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Situating Responsibility for Injustice

Corwin Scott Aragon
University of Colorado at Boulder, corwin.aragon@colorado.edu

SITUATING RESPONSIBILITY FOR INJUSTICE

by

CORWIN SCOTT ARAGON

B.A., University of Colorado at Boulder, 2004

M.A., University of Colorado at Boulder, 2008

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Associate Professor Alastair Norcross

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ABSTRACT

Aragon, Corwin Scott (Ph.D., Philosophy)

Situating Responsibility for Injustice

Thesis directed by Professor Alison Jaggar

Much of the suffering and death in the world is neither natural nor inevitable, but rather results from the unjust structure of present systems of social interaction. These situations are structural injustices, and for any specific structural injustice, some set of agents is morally responsible for remedying it. In *Situating Responsibility for Injustice*, I offer a new account of individual moral responsibility for structural injustice, or, what I call, structural responsibility.

Specifically, I argue for four distinct claims. First, I argue for a minimal conception of structural injustice, which explains that structural injustices occur when social structures systematically harm members of certain social groups by positioning them in oppressive social relationships. Second, I argue that we ought to conceptualize the agents responsible for remedying injustice as structurally-situated; this account of social agency explains that the conduct of structurally-situated agents is both deeply shaped by and works to re-shape the social structures in which they are situated. Third, I argue that an agent's social connection to specific injustices makes her complicit in those injustices, and her complicity is the only adequate moral basis of her structural responsibilities. Finally, I argue that structurally-responsible agents must discharge their responsibilities by: a) drawing on the specific social resources provided them by their structural location, b) working to reform or transform the unjust structures in which they are situated, and c) prioritizing and weighing their responsibilities in proportion to the strength (determined by both the kind and degree of the connection) of their social connections.

To my dearly missed friend and sister, Kahla.

Finally, Alexis, my loving partner, has been and will forever be my inspiration. Throughout this process, she challenged me to be a better philosopher, gave me the confidence to keep working, comforted me when things got tough, and celebrated my accomplishments. Her care, curiosity, empathy, friendship, and love are gifts she has shared with me, for which I will be forever grateful. The work of this dissertation provides only a glimpse into the philosopher and person she has helped me to become.

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Introduction: Moral Responsibility for Structural Injustice

1. Introduction

The world is full of injustice. The "radical inequality" (Nagel 2008, Pogge 2002) that characterizes the current global situation places extreme burdens on the groups of individuals on the wrong end of inequality while increasing the benefits afforded those on the top. Radical social inequalities are neither natural nor inevitable but rather result from the unjust structure of present systems of social interaction; they are structural injustices. The severe and widespread nature of debilitating structural injustice would seem to press into action all those who participate in the social structures that create and maintain them. It would seem that we all would feel a strong moral imperative to transform these structures.

However, most persons occupying privileged structural positions take little to no moral responsibility to act. We may find the situations of those occupying the worst-off positions to be unfortunate, and we may even feel that we have a weak obligation to aid such people, but generally speaking, most of us continue on in our daily lives in ordinary fashion. The general reaction to radical inequality, especially by those who are disproportionately benefited, ignores or fails to prioritize moral responsibility to transform the present unjust social structures. A wide gap exists between many people's belief that living in the worst-off positions in a state of affairs characterized by radical inequality is a very bad situation and our general reluctance to acknowledge or act on our moral responsibility to remedy this type of situation.

I aim to bridge this gap by building a theory of individual moral responsibility for structural injustice,[1] or what I call *structural responsibility*.[2] This theory provides answers to

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[1] I frame the issue in terms of injustice rather than justice to emphasize the remedial nature of the kind of responsibility I aim to articulate. While, ultimately, I believe that responsibility for justice is best understood as a remedial responsibility for injustice, I do not wish to beg the question against more idealized approaches, which place greater emphasis on how individual action can be focused on realizing ideal principles of justice. At this

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two distinct questions about moral responsibility for structural injustice: 1) how should we understand the injustices that give rise to individual moral responsibility and 2) how should we understand this responsibility?

I answer these questions by pursuing five intertwined philosophical projects. First, I articulate my non-ideal method for formulating answers to the philosophical questions articulated in this introduction. Second, I sketch a minimal account of structural injustice and, utilizing this account, argue that many situations of extreme poverty are the result of structural injustice.[3] Third, I argue for a structurally-situated account of moral agency as an alternative to two more popular philosophical views. Fourth, I argue that an agent's structurally-mediated social connections to specific injustices make her complicit in those injustices, and her complicity is the only theoretically adequate moral basis of her structural responsibilities to remedy those injustices. Finally, I develop normative parameters for reasoning about how an individual ought to discharge her structural responsibilities. I close the dissertation by synthesizing the claims of the dissertation to present a systematic account of individual moral responsibility for structural injustice.

In this introductory chapter, I detail the framework for pursuing these projects. This chapter articulates the scope of my analysis (individual moral responsibility for structural injustice) and the main questions that need to be answered by an adequate theory of structural responsibility.

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point, the choice to use 'injustice' rather than 'justice' is purely terminological, but as I develop the argument of this chapter, this choice will have a substantive impact on the manner in which I carry out my analysis.

[2] My account draws and builds on the recent work on social connection by Iris Marion Young (2004, 2006, 2007, 2011) and David Miller (2005, 2007).

[3] I offer only a preliminary account of structural injustice, as fully developing and defending an account of structural injustice is beyond the scope of the dissertation. My conception is primarily influenced by the work of Elizabeth Anderson (2010), Ann Cudd (2006), and Iris Marion Young (1990, 2011).

2. What is Structural Responsibility?

Structural responsibility is, minimally, the moral responsibility that individuals have to transform unjust social structures. That is, individual agents have a distinct type of moral responsibility to remedy structural injustice, and I call this structural responsibility. In the remaining five chapters of the dissertation, I build and defend a normative account of structural responsibility.

As I explain in the next chapter, structural injustices occur when social structures systematically but avoidably harm some groups of people by positioning them in oppressive social relationships. Social structures are dynamic, yet enduring systems of social relationships that significantly shape options for individual action. Social relationships come in many forms; we relate to one another as members of a family, as neighbors, as members of a shared culture, as citizens of the same country, as producers and consumers, and as participants in an amorphous global order. The specific social relationships in which we participate situate us in complex and nested social structures that significantly impact our ability to meet our basic needs and to realize our life plans. These networks of social relationships significantly shape which options for action are open to us and which are closed off. They also provide the social resources we must utilize to pursue specific options for action. Further, these relationships set the costs and benefits, risks and rewards for pursuing some options over others. In sum, social structures make up a relatively stable social architecture in which individuals work to realize their life plans.

All individuals act from a specific position in this social architecture. Our family, neighborhood, provincial, and national relationships affect the social conditions on the exercise of our agency. Moreover, as processes of globalization further intertwine our lives with those of distant strangers, global social structures increasingly shape the background social context within

which individuals work to meet their basic needs and realize their life plans. Social structures are both pervasive and enduring; consequently, they deeply impact how our lives go and can be extremely coercive. However, our social position does not *determine* how our lives go. By exercising our agency, we work to reshape the relationships within which we our situated and, concurrently, reconstitute the social architecture. Because they are somewhat responsive to the actions of individual agents, social structures are dynamic. Pervasive and enduring systems of social relationships significantly shape the options for individual action, and, consequently, social structures can be highly coercive, but they do not determine how individuals act.

Social structures are unjust when they systematically and avoidably harm some groups of people by positioning them in oppressive social relationships. Social structures avoidably harm members of social groups when they formally or substantively constrain their options for action in a manner that makes meeting their basic needs or realizing their life plans extremely difficult. As I explain in chapter two, when structures position individuals to suffer similar severe constraints on action, they systematically harm those individuals *as members of a social group*. These harms are systematic, as they are caused by background systems of social relationships and perpetrated against individuals who are similarly situated within these systems. However, systematic harms perpetrated against certain social groups do not, in themselves, make the social structures that cause those harms oppressive. Structures are oppressive when they also afford other groups of individuals a wide range of options for action, a great number of social resources, or a much more favorable incentive structure to act in ways that allow them to prosper. Oppressive social structures position some to suffer the burden of severe constraints on action while at the same time enabling others to flourish. Consequently, oppressive social structures violate a basic moral principle of equal respect. On this principle, each individual has inviolable

and equal moral worth, and whatever social structures we create through our interactions ought to afford all individuals the equal respect that they deserve. The systematic social inequalities caused by unjust social structures are *wrong* because they violate this principle.

Extreme poverty is a paradigmatic example of structural injustice. Each day, billions of people suffer and die in situations of extreme poverty; nearly two-fifths of the world's population suffer acute deprivation of the material resources needed to meet their basic needs and realize their life plans. This acute deprivation exists alongside considerable and growing affluence. Affluent individuals enjoy material comfort and luxury, which contribute to their happiness and flourishing, that will never be attainable by most of those who suffer acute deprivation. Extreme disparities in the distribution of and access to the material resources needed to meet one's basic needs and to realize one's life plans are radical inequalities.

The radical inequalities in the distribution of and access to the material resources needed to meet one's basic needs and realize one's life plans exemplify the rampant structural injustice, created by oppressive cultural, economic, and political relationships, that characterizes the present global situation. These inequalities are more than just matters of bad luck or poor distribution; rather, they are the foreseeable and preventable result of unjust structural processes. That is, the radical inequalities that position the poor[4] to suffer acute deprivation and position the affluent to enjoy abundance and luxury are unjust because they are caused by oppressive systems of social relationships.

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[4] Here and throughout this introductory chapter, I speak of the poor and the affluent as unified social groups. In the next chapter, I offer a much more detailed explanation of what constitutes a social group. Utilizing this explanation, I claim that there is a social group, 'the poor,' which is constituted by a set of individual members who share common kinds of severe constraints on action, and a social group, 'the affluent,' which is constituted by a set of individual members who share common kinds of social privileges. However, I also argue that these groups, while unified by common sets of constraints or privileges, are not uniform; because social structures position individuals along more than one axis of social difference, the individual members of the social groups, 'the poor' or 'the affluent,' are members of a wide variety of distinct social groups. For now, I postpone the more nuanced explanation of social groups and discuss the situation of the poor and the affluent in, admittedly, simplistic terms.

These oppressive systems of social relationships come in three main forms: cultural, economic, and political.[5] Cultural structures organize social systems of meaning and value. The cultural structures in which an individual is situated dramatically effects her options for developing a positive social identity, for receiving recognition and realizing self-worth, and for seeing her beliefs and values represented in her society. Unjust cultural structures harm members of oppressed groups by imposing a dominant group's worldview on them or by stigmatizing them. Economic structures organize the social production of the material resources needed to meet basic material needs. The economic structures in which the individual is situated not only determine her access to and share of the material resources she needs to meet her basic material needs but also significantly shape her power to decide how to exercise her productive capacities. Unjust economic structures exploit, marginalize, and render powerless members of oppressed groups in the exercise of their labor. Political structures organize the exercise of social power to determine how one's life goes. The political structures in which the individual is situated articulate her basic rights and liberties, set limits on her personal freedoms, and legislate and execute a system of social coercion to protect her rights and enforce the limits on her freedom. Additionally, the individual's specific location within these structures will shape her ability to influence and impact political processes by determining her share of social power. Unjust political structures exclude or marginalize members of oppressed groups in political processes, or they subject those members to the, often acted-upon, threat of political violence.

