Journal Title: Journal of Political Philosophy
Volume: 4
Issue: 2
Month/Year: 1996
Pages: 118-41
Article Author: Harry Brighouse
Article Title: Egalitarianism and Equal Availability of Political Influence
OCLC Number:
ISSN/ISBN Number: 0963-8016

LOCALLY FORWARDED REQUEST

Location: mem
Call #: AP J83 P7675
Request Date: 10/17/2005 11:36:40 AM
Not Wanted After: two weeks
Notes:

Odyssey
EGALITARIANISM AND AVAILABILITY

PARTICIPANTS in the so-called 'equality of what?' debate have largely neglected a dimension of equality traditionally thought by many egalitarians to be central to their project: political equality, or democracy. Egalitarian political movements (as opposed to philosophers) have not distinguished the demand for more democracy and that for more material equality as separate demands, only one of which justified their designation as egalitarians. Yet most contemporary egalitarian philosophers have either ignored democracy as a dimension of equality, or have claimed that it has only a dependent or instrumental role: that it is desirable only insofar as it serves the independent requirements of egalitarian justice.

In this paper I argue, contrary to most of the positions within the contemporary debate, that political equality has a central place within egalitarianism. The successful implementation of each of equality of resources, equality of welfare, and equality of opportunity for welfare is, at least in principle, compatible with a regime of beneficent dictatorship. Each is prima facie a right, with quite extreme differentials of political influence and society in which material equality is realised, those with less or no political influence not being unequally in a morally important way. The importance of democracy on the grounds that equal procedures are an indispensable means of determining the equal moral status of citizens.

The paper proceeds as follows. In sections 2-4 of political influence, and then the moral arguments in sections 3 and 4 I show that it fares well in its role as a first in explaining a central egalitarian position. Sections 5 and 6, popular and well-supported anti-egalitarian arguments, show why it should take priority, from a principle which permit majority tyranny.

1. WHAT IS EQUAL AVAILABILITY

A brief characterisation of equal availability order. We can think of the amount of equal availability measured in the following way. The amount of equal availability is the probability that someone else engaged in political activity, and we wanted. Equal influence would be available with the same probability to their getting their way engaged, and knowing nothing of what they want.

EAPI is realised when equal means that equal shared social life are available to each on a substantive content. A description of EAPI which citizens' preferences with respect to what it is vary.

* should note a methodological difficulty here of contradictory pretheoretical intuitions as well as a source in the practices and demands of a wide variety must be passed by any proposed distribution for what? I cannot solve the methodological problem since egalitarians face. I take this to be the task of egalitarian tradition and uncovering principles the principle is. It is worth noting that because of the complexity to think that any of the principles will have to the extent that Sen's question must have an answer. It think them as the best interpretation of the egalitarians can be made persuasive to those who do not also be proffered for the interpreted ideal.
and Equal Availability of Political Influence*

Y BRIGHOUSE

University of Wisconsin-Madison

EGALITARIANISM AND AVAILABILITY OF POLITICAL INFLUENCE

regime of beneficent dictatorship. Each is probably compatible in practice at least with quite extreme differentials of political power. Yet many will suspect that a society in which material equality is realised but democracy is absent is one in which those with less or no political influence institutionally available are being treated unequally in a morally important way. I shall argue for the intrinsic importance of democracy on the grounds that the implementation of democratic procedures is an indispensable means of demonstrating communal recognition of the equal moral status of citizens.

The paper proceeds as follows. In sections 1 and 2 I describe equal availability of political influence, and then the moral argument for holding it as a principle. In sections 3 and 4 I show that it fares well against rival principles of the same form, first in explaining a central egalitarian intuition, and second in deflecting a popular and well-supported anti-egalitarian argument. I then show how rival equalising principles conflict with equal availability of political influence, and show why it should take priority, from an egalitarian viewpoint, over its rivals. Finally I defend the principle against the objection that giving it priority is liable to permit majority tyranny.4

I. WHAT IS EQUAL AVAILABILITY OF POLITICAL INFLUENCE?

A brief characterisation of equal availability of political influence (EAPI) is in order. We can think of the amount of influence available to someone as being measured in the following way. The amount of influence available to them is given by the probability we would assign to their getting their way, if they and everyone else engaged in political activity, and we knew nothing of what any other citizens wanted. Equal influence would be available if for everyone we would assign the same probability to their getting their way, assuming that they and everyone else engaged, and knowing nothing of what the other citizens wanted.

EAPI is realised when equal means to affect the collective conditions of their shared social life are available to each citizen. The idea has both procedural and substantive content. A description of influence must refer to the processes by which citizens’ preferences with respect to public policy options are transformed

4 It should note a methodological difficulty here. Because egalitarianism is characterised by a cluster of contradictory pretheoretical intuitions as well as intuitions about particular cases (which have their source in the practices and demands of a wide variety of historical movements), it is not clear what tests must be passed by any proposed distribution for it to qualify as the proper answer to “equality of what?” I cannot solve the methodological problem here, but I do want to be explicit about the task egalitarians face. I take this to be the task of rendering consistent various intuitions found in the egalitarian tradition and uncovering principles that motivate and justify the consistent set of intuitions. It is worth noting that because of the complexity of the intuitive judgments there is no reason at the outset to think that any of the principles will have the form ‘equality of X’; that is, there is no reason to think that Sen’s question must have an answer. The theorist should order the principles and then offer them as the best interpretation of the egalitarian ideal. Finally, arguments, preferably arguments that can be made persuasive to those who do not already share the bulk of the intuitive judgments, should be proffered for the interpreted ideal.
into outcomes. This requires, for example, that there be a mechanism ensuring that successful policies are enacted by the executive, as well as that the voting system is structured to give the same weight to each vote. So political influence cannot be reduced to a simple mapping of preferences to outcomes, for two reasons. First, two persons having equal political influence does not entail that each of their preferred options is selected equally often in a series of votes on matters about which they each have equally strong views: if a member of a small minority has her preferences on important matters enacted as often as a member of the majority on those matters this indicates that she has more influence than the members of the majority.

But, second, even when each of two persons' public policy preferences are selected in proportion to the size of the political faction to which they belong, this does not entail that they have equal political influence. Having influence implies that a citizen has a live option of participating in the selection process, and that the selection or otherwise of her preference is a non-accidental result of her participation (or non-participation) in the process.5 A system through which political influence is exercised is, however, not simply a process of counting up votes. Another element is the process of public deliberation, in which opinions are formed or refined and promoted. We might call this the marketplace of ideas. The deliberative process plays an essential role in democratic governance by giving voters good reasons for believing that the preferences and/or views that they deploy in voting are genuinely theirs.6 We know, for example, that when the background conditions contain massive inequalities of income and wealth it is usually possible for wealthier citizens to exercise more influence over political decisions because they usually have more access to the mass media, a more suitable educational background and more leisure time to develop considered views about political issues, and, for all these reasons, a greater ability to persuade others of those views. EAPI requires the insulation of the political process from such inequalities. Where the inequalities are so great that insulation is not possible, EAPI requires their reduction to a level at which it is possible.

It is reasonable to think that EAPI will have quite extensive implications for the distribution of resources. We shall see in section 3 that it requires significant redistribution of resources to the disabled. But it is hard to see how political procedures can be insulated against voters' distribution of productive resources. Those productive investment are able to affect participating equally in the deliberative and to withhold or redirect their investment unless desires. In addition, of course, simply in having productive investment, they enjoy disproportionate element of our shared circumstances.

2. THE CASE FOR EQUAL AVAILABILITY

Why should institutions be designed to ensure equal influence over their collective circumstances, considering its explanatory power for some arrangement of democratic institutions. committed to the principle of one person per vote. Democrats generally resist any departures as acceptable usually only a Plural voting schemes or parliamentary seats for members of one or another political thoroughly inimical to the aims of democracy of this intuition?

The most straightforward explanation of person—i.e., equally weighted and inalienable citizen should have available to them idea is that the vote is given the special substantive means for exercising influence regulated forms of influence. On this view, to vote, or of designing a voting system, someone else, is the wrong of denying which she, equally with everyone else, she,

This is not the full case for equal availability with which I am working, however wide is worth looking at why other explanations claimed that its appeal is simply that would be likely to provoke revolt, or at least. Such an explanation appears to ground unacceptably contingent grounding for explain why people want democracy is the
ample, that there be a mechanism ensuring by the executive, as well as that the voting weight to each vote. So political influence piping of preferences to outcomes, for two equal political influence does not entail that alected equally often in a series of votes on equally strong views; if a member of a small group matters enacted as often as a member of large indicates that she has more influence than the two persons’ public policy preferences are in a political faction to which they belong, this political influence. Having influence implies participating in the selection process, and reference is a non-accidental result of her the process.\(^5\)

Influence is exercised, however, not simply another element is the process of public armed or refined and promoted. We might deliberative process plays as essential role in the good reasons for believing that the role in voting are genuinely theirs.\(^6\) We background conditions contain massive usually possible for wealthier citizens to decisions because they usually have more stable educational background and more is about political issues, and, for all these others of those views. EAPI requires the such inequalities. Where the inequalities if, EAPI requires their reduction to a level

I will have quite extensive implications for the in section 3 that it requires significant bled. But it is hard to see how political

procedures can be insulated against very substantial inequalities in the distribution of productive resources. Those who have differential control over productive investment are able to affect political outcomes not just by participating equally in the deliberative and voting processes, but by threatening to withhold or redirect their investment unless political outcomes conform to their desires. In addition, of course, simply in having greater control than others over productive investment, they enjoy disproportionate influence over one important element of our shared circumstances.

