlingen argumenterer for, at arbejde kan være et gode i sig selv, hvis man er to-ordens pro-social, det vil sige værdsætter at gøre noget godt for andre. Idealet om godt arbejde er et selvstændigt ideal og ikke det samme som idealet om retfærdig arbejde, men at realisere idealet om godt arbejde kan også kræve, at arbejdet er retfærdig. Alt i alt understøtter afhandlingen konklusionen, at det bedste liv – eller det utopiske, om man vil – ikke er et liv uden arbejde, som klassiske idéer som for eksempel Edens Have tilsiger, men derimod et liv med meningsfuldt arbejde udført med fællesskabsånd, hvor byrder og goder ved arbejdet fordeles retfærdig.