Social structures are personally pervasive insofar as they deeply shape the cultural, economic, and political dimensions of individual lives. For example, an individual living in

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[5] The ordering of this list of general forms of social relationship is not meant to imply that one form is prior to or more foundational than another in my social ontology. I opt throughout the dissertation for a simplistic and theoretically-neutral alphabetical ordering. In chapter two, I argue for the claim that none of these three forms should be considered more foundational than the others.

extreme poverty has a much different set of options for action, vastly different access to the social resources needed to act on her options, and a schedule of social incentives that exact a greater relative cost to act on some options over others than does her affluent counterparts. Culturally, she is likely to be viewed as being socially unproductive—at best, a passive victim of a bad situation or, at worst, a leach on her community. She may struggle to reconcile her self-understanding with how others see her, to see her understanding of the world and her values reflected in the broader culture, or to find meaning and worth in her life. Economically, she is likely to be unable to secure steady and safe work to provide for her basic material needs. She may be forced to work long hours in dangerous working conditions with little return of the fruits of her labor. And she is likely to have little to no power to change the conditions under which she labors. Politically, she is likely to have very little effective power to be able to transform her social situation. She may not have the opportunity to vote, to voice her interests, or to be taken seriously within political discourse. Her social position severely constrains her cultural, economic, and political opportunities and, consequently, affords her few and costly options to escape poverty. Her affluent counterpart, on the other hand, is likely to have a great many more available options, greater access to the social resources needed to act on those options, and a less costly schedule of social incentives to act on some options over others. Social structures enable the affluent individual, by virtue of her social position, to not only meet her basic cultural, economic, and political needs but also to flourish on each of these social dimensions.

Social structures are also pervasive in a second sense: they forge relationships between individual agents and others, both close to home and very distant. We participate in social relationships in our local communities as members of a family, as friends, as neighbors, and as consumers of local products, resources, and services. We also participate in social relationships

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in broader regional communities as members of a state or province and as consumers of regional products, resources, and services. And we participate in social relationships in national communities as citizens and as consumers of national products, resources, and services. We even participate in social relationships that stretch beyond national borders as "citizens of the world" and as consumers of products, resources, and services provided by people outside our local, regional, and national communities. Our actions impact the lives of those with whom we are very close as well as the lives of distant strangers; further, the actions of others, whether close to home or very distant, impact how our lives go.

The mere fact that my actions impact the lives of others or that their actions impact how my life goes establishes a social relationship between them and me. And these relationships can be morally assessed on the way that they position their participants to be able to meet their basic needs and realize their life plans. Thus, social structures are globally pervasive insofar as they connect individuals throughout the world in complex and nested social relationships, which affect how one's life goes.

Given the pervasiveness of social structures, structural injustices are extremely detrimental to the individuals that suffer them. Moreover, because structural injustices are injustices and not merely bad states of affairs, necessarily some set of agents is morally responsible for their remedy. In other words, for any specific structural injustice, there exists some set of agents that ought to be working to remedy it, and given how extremely detrimental these injustices are, working toward their remedy is of extreme moral importance.

3. Three Questions of Structural Responsibility

Structural responsibility is an individual's moral responsibility to remedy structural injustice. My dissertation specifies a workable conception of structural responsibility to help us:

a) understand the relationship between individual action and structural injustice, b) determine why specific agents have structural responsibilities, and c) reason about what structurally responsible agents ought to do to discharge their responsibilities. Specifically, my dissertation aims to answer three questions about structural responsibility:

1) How should we conceptualize the moral agents responsible for structural injustices?

2) What is the moral basis or ground of their structural responsibilities?

3) What ought these agents do to meet their structural responsibilities?

Question 1 is about how we ought to conceptualize, what I call, *social agency*. In the philosophical literature on moral responsibility, moral responsibility is primarily about the conditions of moral agency, and question 1 encourages us to explore these conditions within the context of social structures. Question 2 is about the appropriate moral basis of an agent's structural responsibility. In the philosophical literature on global poverty, many different moral reasons are offered for why an agent ought to work to remedy poverty, and question 2 encourages us to evaluate these reasons as possible grounds for an agent's structural responsibility. Question 3 is about what must be done to meet or discharge the responsibilities generated by complicity in structural injustices. The growing literature on responsibility for injustice has begun to examine the kinds of obligations responsible agents are obligated to perform, and question 3 encourages us to explore ways of reasoning about how to meet one's structural responsibilities.

Over the course of the next five chapters, I argue for a specific answer to the preliminary question about what structural injustices are and to each of these three questions of structural responsibility. These answers, taken together, provide a systematic and cohesive account of structural responsibility.

4. A Theory of Structural Responsibility

Chapters 3 through 5 will answer, respectively, each of the three questions in a manner that best meets the aims of my non-ideal method as well as my criteria of theoretical adequacy. Before answering these questions though, in chapter two, I explain my conception of structural injustice and, utilizing this conception, argue that many situations of extreme poverty ought to be understood as structural injustices. With this conception in place, in chapter three, I argue for a structurally-situated account of social agency as an alternative to abstract individualist and encumbered agency accounts. My account better explains the relationship between individual action and social structures than these alternative views of social agency. In chapter four, I critically examine four moral grounds of structural responsibility and argue that each ground, on its own, provides an inadequate moral basis of structural responsibility. However, I also argue that each ground highlights a different manifestation of a common underlying feature, namely structurally-mediated moral complicity. An agent's structurally-mediated social connection to specific injustices makes her complicit in those injustices, and her complicity is the only adequate moral basis of her structural responsibility. In chapter five, I develop a set of normative parameters for reasoning about how responsible agents ought to discharge their structural responsibilities. These parameters also provide a schema for giving weight to and prioritizing competing responsibilities. I conclude the dissertation by summarizing the account of structural responsibility for which I argued in the preceding chapters.

Chapter 1: Building A Theory of Structural Responsibility

1. Introduction

In this dissertation, I build a systematic understanding, or theory, of structural responsibility. As I claimed in the Introduction, this account must provide theoretically-adequate and cohesive answers to the three questions of structural responsibility. But before exploring the possible answers to these questions, I need to first detail the methodological commitments of my analysis, clearly identifying the philosophical tools I use to assess the adequacy of different answers to the questions of structural responsibility. Specifically, I claim that structural responsibility is a form of remedial responsibility, argue that remedial responsibility ought to be considered a kind of moral responsibility, and explain the relationship between this understanding of structural responsibility and non-ideal theory. Finally, I articulate the criteria of theoretical adequacy I utilize to assess the possible answers to the questions outlined in the Introduction. This chapter provides the methodological framework for the philosophical analysis of this dissertation.

2. Remedial Responsibility and Non-Ideal Theory

Structural responsibility is an individual agent's moral responsibility to work to transform unjust social structures. This type of responsibility is primarily "remedial" (Miller 2005, 2007). Remedial responsibility begins from the existence of a wrong and asks who has moral responsibility to remedy that wrong. As David Miller explains, "[w]ith remedial responsibility we begin with a state of affairs in need of remedy […] and we then ask whether there is anyone whose responsibility it is to put that state of affairs right" (2007, 98).[6] To be remedially

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[6] It is important to note that Miller does not see remedial responsibility as a type of moral responsibility. Miller accepts the traditional understanding of moral responsibility and, consequently, views moral responsibility as a concept with a much narrower scope than that of remedial responsibility. Later in this section, I argue that we should not accept this narrow understanding of moral responsibility, and we should view remedial responsibility as a

responsible is "to have a special responsibility, either individually or along with others, to remedy the position of the deprived or suffering people […] and to be liable to sanction if the responsibility is not discharged" (Miller 2007, 99). In other words, an individual's remedial responsibilities are her moral responsibilities to work to remedy some existing wrong, and she is open to moral assessment for her successes and failures in doing so.

Structural responsibilities are an individual's remedial responsibilities to work to remedy existing structural injustices. Remedial responsibilities arise when "the situation is one that demands to be put right" (Miller 2007, 98). Structural injustices are, by definition, avoidable and morally wrong; consequently, they demand to be put right. Because of this, all structural injustices necessarily generate remedial responsibilities for some agents to work to transform those unjust structures. An adequate account of structural responsibility must explain why specific agents have moral responsibilities to remedy injustice and guide them in discharging these responsibilities.

Throughout the dissertation, I refer to an agent's responsibility to transform unjust social structures or to remedy structural injustice. But no individual can transform structures or remedy injustice on her own, and thus, no individual agent can be solely responsible to do so. Rather, an individual agent can only be responsible to work to transform structures or to remedy injustice with others who share responsibility. When I say an agent has a responsibility to transform social structures or to remedy structural injustice, I mean that she has a responsibility to work toward those aims in collaboration with others.

Approaching moral responsibility from a remedial perspective reverses the typical order of philosophical analysis. In the philosophical literature on moral responsibility, the concept of

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type of moral responsibility. But I do not want to imply that Miller takes the relationship between remedial responsibility and moral responsibility to be the same as I do.

moral responsibility is commonly understood to be merely the basis for an agent to be open to moral appraisal; that is, to say A is morally responsible for X is just to say that A can be morally appraised for X. A's moral responsibility for X makes her in principle, but not necessarily in practice, open to moral assessment for X. In actual practices of attributing responsibility and holding responsible, there may be features of an agent's social situation that insulate her from being seen as or held responsible for some state of affairs. For example, an extremely wealthy and popular individual may never be actually open to moral assessment for her actions given the distorted beliefs others may hold about her or the disproportionate social power she wields. Still, on the standard account, this individual is morally responsible for the wrongs she causes and, thus, in principle open to moral assessment for those wrongs, even if she is highly unlikely to be actually held responsible. Moral responsibility, on the traditional analysis, is just that which makes her in principle open to moral assessment. I call this the *appraisal model* of moral responsibility.

The remedial perspective reverses the order of analysis by shifting the focus away from the appraisal of the agent toward the reparation of a wrongful state of affairs. Appraisal models of moral responsibility narrowly examine the conditions that make an agent responsible *for* bringing about a particular state of affairs, while remedial approaches examine the conditions that make an agent responsible *to* perform certain actions to ameliorate future suffering (Gosselin 2009, 11). This latter type of approach to moral responsibility is "more forward-looking than backward-looking" (Young 2011, 108-109) insofar as it places greater emphasis on future outcomes rather than past causes. This description is a bit misleading though because remedial models still have to be backward-looking, in some sense, to locate the moral basis of some forward-looking responsibilities, but it helps to explain the difference between the two

approaches. Whereas appraisal models take features of the agent and her conduct as generating responsibility for wrongs that have already occurred, remedial forms of responsibility take features of wrongs currently occurring to generate responsibilities for agents to act to bring about future outcomes.

Remedial approaches do not have to justify blame or punishment (though they may do so); rather, remedial approaches only have to justify the claim that an agent has a moral responsibility to act in some way to work to remedy a wrong. Given this, the basis of remedial responsibility does not have to meet the same high standard appropriate to establishing liability or culpability. Once we shift our focus to the remedy of wrongs, we open up the possibility for alternative moral bases of responsibility for those wrongs. Consequently, remedial understandings of moral responsibility are likely to attribute many more responsibilities to individual agents and to claim that many more agents have responsibilities than their appraisal-based counterparts. In this sense, remedial accounts are much more liberal in the assignment of moral responsibility than appraisal approaches. Throughout the dissertation, concerns and questions of remedial responsibility will be given priority over those of liability, culpability, redress, or blame.