2. THE CASE FOR EQUAL AVAILABILITY OF POLITICAL INFLUENCE

Why should institutions be designed to ensure that citizens have available to them equal influence over their collective circumstances? The case for EAPI begins by considering its explanatory power for some of our firmest intuitions regarding the arrangement of democratic institutions. Most contemporary democracies are committed to the principle of one person–one equally weighted and inalienable vote. Democrats generally resist any departures from this principle, regarding departures as acceptable usually only as transitional or rectifying measures. Plural voting schemes or parliamentary systems that reserve a fixed proportion of seats for members of one or another political minority are generally considered thoroughly inimical to the aims of democracy. What could explain the robustness of this intuition?

The most straightforward explanation is that underlying the principle of one person–one equally weighted and inalienable vote is a deeper principle that each citizen should have available to them equal influence over political affairs. The idea is that the vote is given the special status it has because it serves both as a substantive means for exercising influence and represents other, less easily regulated forms of influence. On this view the wrong of denying someone the right to vote, or of designing a voting system so that her vote is worth less than that of someone else, is the wrong of denying her equal influence over the conditions in which she, equally with everyone else, has to live her life.

This is not the full case for equal availability of influence. After all, the intuition with which I am working, however widespread and robust, may be mistaken. But it is worth looking at why other explanations of the intuition are weak. It might be claimed that its appeal is simply that giving some people more votes than others would be likely to provoke revolt, or at least render society unstable in various ways. Such an explanation appears to ground the value of democracy in the contingent (if reasonably stable) desire of citizens to have democracy. This seems to be an unacceptably contingent grounding for democratic rights. It also makes it hard to explain why people have wanted democracy: most democrats will think that the reason people want democracy is that they correctly recognise it to be valuable
independently of their desire for it, rather than that it is valuable only because they want it.\textsuperscript{7}

Ronald Dworkin has recently offered another explanation of the intuition. He concedes that, because of the role which the struggle for universal suffrage has played in American (and European) history, to deny someone the same number of equally-weighted votes as all others is to deny their moral equality as persons in a deep way. However, he argues that, in principle, if our history had been different, it would not be objectionable to violate the principle of one person–one equally weighted vote.\textsuperscript{8} This explanation, like the last, makes the value of the institution too contingent, and does not explain why the struggle for the principle has played the role that it has in our history.

Furthermore, inalienability is hard to justify on views that appeal to the fact that citizens want the right to vote, or that denying them that right is a wrong for merely contingent historical reasons. If some individuals do not want the right to vote their desires will be better served if they are able through alienation to transform it into something they do want. Allowing them to sell the right does not amount to denying them that right: it just allows them to alienate it when they see alienation to be to their benefit. By contrast, an explanation that appeals to a principle of equal availability of influence can explain inalienability of votes in either of two plausible ways. First, alienation to a second party would deprive third parties of equal influence with that second party; and, second, alienation would foreclose on the continued equal availability of influence for the one alienating the vote.

One possible problem for the above argument is that the very strength of the intuition ensures that many democrats will resist giving up the principle of one person–one equally weighted inalienable vote, even if it could be demonstrated that some other scheme is required by EAPI. While I admit that they may so resist, I think that such resistance can be explained by a number of contingent considerations. Any argument that one person–one vote is incompatible with EAPI will probably be disputable, and will arouse suspicion that the proponent is insincere. The robustness of one person–one vote also reflects the desirability of equality at each stage of the political process. So, even though it would be technically compatible with EAPI, a system in which inequalities in the process of public deliberation were off-set by inverse inequalities in the voting and legislative processes would be undesirable (as well as institutionally unfeasible).\textsuperscript{9} Finally, however robust it may be, the intuition is often applied to all principles that are advanced to explain the undeniable conflict between it and the others that would, it seems to me, constitute inalienable.\textsuperscript{10}

That it does well in explaining a firm rejection of political democracies does not vindicate it as a subject for debate. However, I think the principle from a deeper principle of equal equality of whatever good is claimed as an ideal about how social institutions supposed to be a moral obligation that underlie the argument for the idea that the state is generally viewed as an obligation that right respect for their presumed equal moral.

The argument for EAPI is that it is available to them over our collective respect for our fellow citizens. Conceived and expressed within some affective association. We express equal respect in such conditions to their preferences in making decisions a movie to see. If we fail to consult one another, fail to take her preferences into account or treat her as being less important, usually a sign of relative disrespect. So more or less weight than the others, on behalf of themselves heard, would similarly count.

Of course there are complications. It is appropriate in such contexts for people to express feelings and to cope with one another’s moody tendency for the more unreasonable actions in such associations. Furthermore, because one person–one vote need not be given respect to people with whom we interact in their moral character. Finally, affecting or co-opting the choice of another, hence the choice need not have professional

\textsuperscript{7}For an example of a view which grounds the value of democracy in people’s desire for it, see Philip Green, Retrieving Democracy: In Search of Civic Equality (Totowa: Rowman and Allenheld, 1985).


\textsuperscript{9}Such a system would be undesirable because it is hard to see how it could be transparently egalitarian and hence open to scrutiny by all citizens. It is not even clear that such a system is possible because there is a sense in which those with more influence at the deliberative stage also have more influence at the voting stage: and that influence is only increased by giving extra votes to those they have influenced.

\textsuperscript{10}Failure to consult can sometimes be considered precommitted to go along with whatever gets
However robust it may be, the intuition could not rationally be upheld against all principles that are advanced to explain it. To hold on to it in the face of an undeniable conflict between it and the principle which seemed best to explain it would, it seems to me, constitute a fetishism about voting. Because one person—one equally weighted inalienable vote is compatible with such a wide array of political arrangements, including many that are thoroughly unjust and even undemocratic, its desirability seems to require explanation in terms of a deeper principle. EAPI is, I submit, the deeper principle that best explains it.

That it does well in explaining a firmly held intuition about the proper operation of political democracies does not vindicate EAPI as a principle; it simply suggests it as a subject for debate. However, I think there is an independent argument for the principle from a deeper principle of equal respect. Egalitarianism, and by extension equality of whatever good is claimed as the egalitarian distribuand, is offered as part of an ideal about how social institutions should be arranged. But equality is supposed to be a moral obligation that we owe to one another as individuals. When the argument for the idea that the state should treat us equally is presented, equality is generally viewed as an obligation that moral agents owe each other by virtue of respect for their presumed equal moral worth.

The argument for EAPI is that guaranteeing that equal influence will be available to them over our collective circumstances is a requisite of expressing respect for our fellow citizens. Consider the ways in which equal respect is expressed within some affective associations; for example, in a group of friends. We express equal respect in such contexts by consulting all who wish to assert their preferences in making decisions about where to go for dinner or which movie to see. If we fail to consult one member of the group, or, having consulted her, fail to take her preferences into account when making the decision, that is usually a sign of relative disrespect. Systematically giving one friend’s input more or less weight than the others, or giving them more or less opportunity to get themselves heard, would similarly count as expressing unequal respect.

Of course there are complications within affective associations. It is quite appropriate in such contexts for people to care about not offending each other, and to bend to one another’s moods. Perhaps less appropriately, there is a tendency for the more unreasonable and less considerate to be given more latitude in such associations. Furthermore, because we have fuller information about one another, equal respect need not be presumed. We generally accord differential respect to people with whom we interact personally, based on what we know of their moral character. Finally, affective associations are, in some sense, voluntary. If a friend does not like the chosen activity, she has a realistic option of exit, and hence the choice need not have profound effects on the way her life goes.

Failure to consult can sometimes be compatible with respect: for example, when a person has precommitted to go along with whatever gets decided by the group.
But when we consider interactions mediated primarily by non-affective social institutions, the notion of a presumption is useful. Social institutions enter the picture because in modern societies we regularly interact in morally important ways with strangers; that is, with the many of whom we know nothing and for whom we do not (and perhaps cannot) care, but whom we are obliged to treat equally, at least because our behaviour affects them (and their behaviour affects us) through social cooperation. We have no reason to think they are any more or less valuable than each other or ourselves or our friends. Thus, while in our personal lives we are (properly) concerned about those for whom we have affective ties, through our common social institutions we have an obligation to treat strangers equally and to treat our friends in the same way as others through those institutions. So we should seek institutions that facilitate our equal treatment of one another.