At this point, a critic might claim that remedial responsibilities are not, in fact, moral responsibilities, and, consequently, my analysis fundamentally confuses the concept of moral responsibility with some other concept. I call this the charge of conceptual confusion. Most analyses of the concept of moral responsibility aim to identify the necessary and sufficient conditions for deeming a moral agent open to moral assessment. On this type of analysis, remedial responsibility, or the responsibility an agent has to remedy some wrong, is not a type of moral responsibility; the shift to a remedial rather than appraisal-based form of moral

responsibility may strike some critics as a departure from the concept of individual moral responsibility altogether. In other words, the charge of conceptual confusion claims that my account relies on a fundamental misunderstanding of the concept of moral responsibility, and, thus, my analysis is misguided.

By way of answering this charge, I explain in greater detail the traditional philosophical understanding of the concept of moral responsibility and argue that it has three significant theoretical limitations. These limitations give us some reason to refrain from outright rejecting, on conceptual grounds, the claim that remedial responsibility is a type of moral responsibility. After opening up the space for a broader understanding of moral responsibility, I explain why we should view remedial responsibility as a type of moral responsibility. I, then, briefly explain the conceptual relationship between remedial responsibility as a type of moral responsibility and the concept of moral duty. After providing this more robust understanding of remedial responsibility as a type of moral responsibility, I demonstrate how this understanding ultimately stems from a methodological commitment to developing a non-ideal theory of structural responsibility.

2.1. The Limitations of the Traditional Conception of Moral Responsibility

The identification of moral responsibility with the basis for moral appraisal is ubiquitous in the philosophical literature on moral responsibility. For example, the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* entry on moral responsibility states, "to be morally responsible for something […] is to be worthy of a particular kind of reaction—praise, blame, or something akin to these—for having performed it" (Eshelman 2009, 1). P.F. Strawson's, "Freedom and Resentment," considered as one of the central texts on moral responsibility, uses the phrases "moral responsibility" and "the bases of moral condemnation" as interchangeable throughout the article (Fischer and Ravizza 1993, 45-66). And as Angela M. Smith explains,

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> There seems to be fairly general agreement […] over what is involved in saying that an agent is morally responsible for some thing: to say that a person is morally responsible for some thing is to say that it can be attributed to her in the way that is required in order for it to be a basis for moral appraisal (2007, 467).

To be morally responsible for a state of affairs, according to this literature, is to meet the conditions that make you open to moral appraisal for that state. Or put another way, agent A is morally responsible for state of affairs S just means that A is open to moral appraisal for S.

For example, imagine that a person robs an innocent victim at gunpoint. On the traditional conception of moral responsibility, the robber is morally responsible for the robbery if it is the case that it is appropriate to morally appraise her for her role in the robbery. Typically, an agent is thought to be open to moral appraisal for some state of affairs if that state of affairs is attributable to her and if she has done something morally right or wrong in bringing about that state of affairs. When an agent is morally responsible in this sense, we can ask the further question of whether or not we should hold her responsible by taking up moral reactive attitudes, such as praise or blame. Assuming the robber is a moral agent who chose to rob her victim, we can morally attribute the robbery to her and deem her actions wrong; she is open to moral appraisal and, thus, morally responsible for the wrong of robbing her victim. And the victim of the robbery is likely to be justified in actively blaming her for the robbery.

The philosophical literature on moral responsibility is concerned with three distinct issues: the conditions of moral agency, the moral appraisal of an agent's conduct, and justifications for actively holding an agent responsible.[7] And as you might imagine, there is wide philosophical disagreement on each of these issues. But despite disagreement about the specific conditions that make an agent morally responsible for a state of affairs, there is general

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[7] I explore each of these issues in greater detail in chapter three.

agreement in the philosophical literature that moral responsibility is primarily about the moral appraisal of individual agents.

The appraisal model has three significant theoretical limitations. First, the appraisal model adopts a high standard for establishing moral responsibility, which significantly narrows its conception of moral responsibility. The appraisal model focuses on the conditions that must be met to warrant praising or blaming an individual, with special attention paid to the conditions that justify blame. This centralized focus on wrongdoing and blame causes the appraisal model to primarily seek the conditions that establish liability or culpability. To establish liability or culpability and, thus, justify blame, we must meet a more demanding standard than we might otherwise have to meet on a wider understanding of responsibility. As I suggest below, this focus causes the appraisal model to significantly narrow its understanding of moral responsibility.

Though an agent can be morally responsible for morally good states of affairs, much of the philosophical literature on moral responsibility aims to locate the conditions an agent or her conduct must meet to be blameworthy for a specific morally bad state of affairs. Take, for example, Peter A. French's description of ascribing moral responsibility:

> To ascribe responsibility is for some person to identify another person as the cause of a harmful or untoward event, because of some action that was performed by that other person, and in light of the fact that the person that was identified occupied a certain type of position or role or station and cannot support an acceptable defense, justification, or excuse for the action (1991, 3).

French's description of ascribing responsibility, even if not generally accepted amongst philosophers of moral responsibility, exemplifies the tendency to associate moral responsibility with wrongdoing and blame. John Martin Fischer and Mark Ravizza explain,

> For many people, questions of moral responsibility are associated primarily with wrongdoing […]. According to this view, questions concerning who may legitimately be

held responsible stem from more practical questions concerning who should be blamed and punished for their misdeeds (1993, 5).

It is this tendency in the literature on moral responsibility to focus on what would make an agent liable or culpable and, thus, blameworthy that leads Iris Marion Young to call the general approach "the liability model" of moral responsibility (2004, 2006, 2007, 2011).

Again, not all accounts of moral responsibility only focus on establishing the conditions necessary for blame; some philosophers "take a broader view of moral responsibility, associating it not only with negative responses such as resentment and blame but also with more positive responses such as gratitude, respect, and praise" (Fischer and Ravizza 1993, 5). However, the general tendency to focus on wrongdoing and blame causes the appraisal model's analysis of moral responsibility to identify conditions that will warrant the strongest forms of moral reaction to wrongdoing, specifically blaming and punishment. Even when theorists of moral responsibility explicitly acknowledge that moral responsibility is not entirely about liability or culpability, they still seek general conditions of moral responsibility that are stringent enough to establish liability or culpability. That is, even if a theorist is interested in identifying the conditions an agent or her conduct must meet to be open to positive moral appraisal, the general conditions she identifies must also be able to justify negative appraisals.

Because blame and punishment are harmful to the agent found responsible for wrongdoing, their justification requires more stringent conditions than might otherwise be appropriate for positive attributions of moral responsibility. We may, for example, think that an agent is praiseworthy for her minor causal role in bringing about a good state of affairs but not blameworthy or punishable on the basis of the same type of causal role in bringing about a bad state of affairs. Further, the need for stringent conditions rules out, at the outset, the possibility of identifying conditions for moral responsibility that would not warrant the harmful moral

reactions of blame. For example, we might think that my entirely accidental causal responsibility for spilling my coffee on a friend's computer morally implicates me in the cleaning up of the mess and repair of her computer, even if I am not strictly blameworthy for bringing about this state of affairs. We might—and in the next section, I claim we should—view me as morally responsible for helping to remedy the situation, though I am clearly not liable or culpable for the situation. The tendency to focus on wrongdoing and blame not only skews the appraisal model's analysis of moral responsibility toward locating standards that are too high for other paradigm examples of moral reaction (such as praise or gratitude); it also precludes exploration of other types of moral responsibility by establishing an extremely high burden of proof for the attribution of responsibility.

Second, the appraisal model overlooks moral responsibility for the background conditions of the agent's conduct. On the appraisal model, moral responsibility is only about establishing whether an individual agent is open to moral appraisal for some event. To establish this, we may take into account some of the background conditions of her action. We might ask whether she was forced, coerced, tricked, brainwashed into performing the action. Or we might just ask if she was unaware (through no fault of her own) of what she was doing. These kinds of "excusing conditions" (Fischer and Ravizza 1993, 7) undermine the agent's moral responsibility for the state of affairs she causes; she has done nothing right or wrong, praiseworthy or blameworthy, in bringing about the state of affairs and, thus, she is not morally responsible for it. The background conditions of her action are relevant to attributions of moral responsibility only insofar as they may provide excusing conditions for her action.

However, the further question about moral responsibility for those background conditions often does not arise. In cases where the individual was forced, coerced, tricked, or brainwashed

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into performing the action, we might identify some responsible culprit for the background conditions that led her to act. But, in most of our actions, we are not forced, coerced, tricked, or brainwashed by such a culprit. Rather, we largely choose our actions in response to the social context in which we are positioned. The background conditions of our actions significantly influence which actions we choose to perform, and because there is no singular culprit setting the background conditions, the appraisal model provides no theoretical resources for examining moral responsibility for these conditions. Consequently, the appraisal model's narrow focus on the moral appraisal of individual agents causes it to largely ignore important questions about moral responsibility for the background conditions that influence those agents to act in the manner they do.

In describing the individualistic conception of moral agency often assumed by the traditional understanding of moral responsibility, Christopher Kutz explains this conception as committed to "evaluative solipsism" (2000, 4). Kutz claims that this commitment is both relational and causal;

> Evaluation is relationally solipsistic in the sense that questions of accountability are resolved without reference to the nature of the agent's relations to particular others, whether fellow actors, victims, or bystanders. Rather, individuals are evaluated exclusively according to the content and effects of their wills (2000, 4).

And,

> The causally solipsistic element consists in the presumption that the object of evaluation is solely what an individual has caused or meant to cause […]. Thus, causal relations that depend upon sets of individual acts, but upon no particular individual act, fall outside the bounds of individual normative evaluation (2000, 5).

According to Kutz, the evaluative solipsism of the common understanding of individual moral responsibility lead this understanding to ignore the background system of social relationships within which individual agents act and by which individual agents become morally implicated in

collective wrongs. The appraisal model relies on a strong commitment to the evaluative solipsism Kutz describes and, consequently, inherits the theoretical limitations of this commitment.

To return to the example of the armed robber, the appraisal model will focus on whether she was free to choose to perform the robbery, examine her reasons for performing the robbery, and see if there was any justification or excuse for her conduct. The appraisal model will examine the background conditions of her action only to locate possible excusing conditions for her performing the robbery. If there is no one coercing or tricking her into performing the robbery, the attribution of responsibility begins and ends with the armed robber.

But this approach to the attribution of responsibility is overly limited. We should also ask questions about whether or not any other agents are morally responsible for the background conditions that led the armed robber to act, even if these agents have not coerced or tricked her into performing the robbery. A complete analysis of moral responsibility would ask whether or not there are social factors that played a role in bringing about the robbery. Perhaps, the armed robber was destitute, having lost her job in factory layoffs, unable to materially support her family on the meager social support she receives, and with few social resources available to her to change her situation, she resorts to armed robbery. We should examine her specific relations to the wide number of moral agents who helped shape the background conditions of her action. These conditions may or may not excuse her from her moral responsibility on the appraisal model; this will depend on one's account of excusing conditions. The important point here is that, on the appraisal model, which agents are morally responsible for the background conditions that influenced the robber to perform the robbery is a question that does not get asked. The

appraisal model, given its evaluative solipsism, does not have the theoretical resources to answer some important questions about moral responsibility.