Furthermore, we take ourselves each to be responsible for the institutions by which we are commonly treated, and the decisions that are made through them. That is, at least to the extent that when it is reasonably possible to propose and effect change in the direction of justice without massive costs, we think that respect for others obliges us to do that. So, for example, in societies where dissent is relatively uncostly and productive we do hold ourselves responsible for the design of our social institutions. We see social institutions, in other words, as our central mechanisms for treating strangers equally, and hence we should seek to shape them so that they facilitate mutually equal treatment.

If this is the kind of argument that motivates egalitarians it is easy to see how a concern with political influence—that is, influence over the shaping and reshaping of social institutions and over the decisions made through them—emerges. Making available to others equal influence over design of the institutions and the decisions made through them gives them as full an opportunity as everyone else has both to get things to go their way and to act justly towards others. The obligation of equal respect towards others yields an obligation to ensure that social institutions embody a presumption of equal respect for all citizens. The claim is that making available equal political influence is the proper institutionalisation of that presumption.

I shall consider a number of objections to EAPI in sections 6 and 7. But one objection naturally arises at this point. Some people will think that political decision-making institutions should be designed to promote the common good, however that is best understood. But since it is reasonable to expect that at least some people will use their influence to feather their own nests, granting them influence equal to that of others will be liable of view of the common good than granting.

Justice, however, is part of the common good. EAPI is a foundational element of justice. The implementation of EAPI even if some detriment of the rest of the common good, the presumption of respect for others requires of anyone that they will use their influence required to make available equal influence advancement of their interests, including. The propriety of fulfilling this obligation, it uses to which they will put the influence.

I do not mean to suggest that EAPI may have other obligations that require institutions, and in the conclusion I shall show how they relate to democracy. What I will centre of those obligations. Furthermore, recognising that EAPI is at the centre of egalitarian intuitions about what I share than other proposed versions of equality.

It might be objected to a principle of EAPI influence are morally acceptable—even distinguish between a principle of strict equality doesn’t require that all sources of inequality naturally explains the acceptability of two.

First, it might be objected to strict equality person exerts more influence because proposals than do her opponents, the acceptable but positively desirable. So argument is an acceptable source of influence.

In fact equal availability of political inequalities of influence have their source in evidence and argument they are acceptability. Habermas’s slogan that ‘no force but reason’ This stricture will have implications for the marketplace of ideas; it will perhaps be required, as a condition on getting along and that the mass media be required to factions are pressured to engage each.

\[1^{1}\text{Just to clarify: we take each other and ourselves to be responsible for the arrangement of social institutions and the decisions made through them only to the extent that we think we can reasonably be expected to affect them. So, for example, we would not expect someone to give her life on the off-chance of affecting the arrangements in question: in Nazi Germany, just treatment of others might not require fruitless martyrdom, in fact it might simply be impossible.}\]
mediated primarily by non-affective social interaction is useful. Social institutions enter the debates regularly interact in morally important ways, many of whom we know nothing and for whom care, but whom we are obliged to treat, affects them (and their behaviour affects us) no reason to think they are any more or less as our friends through social institutions we have an obligation to friends in the same way as others through institutions that facilitate our equal to be responsible for the institutions by the decisions that are made through them. In it is reasonably possible to propose and choose, without massive costs, we think that. So, for example, in societies where dissent we do hold ourselves responsible for the social institutions, in other words, as our agents equally, and hence we should seek to equally equal treatment.

Motivates egalitarians it is easy to see how a influence over the shaping and reshaping decisions made through them—emerges. Once over design of the institutions and the man as full an opportunity as everyone else to act justly towards others. The others yield an obligation to ensure that equal respect for all citizens. The equal political influence is the proper conditions to EAPI in sections 6 and 7. But one it. Some people will think that political designed to promote the common good, hence it is reasonable to expect that at least to feather their own nests, granting them influence equal to that of others will be liable to produce results worse from the point of view of the common good than granting them less influence.

Justice, however, is part of the common good, and I have argued that providing EAPI is a foundational element of justice. As such, the common good gains from the implementation of EAPI even if some participants use their influence to the detriment of the rest of the common good. Furthermore, the argument from the presumption of respect for others requires among other things that we not assume of anyone that they will use their influence to feather their own nest. We are required to make available equal influence to others so that they can ensure the advancement of their interests, including their interest in treating others justly. The propriety of fulfilling this obligation to others is not contingent on the actual uses to which they will put the influence.

I do not mean to suggest that EAPI exhausts our obligations to strangers. We may have other obligations that require realisation through the design of social institutions, and in the conclusion I shall say something about what these are and how they relate to democracy. What I do intend to claim is that EAPI lies at the centre of those obligations. Furthermore, as I shall argue in a subsequent section, recognising that EAPI is at the centre of the egalitarian ideal enables us to explain egalitarian intuitions about what I shall call the problem of the disabled better than other proposed versions of equality.

It might be objected to a principle of EAPI that in fact some sources of inequality of influence are morally acceptable—even morally desirable. But it is important to distinguish between a principle of strict equality of political influence and EAPI. EAPI does not require that all sources of inequality be eliminated, and, in particular, it quite naturally explains the acceptability of two proper sources of inequality of influence.

First, it might be objected to strict equality of political influence that when one person exerts more influence because she simply gives better reasons for her proposals than do her opponents, the resultant inequality of influence is not only acceptable but positively desirable. So the presentation of good evidence and argument is an acceptable source of inequality.

In fact equal availability of political influence embraces the idea that when inequalities of influence have their source in the persuasive presentation of good evidence and argument they are acceptable. EAPI embodies the ideal expressed in Habermas’s slogan that ‘no force but that of the better argument is exercised’. This stricture will have implications for the design, in particular, of the institutions of the marketplace of ideas: it will permit, for example, that candidates for office be required, as a condition on getting access to airtime, to engage in direct debate, and that the mass media be required to provide forums in which different political factions are pressured to engage each other.

---

We need at this point to distinguish briefly between access and opportunity on the other. Equal opportunity undermines a weak principle to capture what I think of as my other example, in one sense of opportunity, if the vote is sold on votes, vote-buying is consistent with equally long as each had, at the age of majority, to buy as many others as everyone else had an equal opportunity for future voting. This influence, which prohibits such foreclosure on institutions be designed to facilitate the empowerment of long-term abstainers.15

3. THE PROBLEM

In section 1 I tried to show that a principal problem with the egalitarian ideal. To say this is not to say I do not believe that it does, but it is to say that it must not neglect the value of democracy are based on the idea of democracy being the form 'equality of X' tend to be defective. To explain that EAPI can explain better that equal judgment concerning our obligations to those who want to deny. In the next section I will equip that its rivals to survive a general discussion.

The problem that EAPI gives us a way of tackling the problem of the disabled. Egalitarians insist that if institutional norms equality implies, it means that those who are disabled through not have the same resources as those who are not. The intuition of equality is based on the idea that everyone is equally entitled to spend $6,000 in a surplus of $4,000 for luxury spending and $9,500 to meet their basic needs, those who are not. The problem of the abled might normally spend on luxuries spending, and this seems to be both the idea of trying to treat the disabled as just as well as others who come from disadvantaged backgrounds. In fact the disabled may have disadvantages are, in some strong sense.

13John Roemer, A Future for Socialism (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998) describes the socialist principle of political equality, what he seems to mean is actually 'equal availability'.

14It would not be entirely counterintuitive to think of inequalities of actual influence which have their source solely in voluntary abstention from institutionally available participation in politics as consistent with equality of influence. Abstention, at least when it is chosen deliberately in the knowledge that effective participation is available, can be seen as a form of exercise of influence. The deliberate abstainer influences affairs by his absence; he wants things to go as they would if he did not interfere, and he achieves this by not interfering.

15I do not mean to suggest that there is something which is her authentic view but of which she is unaware. In the circumstances described it seems to me that she does not have an authentic view and so, in particular, the commitment she has is not authentic.
We need at this point to distinguish briefly between availability on the one hand and opportunity on the other. Equal opportunity for political influence is too weak a principle to capture what I think is required by political equality. For example, in one sense of opportunity, if citizens have equal resources and equal votes, vote-buying is consistent with equal opportunity for political influence. As long as each had, at the age of majority, the opportunity to retain their vote, and to buy as many others as everyone else had the opportunity to buy, they each had equal opportunity for future voting. This is not the same as equal availability of influence, which prohibits such foreclosure on future influence, and requires that institutions be designed to facilitate the relatively easy re-entry into influential participation of long-term abstainers.\(^{15}\)

3. THE PROBLEM OF THE DISABLED

In section 1 I tried to show that a principle of EAPI should have a central place in the egalitarian ideal. To say this is not to say that it exhausts the ideal, and I do not believe that it does, but it is to say that explications of egalitarianism that neglect the value of democracy are to that extent defective. In particular, explications which claim that egalitarianism is exhausted by a single principle of the form 'equality of X' tend to be defective in this way. In this section I shall show that EAPI can explain better than rival principles of the same form an intuitive judgment concerning our obligations to the disabled, which no egalitarian will want to deny. In the next section I shall show that the principle of EAPI is better equipped than its rivals to survive a general objection to equalising principles.

The problem that EAPI gives us a way of addressing is what I shall call the problem of the disabled. Egalitarians have generally thought that whatever distributive norms equality implies, it must imply that those who are disabled—at least those who are disabled through no fault of their own—should be granted more resources than others. The intuition is most easily illustrated using resource-based equality. Suppose that everyone received $10,000 per year. The ordinarily-abled might normally spend $6,000 in meeting their basic needs, and thus have a surplus of $4,000 for luxury spending. The disabled, however, might require $9,500 to meet their basic needs, those needs being more extensive and expensive than those of the ordinarily-abled. Only $500 is left for discretionary luxury spending, and this seems to be both unjust and genuinely illegitamit. It is tempting to treat the disabled as just another disadvantaged group: that is, as like others who come from disadvantaged starting points, on a par with victims of past injustice. But in fact the disabled present a special kind of problem: their disadvantages are, in some strong sense, ineliminable. A long-established just

\(^{15}\)John Roemer, A Future for Socialism (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994) p.11, describes the socialist principle of political equality as 'equal opportunity for political influence' when what he seems to mean is actually 'equal availability of political influence'.

thing which is her authentic view but of which she is to me that she does not have an authentic view: and authentic, think of inequalities of actual influence which have institutionally available participation in politics or, at least when it is chosen deliberately in the, can be seen as a form of exercise of influence. The sense: he wants things to go as they would if he did not

conceive of the principle as equal availability multiplying distinction between the deliberative purpose of allowing good arguments to have is that in the voting process those who their own influence, rather than merely acting ers. Views acquired through a process of equal debate become the views of those cases where a commitment is a consequence used the rational capacities of the voter. In e is a sense in which the influence the voter ho manipulated her. Similarly (though less particular candidate or option is merely a voters of that candidate or option had more hose of other candidates or options, there is is not represent her authentic view,\(^{13}\) and in s not genuinely hers.

y of political influence is that what seems to al equality is not that each citizen equally of decisions, but at most that they have influence decisions. Why should it matter if for participation in public life, wields more hone his psychic talents? Surely, in other al inequalities of influence if the source of or relative lack of interest of some citizens. strict equality of influence, however, this EAPI. The emphasis I have placed on the ide is the equal institutional availability of onability of inequalities of influence which tions to engage in political action. If efer to advance it in debate nor to register live. What is essential is that there are no in the process and no barriers to her equal a reading of political equality is suggested like votes inalienable, but wrong to make
society will still have to concern itself with how to distribute to the disabled. The neglect of this problem gives it a slightly indeterminate character: it is not clear exactly what egalitarians feel obliged to do for the disabled. But egalitarians usually do consider it a condition of success of their philosophy that it provide that paraplegics are entitled to wheelchairs and care, that mentally retarded children are entitled to substantial remedial education, and that both are entitled to these resources over and above what they would have been entitled to had they not been disabled. The problem of the disabled, then, is to provide the disabled with significantly more of what the state distributes while nevertheless advocating equality.  

What does EAPI have to say about the problem? It addresses it in the following way. Each disabled citizen is to be granted those additional goods and services (including, for example, remedial education, medical treatment, architectural measures which make public buildings accessible to them) that are required to enable them to play an equal part with other citizens in the political process if they should so choose. Of particular importance is that they are able to play a full role (should they so choose) in the process of public deliberation: they must be able to make their voices heard and must have the freedom from want to be able to deliberate confidently and reflectively about their views and preferences. The capacity to engage in the public deliberative process is crucial for two reasons. Public deliberation is supposed to ensure that evidence and arguments for different positions are given a full airing. Without engagement the rational voter has no assurance that the views or the preferences which she chooses to advance through voting are the best to advance. And unless she engages the voter has no assurance that her interests or views will be taken into account in the required ways by other voters in the formulation of their views or preferences. Although political pursuits often require distinctive knowledge and skills, they presume a similar level of basic functioning to most other rewarding activities, and which the disabled, unattended to, usually lack. Thus, in order for them to have equal political influence available to them, the disabled must be provided with the wide range of goods and services that facilitate this level of functioning. The rationale is not that these goods and services will grant measures can nevertheless be expected to egalitarians have wanted to do for the disabled. It is that powerful intuitions about the relative disadvantages. This is an advantage it has.

The rival accounts I shall consider are the and equality of opportunity for welfare, how it attempts to deal with the problem.

Equality of welfare claims that the state is most likely to achieve actual equality to vary variously as happiness, the satisfaction of hypothetical preferences formed under it will not matter which we pick. It is also conceived, is the proper measure of a prefer this for the sake of argument. Equality comments on the problems posed by perceiving the problem of the disabled. Receive those goods that they require as subjective reward as the ordinarily-able. Natural endowments are, in a deep sense, the intuition that the state should not be held to the natural lottery. So if, when Disabled, preferences, it is more expensive to welfare ensures that Disabled is as abil-

This commentary is not costless however disabled, the egalitarian of welfare have their source in distinctive claim citizens. For the ordinarily-abled with expensive as those of the disabled the preference for a wheelchair is to be the way as the preference for caviar: indi-

treated the same way whether it belong, it would be fun to drive around in a wheelchair preferences is usually thought to be a matter of welfare. My point here is that it also completely deals well with the problem of the dis-

Equality of resources is the position is most naturally formulated, and it

---

16It is important to notice an unavoidable vagueness in this text, which will affect the ensuing discussion. The neglect of the problem of the disabled by egalitarians means that it is not clear precisely what provision egalitarians should make for the disabled, and hence it is not clear exactly what it takes to pass the proposed test. In what follows I show that EAPI can do much for the disabled, and that although equality of welfare or equality of opportunity for welfare each also do much for the disabled, their ability to do what they do is dependent on independently unattractive features of those views.

17It may sound odd to talk of 'best' preferences. In fact I imagine that preferences are no all given, but are actually developed and modified in the course of the debate. Even if preferences were given and unalterable through the public process, though, the public process of deliberation will be essential in most conditions to enabling our own interests, which of our preferences can be advanced most efficaciously. This is consistent with my earlier claim (in note 6) that EAPI is defensible on both cognitive and individual interest conceptions of democracy.

18Both of these considerations usually give individuals a reason to engage, but neither give us a reason, from the perspective of justice, to ensure that they do engage. What is essential is that engagement is a realistic option for them, while abstention is also a guaranteed option.

EGALITARIANISM AND AVAILABILITY OF POLITICAL INFLUENCE

not that these goods and services will give the disabled greater welfare, but the measures can nevertheless be expected to have this effect. So EAPI does much that egalitarians have wanted to do for the disabled, and it does so without violating powerful intuitions about the relationship between disabilities and other disadvantages. This is an advantage it has over rival principles of the same form.

The rival accounts I shall consider are equality of welfare, equality of resources and equality of opportunity for welfare. I shall characterise each, and then show how it attempts to deal with the problem.

Equality of welfare claims that the state should distribute goods in the way that is most likely to achieve actual equality of welfare, where welfare is conceived of variously as happiness, the satisfaction of actual preferences, or the satisfaction of hypothetical preferences formed under idealised circumstances: for my purposes it will not matter which we pick. It is also usually taken for granted that welfare, so conceived, is the proper measure of a person's absolute condition: we shall grant this for the sake of argument. Equality of welfare easily and unproblematically comments on the problems posed by people coming from unequal starting points, including the problem of the disabled. Under equality of welfare the disabled receive those goods that they require in order to live their lives with as much subjective reward as the ordinarily-abled. This meets the intuition that a person's natural endowments are, in a deep sense, part of their person, while also meeting the intuition that they should not be held responsible for society for the outcome of the natural lottery. So if, when Disabled and Ordinarily-abled have the same set of preferences, it is more expensive to fulfil Disabled's preferences, equality of welfare ensures that Disabled is as able to fulfil the preferences as is Ordinarily-abled.

This commentary is not costless however. In outlining the obligations to the disabled, the egalitarian of welfare has to reject the view that these obligations have their source in distinctive claims that the disabled have on their fellow citizens. For the ordinarily-abled with preferences (or sources of happiness) as expensive as those of the disabled can make exactly the same claims. The preference for a wheelchair is to be treated by equality of welfare in the same way as the preference for caviar: indeed the preference for a wheelchair is to be treated the same way whether it belongs to a paraplegic or someone who just thinks it would be fun to drive around in a wheelchair. The way that it deals with expensive preferences is usually thought to be a decisive consideration against equality of welfare. My point here is that it also counts against the idea that equality of welfare deals well with the problem of the disabled.