Finally, the appraisal model fails to examine the connection between moral responsibility and remedial action. On the appraisal model, moral responsibility is the basis for the moral appraisal of an agent and her conduct; consequently, the end of the analysis is to justify holding an individual responsible for some particular state of affairs. But this responsibility only warrants the adoption of certain moral attitudes, praise and blame being the most common. The appraisal model never asks the further question about what one's moral responsibility for some state of affairs means for what she ought to do about that state of affairs. This limitation of the appraisal model causes it to ignore a significant feature of our common intuitions about moral responsibility, namely that one's moral responsibility for some state of affairs might generate obligations to do something about that state of affairs. For example, in the case of the armed robber, we are likely to not only find that she is blameworthy for the robbery but also that she has some obligation to repair the wrong that she has caused. Her moral responsibility for the robbery justifies both our blaming her for the robbery and the moral demand that she remedy the suffering of her victim. As I argue below, these remedial expectations are moral responsibilities of a different type than liability-based moral responsibilities. But, because moral responsibility on the appraisal model ends with the active appraisal of the responsible agent, moral responsibilities to repair are not considered as part of the agent's moral responsibility.

These three limitations of the appraisal model are especially pernicious for formulating an account of structural responsibility. In chapter three, I argue in detail that the appraisal model's focus on attributability, appraisal, and holding responsible makes it inadequate for understanding the specific type of moral responsibility generated by one's participation in unjust

social structures. Specifically, I demonstrate how the evaluative solipsism of the appraisal model commits it to an inadequate understanding of the relationship between individual agency and social structure. But, for now, I merely wish to point out that each of the three limitations of the appraisal model causes it to preclude important questions about moral responsibility. Owing to these limitations, we ought to view the appraisal model not as a complete explanation of the concept of moral responsibility but, rather, as a specialized type of moral responsibility, narrowly focused on appraisal. That is, the appraisal model identifies a set of concerns and possible answers to these concerns, which can only capture one aspect of the concept of moral responsibility. If we view the appraisal model in this manner, the charge of conceptual confusion is largely ameliorated; even if the appraisal model is the paradigm type of moral responsibility, it might not be the only type. At least, we have reason to not reject, on conceptual grounds, remedial responsibility as a type of moral responsibility.

2.2. Remedial Responsibility as a Type of Moral Responsibility

Given the three limitations of the appraisal model, we should not confine ourselves to the narrow understanding of moral responsibility it provides. If I am right about the limitations of viewing moral responsibility only as the basis for the appraisal of a moral agent for some state of affairs, then there is some conceptual space for exploring other types of moral responsibility.

There are three reasons for viewing remedial responsibility as a type of moral responsibility. First, despite the general philosophical agreement that moral responsibility is only about appraisal, we speak of moral responsibility in many different ways, and remedial responsibility is one of these ways. Young asserts,

> In ordinary language we use the term "responsible" in several ways. One [is] paradigmatic of the liability model: to be responsible is to be guilty or at fault for having caused a harm and without valid excuses. We also say, however, that people have certain responsibilities by virtue of their social roles or positions, as when we say that a teacher

has specific responsibilities, or we appeal to our responsibilities as citizens. In this meaning, finding responsible does not imply finding at fault or liable for a past wrong; rather, it refers to agents' carrying out activities in a morally appropriate way and seeing to it that certain outcomes obtain (2011, 104).

As Young explains, we do not only use the term "responsible" to identify who is to praise or blame for some state of affairs; we also use the term to identify who is expected to perform certain future-oriented actions. In common usage, we often speak of someone having a moral responsibility to repair some wrong. For example, we might say that the armed robber has a moral responsibility to remedy the suffering of the victim of her robbery. Common usage suggests that there is no abuse of the concept of moral responsibility in describing the armed robber's remedial responsibilities as moral responsibilities.

Second, the performance of these actions is a moral requirement: to say that someone is responsible to perform action X is to say she is morally obligated to do X. For example, I am responsible for feeding my dog each day, and if I willingly fail to do so, I have done something morally wrong. It is not unreasonable to think, then, that I have a *moral* responsibility to feed my dog. Remedial responsibilities are moral in the same sense: some agents, by virtue of their connection to some wrong, have responsibilities to remedy that wrong, and since it would be immoral for them to fail to act on them, those responsibilities are *moral*.

Finally, remedial responsibility is often closely linked to the moral appraisal of the individual agent. It is at least arguable that the moral appraisal of individuals for their role in bringing about some wrong only really matters because this appraisal might obligate responsible parties to remedy that wrong. If this were the case, moral responsibility would be primarily about identifying the agents who have remedial responsibilities for some state of affairs, and whether the agents are blameworthy for that state would merely be the basis of their remedial

responsibilities. Remedial responsibility would not only be a type of moral responsibility; it would be the paradigm of moral responsibility.

But even if we view moral responsibility as primarily about justifying the moral appraisal of an individual for some wrong, we ought to still view her blameworthiness as generating obligations to remedy the wrong. The same exact reasons that we offer to claim that the individual is blameworthy for some wrong are often the reasons she ought to work to remedy that wrong. Though these may not be the only types of reasons that give rise to remedial responsibilities—this is something we have to settle through analysis—many of the *moral* reasons that we offer for remedial responsibility are the same reasons we offer for appraisal responsibility. Because the basis of remedial responsibilities are moral reasons, and often the same exact reasons we would offer to establish appraisal responsibility, we ought to view remedial responsibility as a type of moral responsibility.

Given all this, we should dismiss the charge of conceptual confusion. The charge of conceptual confusion relies on a narrow understanding of moral responsibility. This understanding has three significant theoretical limitations; noting these limitations, we are able to open conceptual space for exploring alternative understandings of moral responsibility. Remedial responsibility is one such understanding. Remedial responsibilities are commonly understood to be moral responsibilities, issue moral demands, and are based in moral reason. Consequently, we ought to view remedial responsibility as a type of moral responsibility.

2.3. Responsibility and Duty

Remedial responsibilities are moral responsibilities that generate obligations for the responsible agent to act to repair wrongs. I argue in chapter four that an individual's complicity in specific structural injustice is the moral basis of her responsibilities to remedy those injustices.

This complicity provides the structurally responsible agent with weighty moral reasons to work towards the remedy of the injustices for which she is complicit.

Her complicity, however, does not define a specific set of moral duties that the structurally responsible agent must perform. Joel Feinberg explains, "[a] responsibility, like a duty, is both a burden and a liability; but unlike a duty it carries considerable discretion […] along with it" (1980, 187). According to Feinberg, responsibilities provide an end and "the means for achieving it are left to the independent judgment of the responsible party" (1980, 187). Responsibilities are moral obligations of a different form than duties. As Young notes,

> A duty specifies a rule of action or delineates the substance of what actions count as performing the duty. A responsibility, on the other hand, while no less obligatory, is more open as to what counts as carrying it out. A person with responsibilities is obliged to attend to outcomes the responsibilities call for, and to orient her or his actions in ways demonstrably intended to contribute to bringing about those outcomes (2007, 182).

Abigail Gosselin phrases the distinction a bit differently:

> Philosophers debate about whether the kind of obligation relevant to poverty should be regarded as strict 'duty,' with a specified, complete-able, non-discretionary scope of action, or as looser 'responsibility,' with a nonspecific, non-complete-able, discretionary scope of action" (2009, 12).

Gosselin rejects this distinction and uses duty and responsibility nearly interchangeably in her account of individual responsibility for poverty. Despite Gosselin's rejection of the distinction, I believe it marks an important difference in how we understand the obligations of the individual agent to remedy injustice. Duty is more precise about the specific actions an agent is morally obligated to perform to meet their duty, whereas responsibility is a broader, outcome-oriented moral obligation that allows the agent to decide the best way to meet this obligation. Understanding an individual's obligations to remedy injustice as a responsibility rather than a duty allows a broader view of the scope of actions that can be performed to meet one's responsibilities and affords the agent greater discretion in deciding how to prioritize her many

obligations to remedy injustice. Consequently, understanding an agent's remedial obligations as responsibilities is more likely to be responsive to the specific character of her social situation.

The contrast between responsibility and duty is similar to the distinction made in Kantian ethics between perfect and imperfect duties. Christine Korsgaard explains, "[p]erfect duties require definite actions or omissions, while in the case of imperfect duties inclination is allowed to play a role in determining exactly what and how much we will do to carry them out" (1996, 20). One might see the distinction between responsibility and duty as mapping directly onto the distinction between perfect and imperfect duties. For this reason, we might wonder why we should use a non-standard nomenclature of moral responsibilities for individual obligations to remedy injustice when we could use the Kantian language of perfect and imperfect duties. I choose to avoid discussion of perfect and imperfect duties for three reasons. First, this distinction is highly contentious even amongst those that accept some form of Kantian ethics. Second, accepting this distinction is likely to bias my account against non-Kantian moral views. And third, focus on imperfect duties is likely to shift attention away from the reform of unjust social structures and toward the assessment of individual action.

An individual agent's moral complicity in specific injustices generates moral obligations for her to work towards their remedy. In chapter 5, I argue that the actions that will allow the individual to meet these obligations will largely depend on the resources afforded her by her specific social location, her ability to perform transformative actions, and the strength of her social connection to those injustices. The individual agent is likely to be complicit in a great many injustices and, thus, to have a great many remedial obligations. Consequently, she has a great deal of discretion in deciding how to meet these obligations, and for this reason, we should view these obligations as responsibilities.

2.4. A Non-ideal Method

This dissertation aims to build a non-ideal theory of structural responsibility. That is, my theory of structural responsibility explains what is morally required of real-world moral agents in our actual, non-ideal social world. The account of social agency, the claims about the grounds of individual responsibility, and the parameters for reasoning about responsibility I offer in the following chapters are moral claims designed to meet the pressing moral need to remedy the actual and pervasive structural injustice that characterizes our present-day social order.

As a work in non-ideal theory, this dissertation begins from the fact of pervasive and extremely debilitating structural injustices—a fact that I explain in detail in the next chapter—and asks how we can formulate a theory of structural injustice to meet the pressing need to remedy these injustices. As Elizabeth Anderson explains, non-ideal theory does not "advance principles and ideals for a perfectly just society, but ones that we need to cope with the injustices in our current world, and to move us to something better" (2010, 3). This philosophical method takes facts about the actual social conditions of human agency, the moral motivations of these agents, the social processes that shape how they interact with one another, and the injustices some of them suffer as the philosophical foundation for building normative theories. A non-ideal theory begins from the perspective of the actual "motivation and cognitive capacities of human beings" (Anderson 2010, 3) rather than that of "perfectly rational and just persons" (Anderson 2010, 4). Consequently, non-ideal theories provide normative claims that are not only potentially more convincing to actual agents and more effective in their aims than those generated by ideal methods; they also provide normative theories that are more likely to cohere with facts about human agency and social life. Moreover, non-ideal methods enable theorists to draw distinctions among real-world social phenomena and recognize different forms of actual

social injustice that ideal theories typically bracket off as imperfect contingencies of an unjust world (Anderson 2010, 4-7). Because of this, non-ideal theories have the potential to be more coherent with, as well as provide a more comprehensive understanding of, the facts of social interaction than their ideal counterparts.[8]

Non-ideal theorizing, however, is not the predominant method of building moral theory; as Anderson (under)states, "this method is unorthodox" (2010, 3). Anderson suggests, "[n]onideal theory is usually regarded as derivative of ideal theory" (2010, 3). According to this view, once we have correctly located the ideal principles, generated by appeal to the idealizations of human rationality and agency, that govern the structure of the ideal society, non-ideal theorizing is helpful for working to realize these principles. Much philosophical work proceeds from the methodological assumption that ideal theory provides the normative principles that non-ideal theory works to practically realize. For example, in *The Law of Peoples*, Rawls writes of non-ideal theory's role in theorizing his Law of Peoples,

> We take as a basic characteristic of well-ordered peoples that they wish to live in a world in which all peoples accept and follow the (ideal of the) Law of Peoples. Nonideal theory asks how this long-term goal might be achieved, or worked toward, usually in gradual steps. It looks for policies and courses of action that are morally permissible and politically possible as well as likely to be effective. So conceived, nonideal theory presupposes that ideal theory is already on hand. For until the ideal is identified, […] nonideal theory lacks an objective, an aim, by reference to which its queries can be answered (1999a, 90).

Rawls's claim is recognizable in the method of much moral philosophy: the principles generated by ideal theory provide the moral objectives, while non-ideal theory works merely to resolve the practical issues of realizing these objectives.

However, the method of ideal theory "misunderstands how moral thinking works" (Anderson 2010, 3). Normative thinking typically begins from the recognition of a moral

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[8] Young makes very similar claims about the method of critical theory (2000, 10-11).

problem that must be resolved rather than a formulation of ideals that we must work to realize. Further, we do not need to have formulated the correct ideal principles in order to be able to identify adequate moral responses to the problems that confront us (Anderson 2010, 3). Normative thinking is often non-ideal, insofar as it begins from the actual moral issues that characterize our daily lives and works toward moral principles that can effectively guide our remedial responses to these issues.[9]

For the reasons briefly mentioned above, I adopt a non-ideal method for theorizing structural responsibility. In the next chapter, I detail a minimal account of the actual features of pervasive structural injustices. This account of structural injustices serves to guide the non-ideal theory of structural responsibility I formulate over the remaining chapters. But, at this point, one might worry that my adoption of a non-ideal method biases my theory toward practical concerns or guides my theorizing toward an idiosyncratic view of moral responsibility. Much of the allure of ideal theory is found in its impartial and universal justification—the principles of ideal theory do not cater to the interests of a few but rather are derived from universal features of the human experience. A critic might argue that my non-ideal method can provide for nothing more than particular and partial moral prescriptions.

This criticism is either unfounded or unimportant. First, non-ideal theory can still issue universal moral principles; in other words, non-ideal methods can still generate moral ideals. Non-ideal methods only reject the idealization of the conditions utilized in generating our moral ideals, not the generation of universal moral principles. There is no reason to assume that the moral principles of a non-ideal theory will be any more tailored to the interests of a particular few than will those of an ideal theory.

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[9] Charles Mills (2005, 2007, 2010) has also formulated extremely persuasive critiques of ideal theory, especially in the works of John Rawls, which partially motivate my adoption of a non-ideal method.

Second, ideal theory does not escape the worries mentioned above, and, consequently, the objection may be less damning then the critic assumes. Many assume that ideal theory performs the unencumbered (by the non-ideal contingencies of the actual world) task of locating moral truths; once we strip away the morally-regrettable but accidental features of the actual world, we can correctly identify the true moral principles that should guide human interaction. But this is a misguided assumption. No theories grasp truths from a completely impartial perspective. All theories work from a set of basic facts in answering the philosophical questions they aim to answer. That is, some facts are taken to be morally salient for answering the chosen questions, while others are taken as accidental or irrelevant to this process, and because of this, all theories partly depend on the facts that they take as basic. If we consider an alternative set of facts, we may end up with a radically different theory. Ideal theories are as guilty of this sort of partiality as non-ideal theories. The main difference, however, is that non-ideal theories include conditions of the actual world as salient while ideal theories bracket many of these facts. Ideal theories opt instead to focus on "facts" about human nature in their formulation of political principles. Perhaps, this bracketing and idealization of human nature makes ideal theories *more* partial than non-ideal theories, given that they often bracket facts about actual injustices, which have great moral salience to those that suffer these injustices, in favor of idealizations of how humans function in just circumstances. Either way, the criticism that non-ideal methods lead us to formulate partial theories may be just as, if not more, problematic for ideal methods.

Finally, even if non-ideal methods are more likely to be partial or particularist in the moral prescriptions they locate, they may still be better suited for our overarching moral aims in theorizing. Assuming that the main reason we have to theorize about injustice and responsibility to remedy injustice is to actually remedy it, it is much more likely that a moral theory that begins

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from the actual features of real-world injustice and the actual conditions of social agency will better meet that aim than a moral theory built as an ideal model. The criticism, even if founded, is unimportant, as we have a stronger reason to build a theory utilizing a non-ideal method grounded in facts about the actual social world than we have to pursue greater impartiality.

With all that said, I choose to adopt a non-ideal method on the assumption that it will yield a theory of structural responsibility that will guide us better than that of an ideal method toward meeting the main aim in theorizing structural responsibility, namely finding a coherent, normative guide for working to remedy injustice. My non-ideal method requires that the possible answers we might provide to the four questions above adequately recognize the non-ideal conditions that characterize the present social state-of-affairs. In other words, I aim to build a non-ideal theory that does the following:

- Offers a minimally-adequate description of the social phenomenon of structural injustice, explains how it functions in the interacting networks of social structures throughout the world, and provides a normative account of the wrongness of these injustices.

- Builds an account of social agency that adequately recognizes the actual conditions that both restrict and enable individual actors in their everyday interactions and in working to transform unjust social structures.

- Critically evaluates the possible grounds for individual responsibility from a perspective that takes seriously the actual moral commitments of individual agents.

- Generates a normative framework for understanding the actual responsibilities of individual agents, guiding individuals agents in discharging their responsibilities, and assessing morally the actions of individual agents in meeting or failing to meet these

responsibilities, all with a firm grasp on the actual opportunities to meet responsibilities by differently-situated individual agents.

3. Criteria of Theoretical Adequacy

Still, an important feature of the methodological framework utilized in the analysis of this dissertation remains unstated. Namely, I need to still identify the philosophical criteria by which I claim some answers to the four questions better than others. Throughout the dissertation, I will make arguments regarding the theoretical adequacy of various philosophical positions, and before proceeding, I want to take a moment to explain the criteria of theoretical adequacy I will both explicitly and implicitly employ in my analysis. The following four criteria are used to critically assess their adequacy (Jaggar 2005, 205):[10]

C1) *Conservatism.* This first criterion proposes that a theory that is more closely aligned with widely-shared moral intuitions is better than a theory that contradicts such intuitions. Departures from common moral understandings must be justified by appeal to some other criteria of theoretical adequacy. While the widely-shared intuitions related to these issues serve as a baseline for analysis from which a theory should not wander too far, we don't have to automatically accept the dominant view on these issues. Rather, conservatism should encourage us to build a theory that takes seriously the wide-ranging and perhaps contradictory sets of moral intuitions on the given topic. Such a theory will be rooted in the moral sensibilities of actual agents, while locating the already existing theoretical resources that challenge dominant views on structural responsibility, which may ignore or even justify persistent injustice.

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[10] Here, I follow Alison Jaggar in her formulation of criteria for conceptual adequacy. Though conceptual adequacy differs from theoretical adequacy, her desiderata serve as a helpful guide for formulating my four criteria.

C2) *Comprehensiveness.* This second criterion proposes that a theory that explains and justifies a wider range of (relevant) moral intuitions is more adequate than a theory that explains and justifies only a small set of those intuitions. For example, a theory of structural responsibility that can explain both the intuition that moral responsibility is grounded in causal responsibility and the intuition that we can be morally responsible for states of affairs that we did not ourselves cause would be more comprehensive than a theory that explained only one of these intuitions. The former theory, based solely on the criterion of comprehensiveness, should be deemed more theoretically adequate than the latter.

C3) *Consistency and Coherence.* This third criterion proposes that a theory whose claims are consistent and better cohere with one another is more theoretically adequate than a theory whose claims don't. A theory that contains formal contradictions is obviously theoretically inadequate. But a theory whose claims do not generate a formal contradiction, yet do not cohere well with one another, is also theoretically inadequate. In other words, a theory that strings together a set of claims that, while not contradictory, don't interact well or appear arbitrary with respect to one another may also be inadequate. At the least, a theory with a set of non-contradictory, cohesive claims is a better alternative to a less coherent theory.

C4) *Precision.* This final criterion proposes that a theory that provides a more precise explanation of the (relevant) social phenomena is more theoretically adequate than a theory that offers a more vague explanation. Precision in explanation may help to differentiate phenomena that are likely to be confused, distinguish between oft-conflated social concepts, provide a clearer understanding of the complexities of

some social phenomena, or afford us better insight into the moral grounds of our intuitions.

I utilize these criteria to assess the possible answers to the three questions of structural responsibility and to formulate my own theoretically-adequate answers to these questions.

Chapter 2: Extreme Poverty as Structural Injustice

1. Introduction

My analysis begins from the fact of structural injustice and articulates a workable conception of structural responsibility to repair injustice. To argue for this account, I must first describe the injustices that give rise to this type of responsibility. In other words, for my account to be responsive to the features of actual oppressive social processes, I need to articulate these features. In this chapter, I provide a minimal account of structural injustice that explains what social structures are and what makes some of them unjust. Further, I argue that many existing situations of extreme poverty are created or maintained by social structures that oppress those who suffer in those situations. Given that much acute deprivation is caused by oppressive and, thus, unjust social structures, some people are morally responsible for its remedy.

My conception of structural injustice is developed in five sections in this chapter. In section two, I explain my account of social structures. I claim that social structures are dynamic, yet enduring systems of social relationships that situate individuals into social groups. One's membership in social groups defines for her a likely set of social options and constraints, benefits and burdens, that deeply impact the way that her life goes.

Some social structures oppress members of certain social groups and, thus, are unjust. In section three, I explain that structural injustices occur when social structures systematically harm some groups of people by positioning them in oppressive social relationships. I provide an account of social oppression and argue that structural injustice is pervasive, both in the social lives of the individuals who participate in them and in the present global situation.

Many of the social structures that pervade the present global situation create and maintain situations of acute material deprivation alongside growing affluence in a manner that fails to treat

those suffering acute material deprivation with the equal moral respect they deserve. These structures are oppressive and unjust. In section four, I demonstrate that many situations of extreme poverty are not only instances of radical inequality but are also structural injustices. In other words, much of the suffering from acute deprivation that plagues the present social situation is unjust and demands remedy.

Necessarily, some set of moral agents is responsible to remedy any structurally unjust situation of extreme poverty. In the concluding section, I suggest that structural injustices require structural remedies and that existing structural injustices generate weighty moral reasons for some set of agents to work towards these remedies.

2. Social Structures and Social Groups

Below, I argue that many situations of extreme poverty are structural injustices. This argument involves two distinct claims: 1) many situations of extreme poverty are caused or maintained by social structures, and 2) those structures are unjust because they are oppressive. In order to understand and justify these two claims, we must first have working conceptions of two key concepts, namely those of social structures and of oppression. In this section, I explain my minimal conception of social structures and demonstrate how social structures constitute social groups. In the next section, I explain my minimal conception of oppression and explain that oppressive social structures are both personally and globally pervasive.

Social structures are dynamic, yet enduring systems of social relationships that significantly shape options for individual action. They position individuals to have certain options for action open to them while others are closed off. They also provide the social resources individual agents must utilize to pursue specific options for action. Further, social structures set the costs and benefits, risks and rewards for pursuing some options over others.

Consequently, social structures both enable and constrain, sometimes in a deeply coercive manner, the individual agent in realizing her life plans. In sum, social structures are the relatively stable social architecture in which individual agents live their lives.