Equality of resources is the position against which the problem of the disabled is most naturally formulated, and it might therefore be thought redundant to

---

consider it. But resource-egalitarians have a number of responses to this objection. One is to make the cut between resources and the person in a different place: instead of seeing innate endowments as part of the person, we see them as resources which he has, on a par with alienable scarce resources. Apart from the difficulties of implementing such a view, this is usually rejected because egalitarians see innate endowments as not being properly open to distributive manipulation in the way that alienable resources are. We have to distinguish between resources that we may distribute and endowments that we may not redistribute.20

Ronald Dworkin has made a famous alternative proposal: a hypothetical insurance scheme against the bad luck of being born with fewer than the ordinary amount of natural endowments.21 Obviously, since insurance cannot be granted after the fact, this is going to be an unusual scheme. The idea is that we work out the level of insurance that people would have bought had they been born ordinarily-abled and had the chance of acquiring their disability that every child has of being born with that disability. Then we compensate people for their natural disabilities at that level.

One problem with this proposal is that, because it is an insurance scheme, it treats natural endowments as commensurable with alienable resources in a way that intuitively they are not. Many of us would not place a money value on our natural abilities because that is simply not the way that we think of them. Usually actual insurance of natural endowments is motivated by the preferability of some compensation in case of accident, and the affordability of the premium. But we do not think of the pay-out as full compensation. Another unattractive feature is that, because it is a hypothetical scheme, the compensation a disabled person receives is based entirely on the money value that others place on the natural endowments they actually have, because the beneficiary has not yet been born when the calculations are made.

There are other reasons for doubting Dworkin’s proposal which I cannot go into here. But notice that, even if we accept it, the proposal is not so much a way of salvaging equality of resources as the imposition of a constraint on equality of resources. It aims at an unequal division of resources, due to a concern that some are unacceptably disadvantaged by their place in the natural lottery. Therefore they due compensation for this in the form of more alienable resources than the ordinarily-abled, thus ensuring that they have opportunities for welfare more equal to those of the ordinarily-abled than they would otherwise have. But on this understanding of the motivation for the resources, it is not resource-egalitarian. Perhaps a view advocating equality of opportunities with the problem.

Richard Arneson and G. A. Cohen hold this view. A central motivation is that individuals are in control of themselves, and should ensure that all individuals face the same potential for their welfare.22 This is, in one sense, an objection to the maximin approach to the problem of the disabled better than to try to deal with the problem.

4. THE MAXIMUM OBJECTION

A principle of EAPI enjoys a further advantage in that it can more easily resist another general objection to the achievement of equality of some kind: that it disadvantages everyone, and in particular the able-bodied. This is, in one sense, an objection to EAPI thought of as an egalitarian objection.


21Arneson describes the view as follows:

For equal opportunity for welfare to obtain, there must be an array of options that is equivalent to the satisfaction that it offers... Think of two life choices, each one of which offers the same life, but one of which gives the other an array of choices that is incomparable. Given that one or another choice is made, each life would then face another array of choices, that gives an individual an opportunity for welfare obtained among pluses... When persons enjoy equality of opportunities, there is no actual inequality of welfare in terms of what is within each individual’s control.


22Of course, intuitions in these matters are of limited reliability, but one consequence of this view, taken strictly, is that persons are to be considered as separate from all their inalienable endowments, including intellect, etc. A liberalism which embraces this view of persons is open to the kind of objections familiar from the attacks of contemporary communitarians. These attacks take two forms: liberals i) fail to respect the historical situatedness of persons, and ii) they fail even to respect the physical integrity of persons. Often these attacks are misplaced, but the solution to the problem of the disabled described here embraces the latter fault, and for that reason should be unattractive.

understanding of the motivation for the proposed constraint on equality of resources, it is not resource-egalitarian at all, but access-to-welfare egalitarian. Perhaps a view advocating equality of opportunity for welfare would deal better with the problem.

Richard Arneson and G. A. Cohen have each recently proposed versions of this view. A central motivation is that inequalities resulting from choices that lie within the control of individuals are acceptable. So the view is that the state should ensure that all individuals face arrays of options that would have the same potential for their welfare. This view might appear to solve the problem of the disabled unproblematically. The disabled are provided with more resources so that they have the same opportunities for welfare. However, like equality of welfare, equality of opportunity for welfare solves the problem of the disabled at a cost: it treats disabilities as having no more urgency from the perspective of justice than expensive tastes which were acquired neither deliberately nor recklessly. But they do seem to have more urgency and to require different treatment. None of the rival principles, then, seems to deal with the problem of the disabled better than EAPI, and in fact, unlike EAPI, each has to strain to deal with the problem.

4. THE MAXIMUM OBJECTION TO PRINCIPLES OF EQUALITY

A principle of EAPI enjoys a further advantage over its rivals, which is that it is more able to resist a general objection to principles of the same form—that the achievement of equality of some kind of good will sometimes be to the disadvantage of everyone, and in particular to the worst-off members of society. This is, in one sense, an objection to equality as such. But it is also properly thought of as an egalitarian objection, the concern which motivates it being the

---


23Arneson describes the view as follows:

For equal opportunity for welfare to obtain among a number of persons, each must face an array of options that is equivalent to every other person’s in terms of the preference-satisfaction that it offers. Think of two persons entering majority and facing various life choices, each action one might choose being associated with its possible outcomes. Given that one or another choice is made and one or another outcome realised, the agent would then face another array of choices, then another, and so on. We construct a decision tree that gives an individual’s possible complete life-histories. Equal opportunity for welfare obtains among persons when all of them face equivalent decision trees. When persons enjoy equality of opportunity for welfare in the extended sense any actual inequality of welfare in the positions they reach is due to factors that lie within each individual’s control.

wellbeing of the worst off, which is a traditionally egalitarian concern. The reason that this objection to equality has resonance for egalitarians is that distributive norms have to be judged from two points of view: the point of view of the person who seeks to treat others with justice, and the point of view of the person who is the recipient of the treatment. The first point of view is that from which we generate the argument for equality of X: we ask how we should treat others with respect to the distribution of the good, and it turns out that we should treat them equally. But when we take the point of view of the recipient of treatment, equality does not look attractive if it yields even less of the good than does inequality. When equality yields a lesser distribution of a good to everyone, including the worst off, than would maximin, to uphold equality against maximin would be to say that we are obliged to make everyone worse off than they could otherwise be. This seems unappealing once we take the perspective of the recipient of the benefits.

The rival principles are liable to yield distributions which make everyone worse off with respect to the proposed distribuands than would some unequal distributions, because in each case there are specifiable mechanisms by which unequal distributions can reasonably be expected to produce sufficiently more of the good that, if it is redistributed appropriately, all can benefit. There are no such mechanisms in the case of political influence. This is not to say that the total amount of influence is constant across societies. A society plagued by regular natural disasters, for example, is likely to have available to it, as a whole, less influence over its collective affairs than a similar society which is blessed with geological stability. Nor is it to say that the total amount of political influence cannot be increased or decreased: it can. In particular, sometimes there are technological advances that open up areas of our shared circumstances to effective collective control which had previously been unsusceptible to human manipulation (if somebody invented a weather machine, for example, we would enjoy such an increase in collective control).

The point here is that, unlike the other kinds of good surveyed, our access to political influence is strongly dependent on that of each other, and there appears to be no mechanism available to us by which we can expect to produce such increases in political influence by distributive means.

I would not want to be taken to be saying that the total. There are in fact reasons to think that the worst off are the best off. Minds are at work on the problems, fewer options must be made is harder to gather, and decisions are better made. Fleurbaey pointed this out to me.

5. THE AMBITION OF EAPI

I have assumed so far that the rival answers offered as exhaustive accounts of egalitarianism. EAPI is supposed to be one central egalitarian. It might be objected that it is indeed partners of EAPI within a full-blooded sense that have set up is misconceived.

Notice that, were equalising principles, they deal with the problem of the disabled. The rich could simply be subordinated to a lexical rule (with needs defined in terms of objects) so that the problem of the disabled was well handled.

Furthermore, the authors to whom I refer their answers as exhaustive accounts, do not cover the interests we have in political collective action. The articles cited, make it apparent that equalising principles (EAPI advantage) is supposed to capture those who are collective towards one another as citizens. Dworkin at the expense of resources. The first two articles in his...
EGALITARIANISM AND AVAILABILITY OF POLITICAL INFLUENCE

EGALITARIANISM AND AVAILABILITY OF POLITICAL INFLUENCE

is a traditionally egalitarian concern. The quality has resonance for egalitarians is that it is two points of view: the point of view of others with justice, and the point of view of the treatment. The first point of view is that from equality of X: we ask how we should treat of the good, and it turns out that we should take the point of view of the recipient of attractive if it yields even less of the good than a lesser distribution of a good to everyone, maximin, to uphold equality against minimin to make everyone worse off than they could once we take the perspective of the recipient.

held distributions which make everyone worse off distribuands than would some unequal, there are specifiable mechanisms by which they are expected to produce sufficiently more of appropriately, all can benefit. There are no such influence. This is not to say that the total amount is greater, but that the total amount of political influence can. In particular, sometimes there are areas of our shared circumstances to effective previously been unsuscetible to human a weather machine, for example, we would control.

other kinds of good surveyed, our access to access is on that of each other, and there appears as by which we can expect to produce such

consider John Rawls an egalitarian despite his explicit distribution of resources. See also Harry Frankfurt, The Age: Cambridge University Press, 1988), chapter 11, on egalitarian sufficiency criterion: 'Economic equality is with respect to the distribution of economic assets, what is not that everyone should have the same, but that each receive for the worst off to ridicule their egalitarian Thatcher accused a Liberal Democrat spokesperson as in they were. He is saying that he would rather the poor, This way you will never create wealth for better social record', The Times of London, November 23rd 1990.

increases in political influence by distributing it unequally. A principle of EAPI is therefore likely to survive pressure from those who object to equality on the grounds that it is unfair to the worst off.