This social architecture marks out a system of social positions that situate individuals in relation to one another. These relational positions are differentiated by the specific schema of structural privileges or constraints of that position, and this schema is defined by the sets of social expectations, norms, and rules that influence how individuals relate to one another. Structures position some individuals within these systems of social relationships in a similar manner to others, giving them common sets of structural privileges or constraints. Individuals who share a common set of structural privileges or constraints comprise a social group. Differently-situated social groups have different sets of privileges and constraints and, consequently, different life prospects.

For example, we can imagine a local business, which produces stainless steel water bottles. This business has a workplace structure that defines different social roles for its employees. The division of labor marked out by these roles situate individuals in workplace relationships that define the social expectations of the employees, distribute social resources to the employees to meet those expectations, and evaluate employee performance in meeting the expectations of their role. Some individuals, call them executives, are tasked with formulating the mission of the company, deciding how to work to realize this mission, and finding effective leaders to carry out their plan. Other individuals, call them management, are tasked with identifying individuals who can perform the work required to realize the mission, motivating them to be efficient and productive, and evaluating their work. Finally, another group of individuals, call them the workers, are tasked with doing the actual labor of making, packaging,

and distributing the water bottles in a way that is profitable for the company and consistent with its mission. The (simplified) workplace structure of this water bottle company positions the individuals who are a part of the company into three distinct social groups—executives, management, and workers—and their social group membership significantly shapes their options for exercising their labor, the resources available to them for acting on their options, and the schema of social risks and rewards that shape which options they choose to pursue. Executives will have a great many more choices and resources available to them than the average worker. Because of this, executives and workers will have dramatically different prospects for how their worklife goes.

The example above, though simplistic, helps to demonstrate one way that an indvidual's position in social relationships could potentially shape her life options. To more fully understand the claim that one's social position dramatically affects her life options, I need to articulate the general features of social structures. Social structures have four distinct features:[11]

1) Social structures map out a *relational landscape*, which positions individual agents in relation to one another and significantly shapes their ability to realize their life plans.

2) Social structures, though they do not exist independently of individual action, are *irreducible to individual action*.

3) Social structures both significantly shape the conditions for individual action and are responsive to individual action, created and recreated through a process of *structuration*.

4) Social structures are *sociohistorical realities*, which lends their continued existence the force of social and historical inertia.

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[11] This discussion of the four features of social structure largely follows that provided by Young (2000, 2001, 2004, 2006, 2007, 2011), though I articulate these features in different terms.

I will briefly explain each of these features.

2.1.   Relational Landscape

First, social structures create complex and nested networks of relational social positions, into which individuals are situated, and these positions significantly impact how one's life goes. John Rawls asserts that the basic structure of society is "the way in which the major social institutions distribute fundamental rights and duties and determine the division of advantages from social cooperation" (1999b, 6). This structure, Rawls continues, "contains various social positions and […] [people] born into different positions have different expectations of life determined, in part, by the political system as well as by economic and social circumstances" (1999b, 7).[12] For Rawls, the basic structure is both the schema that determines how to distribute the benefits and burdens of social cooperation as well as the set of social positions to which these benefits and burdens are distributed.

Rawls's discussion of the basic structure leaves many questions unanswered; as Rawls admits, his conception of the basic structure of society is "somewhat vague," even if "intuitively understood" (1999b, 8). Peter M. Blau (1975, 1977, 1994) offers a spatial metaphor that helps to more fully explain the ways that social structures position individuals to have differential life prospects. He argues that a social structure is "a multidimensional space of different social positions among which a population is distributed," in which the "associations of people provide both the criterion for distinguishing social positions and the connections among them that make them elements of the same social structure" (1977, 4). Social structures are systems of social positions, and these social positions are interconnected through the associations, or social relationships, of those that occupy them.   Further, it is the specific characteristics of these

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[12] Rawls's conception of the basic structure—a conception that he reiterates in *Justice as Fairness: A Restatement* (2001, 10) and *Political Liberalism* (2005, 11, 258)—is often the default conception of social structure utilized in contemporary political philosophy.

associations or relationships that differentiate one social structure from another. Our positions within these landscapes provide us with a schema of social benefits and burdens that significantly shape our options for action, both enabling and constraining us in the pursuit of our life plans (Blau 1994, Rawls 1999b).

To return to the example of the water bottle company, we can metaphorically describe the business structure as a relational landscape. This landscape is made up of social positions within the company, differentiated by the expectations and the benefits and burdens of those positions, and defined in relation to other social positions. Taken together, this system of relational social positions constitute the entire structure of the water bottle company, and each individual employee occupies a position that is (ideally) directed at realizing some aspect of the company's success. One's position within this landscape will significantly shape how her worklife goes.

While the positioning of individual agents in a relational social landscape is a key feature of social structures, we need to develop our conception beyond this initial observation. The picture of social structure provided by Rawls and Blau tends to reify the structural relationships amongst agents and, consequently, describes social structures in an overly static and deterministic manner. This view describes social structures as though they are distinct and independent from the actions of individual agents. For example, G.A. Cohen (1997) argues that there is a "fatal ambiguity" (1997, 18) in the way that Rawls employs the concept of the basic structure. This ambiguity, according to Cohen, stems from the inability of Rawls's theory to capture the way that personal choices made by individual agents affect social structure. Cohen's critique demonstrates the inability of Rawls's view of social structure to take into account the way that the actions of individual agents shape the system of social positions that constitute those structures. Moreover, this inability causes Rawls's conception of social structure to ignore the

ways in which structural injustices are created and maintained in the everyday interactions of well-intentioned individuals (Young 1990, 41-42).

Blau's account is theoretically limited in a similar manner. While the spatial metaphor helps us to visualize the ways in which social structures position individuals in complex networks of social relationships, it offers a static depiction of these networks. In describing social positions as nodes in a landscape of social associations, the spatial metaphor problematically depicts "social structures as entities independent of social actors, lying passively around them easing or inhibiting their movement" (Young 2007, 169). To return to our earlier example, the metaphor treats the business structure of the water bottle company as independent of the actions of its employees. But this business structure cannot exist apart from the decisions and actions made by the employees of the company; the company does not exist without these decisions and actions. The metaphor cannot account for the way that the individual agency of individual executives, managers, and workers creates, reshapes, or even transforms the structure of the water bottle company.

These accounts potentially reify unjust systems of social interaction by failing to account for the ways in which individuals exercise their agency to reconstitute systems of social relationships. They render individuals causally inert and, thus, without moral agency. Consequently, these accounts cannot recognize the potential for social transformation that lies in the exercise of individual agency, leaving them unable to adequately eplain how we are to work to remedy structural injustice.

2.2. Irreducible to Individual Action

The discussion above brings us to our second feature of social structures. Social structures do not exist independently of, but are not reducible to, individual action. Rather, they

are the cumulative outcomes of individual social interaction. The relational landscapes of social structures are defined by social rules and norms, roles and expectations, practices and processes, and systems of collective consciousness that only exist because of the actions of individual agents. However, social structures are not always deliberately created or intentionally shaped by individual actors; rather, they are often the result of the uncoordinated actions of many individuals pursuing their own life plans. The cumulative effects of these uncoordinated actions often come together in unintended ways to reinforce or reshape the structural conditions of individual action (Young 2011, 62-64). Social structures are contingent upon but not reducible to individual action.

In other words, structural analyses have explanatory and normative power apart from analyses that only identify facts about the desires, intentions, motives, and conduct of individual agents. That type of analysis will not provide a comprehensive and precise explanation or moral assessment of the way the social world functions. While we should be careful not to depict social structures as entities that exist independently from the conduct of individual agents, we should also not turn to a reductionist account of social structure.[13]

When I say structural analyses have explanatory power, I mean that there exist facts about social structures—such as facts about social identities, institutions, norms, processes, and

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[13] To help myself understand what is meant by a reductionist account of social structure, I reference debates in the philosophy of mind. In trying to give an account of the interaction between the so-called mental and physical worlds, philosophers of mind often provide a levels picture of these two worlds. Reductionist accounts typically try to reduce the mental world (understood in terms of, say, mental properties or phenomenal experiences) to the physical world (understood in terms of, say, the physical properties of complex neurophysiological processes); that is, reductionist accounts in the philosophy of mind aim to demonstrate that all the properties or facts at the mental level can be fully explained by appeal to properties or facts at the physical level. Non-reductionists resist this move by arguing that facts or properties at the mental level cannot be entirely explained by facts or properties at the physical level. Aside from one's philosophical views on the mind, I believe this analogy helps to demonstrate the dichotomous approach to conceptualizing social structure; as I suggest, our account of social structure can neither treat social structure as operating at a level independent of individual agency nor as reducible to the level of interpersonal interaction. I offer this analogy to help illustrate the issue, and I detail some preliminary reasons to resist reduction in the next couple paragraphs, but I admit that a full defense of my account of social structures would need a more robust argument for non-reductionism.

roles—that are not reducible to facts about the individual agents situated in those structures. In other words, knowledge of all the facts about all individual agents will not provide complete knowledge of the social world. For this kind of complete knowledge, we also need to know about the social forces that shape the beliefs, desires, and intentions of individual agents, and the character of these forces is best explained by facts about the social structures in which these agents are situated. Descriptions about the way that social structures operate have explanatory power insofar as they explain parts of social life that cannot be fully explained merely by facts about individual agents.[14]

When I say structural analyses have normative power, I mean that there exist moral facts about social structures—such as facts about the unintentionally oppressive character of social relationships—that are not reducible to moral facts about the isolated conduct of individual agents. In other words, knowledge of all the moral facts about individual conduct will not provide complete knowledge of all the moral facts about the social world. For this kind of complete knowledge, we also need to analyze the morality of the background social conditions and ongoing social processes that shape options for individual action. As I suggested above, the well-intentioned and morally permissible conduct of individual agents may contribute to social processes that severely constrain the options of members of some social groups. Moral analysis of these processes that focus only on the intentions of the individuals involved will miss important moral facts about the social world those processes help to shape. Structural analysis has normative power insofar as it provides additional information for our moral diagnosis.

Pogge's distinction between interactional and institutional moral analysis may help to clarify this point:

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[14] Cudd makes a similar point about the irreducibility of social groups to sets of individual actors: "without positing social groups as causally efficacious entities, we cannot explain oppression or many other aspects of human behavior" (2006, 34).

There are two distinct ways of looking at the events of our social world. On the one hand, we can see such events interactionally: as action, and effects of actions performed by individual and collective agents. On the other hand, we can see them institutionally: as effects of how our social world is structured and organized […]. These two ways of viewing entail different descriptions and explanations of social phenomena, and they also lead to two distinct kinds of moral analysis or moral diagnostics (2010, 15).

By focusing our analysis of the present social situation on structural processes as opposed to individual conduct, we are able to locate alternative explanations of existing social phenomena as well as different moral diagnoses of these phenomena. Consequently, reductionist accounts of social structure cannot provide a comprehensive description or moral diagnosis of the present social situation.

Perhaps this point can be better explained by appeal to our earlier example. We might be tempted to appeal to the description and moral evaluation of individual interactions amongst the employees of the water bottle company to fully describe the social functioning of that company. To explain a failure on the part of the company to deliver quality product to a local retail store on time, we might aim to identify the deliberate misconduct or the negligence of one or more of the employees. This type of explanation may offer a full diagnosis of the problem; further, it may provide all of the information needed for determining fault for the failure and for justifying blame and accountability. However, in many situations, a description of the company's failure that appeals only to the beliefs, desires, and motives of individual employees will not provide a complete description of the problem at hand. In many situations, there are social forces—such as the culture of the company or worker morale—that shape the beliefs, desires, and motives of individual employees. Perhaps the repeated suspension of annual raises contributes to worker dissatisfaction that, in turn, leads to oversights in the production of quality water bottles. This failure, from an interpersonal perspective, might be attributed to the workers whose oversights lead to shoddy production. But, on this perspective, we are likely to ignore the role that

executive or management decisions about how to handle economic losses played in shaping the attitudes and beliefs of the individual workers thought to be at fault for the poor work. A full explanation of the failure to produce quality water bottles must take into account the way that the structural forces shape the background conditions in which individual employees act. Further, the moral diagnosis of the failure, which serves as the basis for attributing responsibility and holding accountable, is incomplete without looking at this broader structural backdrop.

2.3.   Structuration

I have suggested that accounts of social structure that treat social structures as independent from individual conduct are overly static and theoretically limited; however, I have also suggested that we should resist the tendency to reduce social structure to interpersonal interaction. To avoid this theoretical dichotomy, we need an explanation of how social structures interact with individual conduct. The third feature of social structures meets this need by explaining that they are "fundamentally *recursive*" (Giddens 1982, 10).[15] Anthony Giddens argues that social structures are recursive insofar as "the structural properties of social systems are both medium and outcome of the practices that constitute those systems" (1982, 36). He develops a theory of "structuration" to explain the "duality" of social structures (Giddens 1979, 1982). Structuration describes the process by which individual action comes to recreate and reinforce the very structural properties that shape those actions. The duality of social structures is found in their recursive nature as both the background conditions and often-unintended consequences of individual action. Given the recursive nature of social structures, individual

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[15] I follow Giddens in using the term 'recursive' despite its technical definition. The term recursive is often used to mean recurring or repetitive, and in mathematics and computing, the term has a technical meaning. I recognize that the use of the term here departs from these common or technical meanings and only wish to note that I am using the term to mean something different.

action can function to reinforce or transform the very structures that shape the agent's options for action.

Again, to reference our water bottle company, the actions of the individual employees that occupy specific positions within the company are not only significantly shaped by the structural expectations of their positions but will also reshape the expectations of those positions. As a manager of the quality department for the water bottle company, I may recognize that my role in the company involves scheduling employees to inspect product, evaluating their performance, and enacting a system of rewards and incentives to encourage the employees I manage to adequately perform their inspections. I know that I will be given a specific allotment of company resources, such as a departmental budget and certain number of employees, to meet the expectations of my role. Also, I understand that the successes and failures of my department will be met with specific types of personal rewards, such as a raise or a budget increase, or costs, such as poor performance reviews or budget decreases. But while the content of my position, as described, is largely determined by the relational structure in which it is situated, I am still able to exercise my agency to meet the expectations of my position in a manner at least partly of my choosing. Further, the manner in which I go about meeting these expectations may come to reshape the expectations of my position. If I implement a new quality-control process to ensure that the caps of our water bottles do not leak, the management of this process may become a standard, even if not formally-recognized, expectation of the position I currently occupy. In some meaningful sense, I have come to transform the expectations of my position within the company, and consequently, I have re-constituted the business structure of which my position is a part.

While this example demonstrates structuration on a small scale, it can help to shed light on the way that individual action is both shaped by and shapes social structure. We, deliberate agents, take the social conditions of our structural positions and act to change our lives, and these actions come to reinforce or transform the content of the social expectations of our structural positions and, thus, the structures in which these positions are located.

2.4.   Sociohistorical Realities

Finally, social structures are "sociohistorical realities," which means that they have considerable social and historical inertia contributing to their continued existence. Social structures significantly shape the wants and desires of agents as well as accumulate the intended and unintended outcomes of their actions; as Young notes, "[s]ometimes these unintended outcomes even run counter to the intentions of most actors" (2011, 63). Social structures shape options for individual action in a manner that tends to encourage actions that reinforce the structural status quo. While responsive to the impact of individual action, social structures tend to reproduce themselves and are resistant to transformation.

To return one last time to the example of the water bottle company, we can imagine that the current system for producing the water bottles would have considerable social and historical inertia contributing to its continued acceptance as the best way to produce the bottles. Presumably, a great amount of social resources, including employee energy to research possible production processes, company finances to purchase machinery or technology, and the actual labor put into the production process, has gone into the successful production of the water bottles. This investment is a powerful force working toward the continuation of the current production process. But more than the mere investment of company resources is working toward maintaining the production status quo; when the production process is seen as successful, the

company is likely to become culturally invested in the process. Successes of the process are likely to be touted, while its failures are likely to be ignored or attributed to the idiosyncratic failures of individual employees. Workers may come to view the process as the only one that will work. Managers are likely to encourage employees to do only what the current process requires. And executives are unlikely to consider other processes that may provide better results. At all levels, a company culture pervades which accepts the production status quo as the best, and maybe even only, option for the company. Once the business structure is adapted to the specific production process, there is considerable inertia on its side to remain the accepted process.

Again, this example is simplistic and is applied at a much smaller scale than that of the general claims about social structure I have put forth. Still, the example demonstrates that social structures shape our options for action in a manner that is likely to reproduce their current form of existence. We, as deliberate agents, are able to reconstitute these structures, but doing so is not as easy as just putting our mind to it.

These final two features of social structures are perhaps the most instructive for formulating a theory of structural responsibility. They explain both the recursive reproduction of social structures through the individual actions those structures condition as well as the strong tendency for individual conduct to reinforce the current arrangement of those structures. In the next chapter, I articulate the way that the recursive nature of social structures and the sociohistorical inertia that conservatively works toward their continued existence shape the social agency of structurally-responsible individuals. Specifically, I argue that standard accounts of social agency utilized in contemporary philosophy fail to adequately theorize the relation between social structures and individual agency. At this point, however, it is important to note

that the final two conditions shape a theoretical account of social structure that not only takes seriously the agency of structurally-situated individuals but also recognizes the significant structural barriers to transforming unjust social structures.

2.5.   Social Groups

Social structures position individuals into social groups. Social groups are groups of people who suffer similar structural constraints on action or enjoy similar structural privileges. Ann Cudd claims, "[s]ocial groups, whether voluntary or nonvoluntary, are collections of persons who share something that is socially significant" (2006, 41).[16] For Cudd, the socially significant feature of social groups is the common set of social constraints its members share: "[a] social group is a collection of persons who share (or would share under similar circumstances) a set of social constraints on action" (2006, 44). Social constraints, according to Cudd, are "facts that one does or ought to rationally consider in deciding how to act or how to plan one's life, or facts that shape beliefs or attitudes about other persons" (2006, 41). These facts are social "when they come about as a result of social actions" (Cudd 2006, 41), and "social constraints affect actions through the penalties and rewards that one can reasonably expect from them" (Cudd 2006, 42). Given all this, "[m]embership in a nonvoluntary social group is socially and not individually determined" (Cudd 2006, 44). On Cudd's view, social groups are constituted by social actions that define a common set of constraints (in her sense) amongst a group of individuals.

In the terms of my previous discussion, social structures constitute social groups by positioning individuals to have similar structural constraints or privileges. Or as Young puts it,

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[16] Cudd's account is meant to describe both voluntary and nonvoluntary social groups. I, however, choose to focus, here, on nonvoluntary social groups, as oppressed groups are most likely to be nonvoluntary. Still, I wish to note that voluntary social groups (such as affiliative clubs) and mixed voluntary/nonvoluntary social groups (such as religious groups, perhaps) may also be oppressed.

"a structural social group is a collection of persons who are similarly positioned in interactive and institutional relations that condition their opportunities or life prospects" (2000, 97). The social rules and norms, practices and processes, and systems of collective consciousness that both mark out different locations in the relational social landscape and position individual agents in these locations create social groups out of the individuals who share a common set of social constraints and privileges. Owing to this, individual social group membership is largely determined by one's social position, and this position is greatly influenced by prevailing social structures.

Because social structures position individuals in complex and nested networks of social relationships, their social position simultaneously situates them in multiple cross-cutting social groups. Our age, class, gender, race, or sexuality are some of the ways in which we become situated in relation to one another to share common sets of constraints and privileges, and, consequently, these forms of social position define age-, class-, gender-, race-, or sexuality-specific social groups. An individual is always positioned at the intersection of a complex of social group memberships, some of which may work to constrain her options while, at the same time, others work to enlarge her options for action. In other words, an individual can be simultaneously empowered and disempowered, privileged and oppressed, by the way that social structures position her into multiple social groups. Moreover, the forms of empowerment and disempowerment that her social group memberships take will shift depending on the social context, with her membership in some social groups becoming more salient and others becoming less salient because of the specific features of that social context. The structurally-constituted social groups in which we belong define for us complicated sets of social constraints and

privileges, which play a significant role in shaping our options for acting to meet our basic needs and realize our life plans.

3. Structural Injustice

Social structures do not determine individual action, but they do significantly shape the conditions of those actions; as I have claimed, social structures are the relatively stable social architecture in which individual agents live their lives. For this reason, social structures can be deeply coercive. Structural conditions apply powerful social forces to how an agent chooses to live her life, in many cases significantly constraining her substantive options for action. Further, there is considerable social and historical inertia moving structural processes towards reification by incentivizing individual action that reinforces the already existing structural conditions. Social structures coercively impact the lives of those who participate in them.

Though coercive, social structures are not necessarily unjust. My description of structural processes offered above is purely descriptive and morally neutral. Even the example of the water bottle company largely ignored moral judgments about the business structure of the company. But many social structures are deeply unjust, which means we need more than a purely descriptive explanation of how structures operate. In this section, I offer a minimal normative account of what makes some social structures unjust and of the extremely detrimental nature of pervasive structural injustice.

Structural injustices occur when social structures systematically but avoidably harm some groups of people by positioning them in oppressive relationships. Young claims structural injustices occur:

> when social processes put large groups of persons under systematic threat of domination or deprivation of the means to develop and exercise their capacities, at the same time that these processes enable others to dominate or to have a wide range of opportunities for developing and exercising capacities available to them (2011, 52).

Unjust social structures position members of some social groups to suffer severe constraints on their options for meeting their basic needs and for realizing their life plans. These severe constraints make members of these groups vulnerable to domination and deprivation. But oppressive structures not only severely constrain members of some social groups; they also enable members of other social groups to prosper. Unjust social structures privilege members of some social groups by affording them the social opportunities and resources to flourish. Any system of social relationships that position individuals in the manner described above is oppressive.

Oppressive social relationships are more than just harmful to those oppressed; they are *wrongfully* harmful. The oppressed are wrongfully harmed by being structurally positioned in relationships that fail to afford them the equal moral respect they deserve. In other words, oppressive social relationships wrongfully harm members of oppressed groups because they treat them as less fully human than members of privileged groups.

From the discussion above, we can generate four necessary and jointly-sufficient conditions for oppression. To count as an oppressive social structure, the following four conditions must be met:[17]

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[17] These four conditions parallel the conditions of oppression provided by Ann Cudd (2006, 25). Cudd's conditions describe oppression as the fundamental moral wrong of social institutions and root the wrongness of the harms unjust institutions cause in the coercive character of these institutions. My conditions, while similar to Cudd's, focus on oppression as rooted in systems of social relationships rather than social institutions. This shift, I believe, provides a better description of the relationship between individual agents and the social processes that oppress members of certain social groups. Further, my conditions place the wrongness of the harms caused by unjust social structures not in their coercing individuals to act in ways that support their own oppression, but rather in their violation of a basic moral principle of equal respect. This shift avoids what I believe to be some problematic claims about the role of victims in recreating their own oppressive position and the adaptive preferences of victims of oppression. Unfortunately, I cannot fully defend these claims here, but I do wish to note both the guidance taken from Cudd's discussion and what I perceive to be the limitations of this discussion.