It would be a mistake to place too much weight on this point. It is an advantage of EAPI that in a wide range of important circumstances it survives an anti-equality test that other principles of the same form fail. But if egalitarianism is properly spelled out in terms of several lexically ordered principles this advantage is not in itself decisive in favour of EAPI. Furthermore, some egalitarians will simply dig in their heels against the maximum objection, and say that equality is valuable in itself, and that value is prior to, and generates, any concern we should have with the wellbeing of the worst off. Nevertheless, egalitarians who are moved by a concern for the worst off will find this an appealing feature of a principle of EAPI.

5. THE AMBITION OF EQUALISING PRINCIPLES

I have assumed so far that the rival answers to the question 'equality of what?' are offered as exhaustive accounts of egalitarianism, and I have also made it clear that EAPI is supposed to be one central principle within a full account of egalitarianism. It might be objected that the rivals are better conceived of as partners of EAPI within a full-blooded egalitarianism, and so the opposition I have set up is misconceived.

Notice that, were equalising principles thus limited in ambition, the way that they deal with the problem of the disabled would not count against them. They could simply be subordinated to a lexically prior principle of meeting the needs of all (with needs defined in terms of objective biological capacities). But then it would be hard to explain why Dworkin, for example, goes to such lengths to answer the problem of the disabled from within the principle of equality of resources.

Furthermore, the authors to whom I have responded do indeed appear to offer their answers as exhaustive accounts, or at least as accounts that are supposed to cover the interests we have in political equality. Both Cohen and Arneson, in the articles cited, make it apparent that equal opportunity for welfare (or access to advantage) is supposed to capture the full extent of our egalitarian obligations towards one another as citizens. Dworkin is less explicit in his defence of equality of resources. The first two articles in his 'Equality of What?' series purport to give

28I would not want to be taken to be saying that the way that influence is distributed cannot affect the total. There are in fact reasons to think that as influence is concentrated it tends to diminish: fewer minds are at work on the problems, fewer options are considered, the information on which decisions must be made is harder to gather, and decisions tend to be made in favour of particular interests. Marc Fleurbaey pointed this out to me.

29I am grateful to the referees for pointing out this very mistake in a previous version of the paper.

an account of what equality means. Yet the first article, devoted to equality of welfare, is a sustained argument against equality of welfare as an ideal. The second article has a different form: it is an elucidation, with little defence, of the meaning of equality of resources as an ideal. But in two more recent articles that deal explicitly with political equality and with the provision of health care, he argues from equality of resources (and from the principle of neutrality which he takes to underlie it) against proposals which would insulate the distribution of those goods from the background distribution of resources. The argument is that, under a regime of equality of resources, independent measures aimed at securing, in the one case, equal political influence, and, in the other case, health care provision would unfairly favour the ways of life of those who care about politics or health over the ways of life of others.

Of course, the intent of the proponents of these principles is not authoritative. But if other proponents of the rival principles were to concede that democracy has a value independent of its service to those principles, they would have to give a full account of that value, and say something about what should happen when democracy comes into conflict with the other principles. This is a gap in contemporary analytic egalitarianism which I hope the present article begins to fill.

But there are other reactions available to proponents of rival principles, consistent with their exhaustive ambition. One is to claim that the rival principles can accommodate the foundational nature of the value of EAPI. The other is to reject the procedural conception of democracy I have advanced, and to say that democracy (and by extension EAPI) is valuable only in so far as it produces the right outcomes, which outcomes are measured against the rival equalising principles.

It bears showing, then, that the foundational importance of neither EAPI nor democracy more generically is accommodated by either equal opportunity for welfare or equality of resources. The following example will show how equal opportunity for welfare clashes with EAPI. Consider someone who is not in the conventional sense disabled but who, through no fault or virtue of her own, has preferences which are extremely cheap to fulfil. Suppose she is a peasant with abnormally sensitive taste buds and an abnormally hardy metabolism, and so can live an extremely rewarding and satisfying life by tasting readily available objects which most people prefer not to eat. Provision of equal opportunities for welfare is very inexpensive, and this is all she should receive.


29The observant reader will notice that equality of welfare has dropped out of consideration. This is because arguments against and responses on behalf of equality of opportunity for welfare are likely to be so similar to those with respect to equality of welfare as to render independent consideration of that principle redundant.

Compare her with the son of the prêt-à-manger appetite for the best caviar, which developed at the Palace and for which he therefore cannot be expected to provide him with the means to be as he is, which means that we have to provide him with more resources than she does, then he will make decisions that will affect their common circumstances, and then she may not receive sufficient resources. The problem is not that EAPI is not guaranteed welfare (although it is not), but that equality ignores the value of political influence among those who are not already engaged in politics would be to provide the means of welfare.

The egalitarian of opportunity for welfare is defeated by the objection rests on a contingent feature of opportunity for welfare. Proponents of the claim for their expensive tastes; that is, they might be disadvantaged with respect to the simple fact of opportunity for welfare could easily afford those tastes and refuse to compensate him for the value of resources does: then the inequalities of means would not arise.

I want to mention two problems with the way in which expensive tastes of the ordinary-abled individual begin to look like a mere modification of the problem of the disabled but are left with no resources faces.

Second, it is not clear that the provision of expensive tastes of the ordinary-abled individual begins to look like a mere modification of the problem of the disabled but are left with no resources faces.

*30This example works at least against the theories in the way in which they demarcate which preferences are tastes which they identify. The problem often unjustly led to 'know their place' and then they have no good reason to be satisfied, other than no reason to be satisfied. 
Yet the first article, devoted to equality of gainst equality of welfare as an ideal. The
it is an elucidation, with little defence, of the
an ideal. But in two more recent articles that y and with the provision of health care, he
and from the principle of neutrality which he
ls which would insulate the distribution of distribution of resources.28 The argument is resources, independent measures aimed atocial influence, and, in the other case, health r the ways of life of those who care about f of others.
ments of these principles is not authoritative.
inciples were to concede that democracy has pse principles, they would have to give a full nething about what should happen when h the other principles. This is a gap in which I hope the present article begins to
available to proponents of rival principles, ion. One is to claim that the rival principles uature of the value of EAPI. The other is to democracy I have advanced, and to say that valuable only in so far as it produces the measured against the rival equalising
ternal importance of neither EAPI nor modated by either equal opportunity for e following example will show how equal EAPI. Consider someone who is not in the through no fault or virtue of her own, has p to fulfill. Suppose she is a peasant with normally hardy metabolism, and so can sifying life by tasting and eating readily p prefer not to eat. Provision of equal expensive, and this is all she should

EGALITARIANISM AND AVAILABILITY OF POLITICAL INFLUENCE

Compare her with the son of the pre-revolutionary Emperor, who has an appetite for the best caviar, which developed as he grew up in the Emperor's Palace and for which he therefore cannot be praised or blamed. Our obligation is to provide him with the means to be as happy in his life as she can be in hers: which means that we have to provide him with much greater resources. If he has more resources than she does, then he has more available to influence the decisions that will affect their common circumstances. If her tastes are very simple then she may not receive sufficient resources to even engage effectively in politics. The problem is not that EAPI is not guaranteed by equality of opportunity for welfare (although it is not), but that equality of opportunity for welfare simply neglects the value of political influence altogether: to provide her with the means to engage in politics would be to provide her with more opportunities for welfare.30

The egalitarian of opportunity for welfare might respond by claiming that this objection rests on a contingent feature of the arguments for equality of opportunity for welfare. Proponents of this view compensate the ordinarily-abled for their expensive tastes; that is, they regard the ordinarily-abled gourmet as disadvantaged with respect to the simple shepherd girl. But a defensible equality of opportunity for welfare could easily hold him responsible for his expensive tastes and refuse to compensate him for them, in much the way that the egalitarian of resources does: then the inequalities of resources available to them for political means would not arise.

I want to mention two problems with this response. First, although the particular way in which expensive tastes are treated by the egalitarians of opportunity for welfare may be a contingent element of the view, they are likely to be very reluctant to give it up. Once they treat the expensive tastes of the ordinarily-abled in much the way that resource-egalitarianism does, their view begins to look like a mere modification of equality of resources: they address the problem of the disabled but are left with the other problems that equality of resources faces.

Second, it is not clear that the problems are resolved just by treating the expensive tastes of the ordinarily-abled in a more acceptable way. Let us look now at the argument against the capacity of equality of resources to accommodate

30This example works at least against the theories of Aineson, G.A. Cohen and Roemer, because of the way in which they demarcate which preferences people are to be held responsible for. They take the tastes which the agent did not voluntarily form as ones for which the agent should not be held responsible when determining distribution. So the Emperor's daughter continues to be supplied with caviar after the revolution, since she developed her taste for it in a way over which she had no control. Unchosen expensive tastes are thus treated as equivalent to the handicaps experienced by the disabled. This demarcation is preferred to that of Dworkin, who treats people as responsible for exactly those preferences with which they identify. The problem with Dworkin's demarcation is obvious: people are often unjustly led to 'know their place' and therefore to identify with inexpensive tastes with which they have no good reason to be satisfied, other than the fact that, in the unjust world they inhabit, those tastes are unlikely to be satisfied.
EAPI. Consider people who are born with a capacity for enjoyment of the simple things in life, and an aversion to expensive pleasures, neither of which can be conditioned away from them: say people who are like sufferers of Down's syndrome, except that their basic functioning is like that of the ordinarily-abled. The inattention of the condition makes it appropriate to treat them like the disabled (although their disability is an advantage not a disadvantage). Even if we treat them as would equality of resources, appropriately modified, these people will be sufficiently disadvantaged in terms of resources to diminish the political influence available to them.

Even if the proponent of equality of resources could avoid this conclusion, EAPI is still not accommodated. Inequalities of wealth are a major source of unequal influence over collective affairs, but they are not the only ones. As long as they do not use it to accumulate disproportionate wealth, the members of an oligarchy can enjoy enormous influence over the affairs of their subject without violating equality of resources. Similarly, plural voting schemes with an educational qualification for voting could be implemented without violation of material inequality, as long as equality of resources was an enshrined right that would be enforced by judicial review. Finally, even within formal democracy, unequal influence can be accumulated by more fervent activists, and the design of the marketplace of ideas can affect the distribution of influence.

So the principle of EAPI is genuinely in conflict with the rival principles, and ensuring that equal influence is available to all will often involve a violation of equality of resources and of opportunity for welfare.

6. IS EAPI PRIOR TO OTHER EQUALISING PRINCIPLES?

Why should egalitarians who are attracted to the rival principles care about guaranteeing political influence in some proportion independently of its service to, and sometimes in the face of its conflict with, the implementation of the other principles? Or, to put it another way, why should egalitarians see EAPI as foundationally valuable, rather than as valuable only in so far as it is liable to promote independently valuable outcomes?

There are, I think, a number of answers to these questions. Before reviewing two that I think have some power, I should mention one that should be resisted. Some people believe that a life engaged in active participation in determining civic affairs is uniquely valuable, and should therefore be made equally available to all moral agents. My adherence to EAPI owes nothing to this claim, which is both illiberal and implausible. It is illiberal because it identifies a particular way of life as distinctively valuable and allows that value to determine the design of social institutions. It is implausible both because many other ways of life are equally valuable. And there are many retiring distinctive value although they involve determination of civic affairs. So even if particular illiberalism would not be.

Liberal arguments for EAPI will recognize will be intrinsically rewarding, in general, this is good and it is on this basis that it must conflict with the claim that EAPI is found other principles. Advocates of equality of welfare do not claim that their proposal both cases they recognize welfare as equal and as being instrumental for principles as the proper understanding is similarly for EAPI.

Now to the two good reasons for seeing the first appeals to a familiar liberal idea to reject. Liberals tend to see moral agents able to reflect on and revise their current projects in life. This interest has a central rights such as the right to free speech ensures that citizens whose current political influence may at some later time pursuit does require the same. Sh are disadvantaged in the pursuit of their new projects were relatively solitary. Thus proportion to its usefulness in the pursuit be useful in the pursuit of other, as yet widely dispersed provides us with conditions and free revisions in our pursuits for good.

Second, the principle flows from the of equality in the design of institutions argued for the connection between EAPI state-sponsored equality on the require fellow citizens in the design of our share of opportunity for welfare have a similar analogy with affective associations. In of income, it is not usually thought to work income equally, or to fail to redistribute welfare. In fact, it is often thought does not know what would be required to
orn with a capacity for enjoyment of the simple and expensive pleasures, neither of which can be enjoyed by many people who are like sufferers of Down’s disease. In this function, it is that of the ordinarily-abled. It makes it appropriate to treat them like the able-bodied, for it is an advantage not a disadvantage. Even if we are ressource, appropriately modified, these people could avoid this conclusion, for inequalities of wealth are a major source of political affairs, but they are not the only ones. As inequities in the distribution of wealth, the members of the society influence the distribution of the resources. Similarly, plural voting schemes with being could be implemented without violating the rule of equal sharing resources was an enshrined right by judicial review. Finally, even within a democracy, the distribution of ideas can affect the distribution of power. It is in conflict with the rival principles, and available to all will often involve a violation of justice.

THE EQUALISING PRINCIPLES?

Attracting the equalising principles care about the proportion independently of its service to the outcome, the implementation of the other way, why should egalitarians see EAPI as valuable only in so far as it is necessary to outcomes? Answers to these questions. Before reviewing one should mention one that should be resisted. In active participation in determining civic institutions therefore be made equally available to all. I owe nothing to this claim, which is both because it identifies a particular way of life that value to determine the design of social institutions. It is implausible both because some participation is not valuable and because many other ways of life are either equally or incommensurably valuable. Active participation that violates ideals of civic respect and mutual tolerance is not valuable. And there are many retiring and hermetic ways of life that have distinctive value although they involve no active participation in the determination of civic affairs. So even if illiberalism were generally acceptable, this particular illiberalism would not be.

Liberals arguments for EAPI will recognise that although for some participation will be intrinsically rewarding, in general political influence is an instrumental good and it is on this basis that it must be equally distributed. This does not conflict with the claim that EAPI is foundationally valuable and has priority over other principles. Advocates of equality of resources and of opportunity for welfare do not claim that their proposed equalitaria are intrinsically valuable. In both cases they recognise welfare as intrinsically valuable, and the proposed equalitaria as being instrumental for it, but they advance their respective principles as the proper understanding of the intrinsic value of justice. I do that similarly for EAPI.

Now to the two good reasons for seeing EAPI as prior to the other principles. The first appeals to a familiar liberal ideal that egalitarians ought to be reluctant to reject. Liberals tend to see moral agents as having an essential interest in being able to reflect on and revise their current conceptions of the good and central projects in life. This interest has a central place in justifications of basic liberal rights such as the right to free speech and freedom of assembly. It also, though, ensures that citizens whose current projects do not require that they exercise political influence may at some later time become committed to projects whose pursuit does require the same. Should they do so, they should not be disadvantaged in the pursuit of their new projects by the fact that their previous projects were relatively solitary. Thus, political influence is not desirable just in proportion to its usefulness in the pursuit of current projects, but because it may be useful in the pursuit of other, as yet unadopted, projects, and because having it widely dispersed provides us with conditions in which we are better able to make free revisions in our pursuits for good reasons.

Second, the principle flows from the fundamental argument for the realisation of equality in the design of institutions more readily than do its rivals. Earlier I argued for the connection between EAPI and the argument that bases the case for state-sponsored equality on the requirement that we presume equal respect for our fellow citizens in the design of our shared institutions. Do equality of resources or of opportunity for welfare have a similarly close connection? Consider, again, the analogy with affective associations. In such associations, and above a certain level of income, it is not usually thought to be disrespectful to fail to redistribute income equally, or to fail to redistribute it so as to ensure equal opportunities for welfare. In fact, it is often thought disrespectful even to enquire closely enough to know what would be required to achieve material equality within the
association. I suspect, then, that the case for material equality, even if it can be made on the basis of respect, is a subsequent case, of lesser significance than the case for political equality.

7. THE PROBLEM OF MAJORITY TYRANNY

Finally, we should consider what is probably the most important objection to the idea that democracy, and by implication EAPI, is a foundational value of justice. The objection focuses on the possibility of majority tyranny within a democracy. The claim is that there are decisions which would be illegitimate even if they were made democratically. Therefore it cannot be that the legitimacy of outcomes is entirely revealed by the fact that they were achieved through democratic procedures. Therefore, the argument goes, democracy cannot be foundational, but must be valuable only insofar as it has a tendency to promote outcomes consistent with the more fundamental rights that properly constrain democratic processes.

The egalitarian of political influence will be reluctant to deny that there are other fundamental rights, including some that may not legitimately be overridden by democratic decisions. But this does not require that they give up the foundational value of democracy. The above argument makes the mistake of seeing EAPI as a maximising principle. The ambition of EAPI is not to achieve equality at the highest possible level, with the implication that all feasible areas of human activity may be regulated by democratic decisions. Rather, it aims to ensure that for those areas that are publicly regulated, each person has available equal influence.

Furthermore, I think that the argument I have provided for EAPI suggests a principled account of what properly falls within the scope of democratic deliberation. Some democratic theorists have argued that other fundamental individual rights can be accounted for as prerequisites of the effective maintenance of democratic institutions. For example, the right to freedom of expression can be connected to the requirement that democratic decisions be the product of procedures in which all have had an opportunity to present their own position. A principle of EAPI must reproduce the material preconditions for the continued equal availability of influence as it is normally understood as a requirement. So some fundamental rights are those any decision to violate them would make not only worse than to others, and would hence violate it.

There are, of course, some fundamental rights that choose one's sexual partner from among those that may be a case that these rights and more arguments are likely to place greater emphasis on psychological claims. Furthermore, it is exhausted by their service to democratic self-government participation. So the strategy that a principle of EAI will be suspect for the same.

But the proponent of EAPI has another option. EAPI rests on the claim that it is disreputable influence over our shared circumstances that gives rise to certain rights. Those rights constitute a sphere within circumstances, and hence over which we have some degree of influence.

I suggest that the argument from democratic procedures is a foundation for relations between those procedures and other, more fundamental, outcome-specifying constraints on the exercise of fundamental rights should be seen as determining what legitimacy is, which is why the argument makes the mistake of seeing EAPI.

The above argument should ease fears about the possibility that in some circumstances, even if their rights are not violated, reductively in the operation of EAPI. Conceptually, there is no good reason why small minorities that persistently engage in dispute will never get their way. So there are minorities have any reason to remain.

35A weakness of Cohen's account is that he seems to be accounted for in the manner described in the previous paragraph on freedom of expression. Yet this is perhaps the characteristic of the democratic process.
OF MAJORITY TYRANNY

probably the most important objection to the notion EAPI, is a foundational value of justice, of majority tyranny within a democracy. which would be illegitimate even if they were not be that the legitimacy of outcomes is that they were achieved through democratic it goes, democracy cannot be foundational ly insofar as it has a tendency to promote fundamental rights that properly constrain

ence will be reluctant to deny that there are some that may not legitimately be overridden it does not require that they give up the The above argument makes the mistake of the. The ambition of EAPI is not to achieve with the implication that all feasible areas of by democratic decisions. Rather, it aims to publicly regulated, each person has available

ument I have provided for EAPI suggests a key falls within the scope of democratic Pragmatists have argued that other fundamental as prerequisites of the effective maintenance ample, the right to freedom of expression can at democratic decisions be the product of

tain level of income is important here. It is within the that we look out for the needs of our friends, and also needs. The concern with needs (though not with intense justice. My point here though is that a concern with this context.

and exploration of its implications, is given in Arneson, levels, especially pp. 123–33.

al influence distinguishes it from its rivals, at least as

erman, A Future for Socialism, p. 13:

 Democracy and Democratic Legitimacy', The Good


and disagreements with some of his strategies, the

procedures in which all have had an opportunity to attempt to persuade others of their own position. A principle of EAPI itself constrains outcomes such that they must reproduce the material preconditions and procedural mechanisms required for the continued equal availability of influence. Any restriction on freedom of expression as it is normally understood runs the risk of falling foul of this requirement. So some fundamental rights can be argued for on the grounds that any decision to violate them would make less influence available to some citizens than to others, and would hence violate the principle that justifies the process.

There are, of course, some fundamental rights that cannot be accounted for this way. Consider for example privacy rights, such as the rights to abortion and to choose one's sexual partner from amongst willing co-respondents. While there may be a case that these rights and others like them facilitate EAPI, such arguments are likely to place great emphasis on contingent and disputed psychological claims. Furthermore, it is doubtful that the value of those rights is exhausted by their service to democratic participation, even if they do significantly serve participation. So the strategy that derives fundamental rights from the principle of EAPI will be suspect for these rights.

But the proponent of EAPI has another strategy available. The argument for EAPI rests on the claim that it is disrespectful not to make available to all equal influence over our shared circumstances. There is an important sense in which the privacy rights describe a sphere which actually lies outside of our shared circumstances, and hence over which we have no obligation to grant others any degree of influence.

I suggest that the argument from majority tyranny against the idea that democratic procedures are foundational to justice misconstructs the relationship between those procedures and other fundamental rights. Instead of being seen as outcome-specifying constraints on the legitimacy of democratic process, other fundamental rights should be seen as describing the sphere over which democratic decision making is legitimate, within which sphere it, and only it, properly determines outcomes.

The above argument should ease fears about majority tyranny. But another fear concerns the possibility that in some circumstances members of permanent minorities, even if their rights are not violated, would feel that they had no stake in the operation of EAPI. Conceptually EAPI allows for situations to arise in which small minorities that persistently disagree with the majority on all matters of dispute will never get their way. Should this occur, would members of such minorities have any reason to remain loyal?


A weakness of Cohen's account is that he suggests that all other fundamentally valuable rights can be accounted for in the manner described in the preceding paragraph. The example he uses is the right to freedom of expression. Yet this is perhaps the easiest right to account for on the grounds of service to the democratic process.
I have little to say about this objection. Since, by hypothesis, no fundamental rights of the minority’s members are being violated, I do not see this possibility as an objection to the moral legitimacy of EAPI. And because this problem arises without being dramatically destabilising within actually existing democracies, I do not see it as an objection to the feasibility of EAPI. One feature of my view that makes this situation less likely to arise than under some other conceptions of democracy is that the acceptability of inequalities of influence based on the presentation of evidence and argument may inform the design of the institutions of public deliberation so that disagreement will be more, rather than less, reflective of the burdens of reason. This would make it more likely that both minorities and majorities would shift, and permanent minorities would thus be dispersed. But nothing can guarantee this, and I lack a solution to this problem.\[37\]

8. CONCLUDING REMARKS

I have argued that EAPI, appropriately conceived, has a central place in the egalitarian ideal, and that it should take precedence over other equalising principles because it is an essential element of what it means to treat our fellow citizens with respect that we grant them equal influence over our shared circumstances.

At the same time my discussion may have been a little misleading on one issue. While I have argued for the importance of a particular principle of the form ‘equality of X’, I suspect that the search for such a principle, especially as the exhaustive explication of the egalitarian ideal, is mistaken. Egalitarianism is best described by a complex set of principles, and it is possible, at least pre-theoretically, that none of them will have the form ‘equality of X’. Furthermore, that EAPI is more central than the materially equalising principles does not mean that it is the first principle of egalitarianism. As I hinted earlier, it could be argued that the obligation of ensuring that one another’s most basic needs are met is prior to the obligation to make available equal influence over shared circumstances.\[38\]

37For an extended treatment of the problem of persistent minorities, from within a similar framework, but which does offer a solution, see Thomas Christiano, ‘Democratic Equality and the Problem of Persistent Minorities’, Philosophical Papers (forthcoming). In this paper I have largely set aside questions of the concrete institutional implementation of EAPI. However, I do address the mechanism for insulating political debate from background inequalities of income and wealth in another paper, ‘Political Equality and the Funding of Political Speech’, Social Theory and Practice (forthcoming). For valuable accounts of the implications of political equality for the structure of representative systems see Hugh Ward, ‘A Contractarian Defence of Ideal Proportional Representation—A Low Average Error Electoral Law’, Journal of Political Philosophy, 3 (1995), 86–109, and Thomas Christiano, The Rule of the Many (manuscript), chapter 6.

objection. Since, by hypothesis, no fundamental are being violated, I do not see this possibility intimacy of EAPI. And because this problem ally destabilising within actually existing an objection to the feasibility of EAPI. One situation less likely to arise than under some is that the acceptability of inequalities of evidence and argument may inform theic deliberation so that disagreement will be of the burdens of reason. This would make it and majorities would shift, and permanent. But nothing can guarantee this, and I lack a

UDING REMARKS

ately conceived, has a central place in theuld take precedence over other equalising element of what it means to treat our fellow them equal influence over our shared may have been a little misleading on one issue. nance of a particular principle of the form search for such a principle, especially as thearian ideal, is mistaken. Egalitarianism is best principles, and it is possible, at least pre-have the form ‘equality of X’. Furthermore, e materially equalising principles does notgalitarianism. As I hinted earlier, it could be g that one another’s most basic needs are met ke available equal influence over shared

blem of persistent minorities, from within a similar see Thomas Christiano, ‘Democratic Equality and the al Papers’ (forthcoming). In this paper I have largely set implementation of EAPI. However, I do address the background inequalities of income and wealth in d of Political Speech’, Social Theory and Practice implications of political equality for the structure of ‘A Contractarian Defence of Ideal Proportional Law’, Journal of Political Philosophy, 3 (1995), 86–Many (manuscript), chapter 6.