1. *The avoidable social harm condition*: There exists an avoidable harm perpetrated by the system of social relationships against some of those individuals situated in this system.

2. *The social group condition*: The harm in 1 is systematic because it is perpetrated only against members of certain social groups.

3. *The social privileges condition*: The system of social relationships affords some other group of individuals a wide-range of opportunities and resources to both avoid the harm in 1 and to flourish.

4. *The violation of equal moral respect condition*: There is an unjustifiable violation of the basic principle of equal moral respect.

Let's take a brief, but closer look at each of these conditions.

3.1.   The Avoidable Social Harm Condition

Oppressive social structures harm groups of people by severely constraining their options for action in a manner that makes them vulnerable to acute deprivation or social domination. Social structures can severely constrain options for action in three manners. First, they could formally constrain the options of members of some social groups by means of law or other forms of official rules and sanctions. Second, they could fail to allocate sufficient social resources to members of social groups to make nominally open options real possibilities for action. And third, they could make the system of social costs and benefits or risks and rewards overly costly or risky, such that some open, viable options of action for members of some social groups are highly disincentivized. Any of these three forms of severe constraint drastically hinder the individual in her efforts to meet her basic needs or to realize her life plans.

Severe constraints on action make those that suffer them vulnerable to acute deprivation or social domination. Young asserts, "all oppressed people suffer some inhibition of their ability to develop and exercise their capacities and express their needs, thoughts, and feelings" (1990, 40). This structural inhibition experienced by members of oppressed groups leaves them little recourse to avoid or escape acute deprivation and prevalent social domination. Severe structural constraints on action make it extremely difficult for members of oppressed groups to develop and effectively exercise the social capacities necessary for avoiding deprivation and domination. Consequently, they are structurally positioned to be and remain especially vulnerable to these harms.

And this type of vulnerability is avoidable; vulnerability to acute deprivation and domination created by severe structural constraints on action does not have to exist. It is not a natural feature of the social world. Of course, all human beings are vulnerable to natural maladies and calamities that threaten their ability to meet their basic material needs. Further, anyone who interacts with another human being is vulnerable to being harmed or even wronged in this interaction (Jaggar 2009). But these forms of vulnerability are importantly different than the type of vulnerability created by severe structural constraints on action. Specifically, the former types of vulnerability cannot be prevented and are not structurally caused. Vulnerability caused by structural constraints can be avoided by reconfiguring the social structures that cause this vulnerability. In other words, social structures do not have to produce the severe constraints on action that make members of some social groups vulnerable to acute deprivation and domination and, thus, the harms caused by these constraints are avoidable.

3.2.   The Social Group Condition

When social structures severely constrain the options of individuals in any of these manners, they harm those individuals. When the system of options could be otherwise, they avoidably harm those individuals. But it is only when these avoidable harms are perpetrated against members of certain social groups that they become systematic. Oppressive social structures systematically harm individuals *as members of social groups*.

Social groups are groups of individuals who are positioned by social structures to share a common set of structural privileges or constraints. Oppressive social structures position groups of individuals to suffer the same types of severe constraints on action and, thus, oppress those individuals as members of a social group. The vulnerability to deprivation and domination of members of oppressed social groups are not accidental outcomes of structural processes; nor is this vulnerability entirely attributable to their personal choices or the interpersonal conduct of isolated agents. Rather, the specific character of the social relationships that constitute unjust social structures position groups of individuals to suffer similar severe constraints on action. These harms are not only avoidable; they are systematic. Those that suffer the harms of severe constraints produced by oppressive social structures are picked out to do so, and their social group membership is the main criteria for this picking. Oppressive social structures must not only avoidably harm some individuals; they must also systematically harm them.

3.3.   The Social Privileges Condition

However, systematic harms perpetrated against certain social groups do not, in themselves, make social structures oppressive. Structures that cause this kind of harm become oppressive when they also afford other groups of individuals an expansive set of options for action that allows their members to prosper. Members of privileged social groups are afforded a

very wide range of options for action, a great number of social resources, or an extremely favorable incentive structure to act in ways that allow them to flourish. The individual agent may work, in some sense, herself into a position to enjoy these privileges, or she may just luck into occupying the position, but these privileges can only be enjoyed when they position her in relation to those forced to suffer structural severe structural constraints. Unjust social structures must benefit some groups of individuals by positioning them to enjoy a wide variety of opportunities to flourish.

3.4. The Violation of Equal Moral Respect Condition

Finally, oppressive social structures violate a basic principle of equal moral respect. The basic belief that all moral agents deserve equal moral respect is a central principle of many political theories. On this principle, each individual has inviolable and equal moral worth, and whatever social structure we create through our actions ought to afford all individuals the equal respect that they deserve. The systematic threat of acute deprivation or social domination suffered by some at the same time that others are given many opportunities to flourish is an affront to intrinsic human dignity; this systematic threat suffered by many "shows inadequate regard for the equal moral importance of [their] interests and [their] capacity for choice" (Miller 2010, 60). The oppressive social relationships that constitute unjust social structures are *wrong* because they violate a principle of equal moral respect.[18]

4. Pervasive Structural Injustice

Social structures are deeply pervasive in two distinct senses. Social structures are personally pervasive insofar as they permeate every aspect of an individual's social life. But social structures are also globally pervasive insofar as they forge moral relationships amongst

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[18] I realize that this principle may be more controversial than I am letting on here. I also realize that there are many ways to explicate and justify a principle of equal moral respect. However, I cannot provide a more complete explication or defense of my understanding of this principle here.

members of local communities, fellow compatriots, and distant strangers. Because social structures are personally and globally pervasive, structural injustices are deeply detrimental to those that suffer them.[19]

Social structures permeate every aspect of one's social life. Specifically, social structures significantly shape the cultural, economic, and political dimensions of individual lives.[20] Cultural structures organize relationships with respect to social systems of meaning and value. They shape an individual's options for formulating a positive social identity, for finding personal recognition and self-worth in their social interactions, and for seeing their beliefs and values represented in their society. Consequently, cultural structures have a deep impact on an individual's self-understanding, on her self-worth and self-respect, and on her view of her contribution to society.

Some systems of social meaning and value are structured to systematically harm members of oppressed groups. Unjust cultural structures harm members of oppressed groups in

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[19] Some of the forms of structural injustice I identify below draw directly from and are articulated by appeal to Young's "Five Faces of Oppression" (1990, 39-65). I, however, provide a much different way of categorizing these types of oppression, articulating them as specifically cultural, economic, or political.

[20] This ordering of the three primary forms of social structure may strike some as odd. My ordering of the three forms in the explanation that follows should not be taken to suggest that I view one of these forms as more basic or foundational in the (partial) social ontology this explanation provides. I view cultural, economic, and political structures all as basic elements of this ontology, with none of these forms socially prior to another.

However, I recognize that this view is controversial. Social and political philosophers often take one or more of these forms of social structure as primary and treat the remaining forms as derivative. Socialist philosophers are likely to prioritize the economic and view the political and cultural as derivative For example, Marx argues that the primary system of economic relationships form the basic structure of society, while political and cultural relationships remain derivative or "superstructural" (2001). It is arguable that much of classical liberalism, exemplified in modern social contract theory, prioritizes the political; for example, John Locke primarily aims, in his *Second Treatise of Civil Government* (2002), to provide a justification for political power. Contemporary liberalism, again arguably, sometimes still prioritizes political structures—as exemplified in the lexical ordering of Rawls's two principles (1999b, 2001, 2005)—while at other times, treating both the political and the economic as foundational and the cultural as derivative (here, Elizabeth Anderson's (2010) is a good example). But from a republican or communitarian perspective, cultural relationships appear to be socially prior to economic and political ones. We might read Michael Walzer (1983), for example, as arguing that cultural structures determine the just ordering of political and economic structures.

Again, my readings of social priority into these traditions, in general, and the referenced texts, in particular, require argumentation; and in greater space, I would hope to offer compelling arguments for my readers. But, for now, I wish merely to note that claims about the foundation of social life or about the priority of some forms of relationships in our social ontology are contested. I view the three forms of social structure as equally basic, and I opt, in my discussion, for a theoretically-neutral alphabetical ordering.

two distinct manners (Anderson 2010, Young 1990): 1) by imposing a dominant group's way of experiencing the world, system of beliefs and values, and social practices on members of subordinate groups; and 2) by creating and promulgating stigmatizing representations of members of subordinate social groups. Young calls the external imposition of a dominant group's social perspective on members of subordinated social groups "cultural imperialism;" she explains,

> [t]o experience cultural imperialism means to experience how the dominant meanings of a society render the particular perspective of one's own group invisible at the same time as they stereotype one's group and mark it out as the Other. Cultural imperialism involves the universalization of a dominant group's experience and culture, and its establishment as the norm. (1990, 58-9).

According to Young, unjust cultural structures organize social relationships around the experience and values of members of dominant groups, culturally marginalizing those of members of subordinate groups, forcing them to search for self-understandings from the external, dominant perspective. Oppressive cultural structures make members of subordinate social groups systematically vulnerable to the specific form of social domination found in cultural imperialism.

But, as Elizabeth Anderson notes, "Young's category of cultural imperialism conflates two distinct phenomena" (2010, 15). Not only do unjust cultural structures normalize dominant experience, they also enable the dominant perspective to entrench "stigmatizing representations about a subordinate group in public discourse" (Anderson 2010, 15). Whereas cultural imperialism causes members of subordinate social groups to search for self-understandings through the external perspective of dominant groups, stigmatization works to legitimate or justify their subordination. Cultural stereotypes attribute clusters of "undesirable" character traits, "misguided" cultural practices, or "distorted" systems of belief to the members of subordinate

social groups to locate the source of their struggles within the group. This type of stigmatization obscures the way that broader social processes severely constrain the options for action of members of subordinate social groups. Further, stigmatization works to legitimate attitudes of disinterest, aversion, or even hatred toward members of subordinate social groups (Anderson 2010). Unjust cultural structures, thus, not only actively subordinate members of oppressed social groups through processes of cultural imperialism but also provide cultural mechanisms to justify their subordination.

Economic structures organize relationships with respect to the social resources necessary to meet the material needs of individuals. They shape an individual's options for exercising their productive capacities to meet her basic needs and to acquire the material resources necessary for realizing her life plans. Much of contemporary political philosophy has focused on the just distribution of material social goods, such as income and wealth. But this focus provides an overly narrow view of economic structures. Economic structures not only distribute the social resources that enable or constrain individual agents in acting to meet their material needs; they also determine who controls the material resources necessary for social production, allocate differential levels of decision-making power with respect to how one exercises their productive capacities, and organize divisions of labor (Young 1990). Consequently, economic structures have a deep impact on how an individual's life goes by both allocating and regulating the control of the social resources necessary for material production as well as positioning her in divisions of labor that afford her more or less power to decide how she exercises her labor.

Unjust economic structures systematically harm members of some social groups by positioning them in a system of oppressive economic relationships. Oppressive economic relationships manifest themselves in four different ways: 1) radical inequality in income and

wealth, 2) exploitation, 3) economic marginalization, and 4) economic powerlessness. First, radical inequality in income and wealth generated by the specific structure of economic relations unjustly harms those on the wrong end of these inequalities. Economic structures that position many to suffer acute material deprivation, while at the same time enabling others to grow more affluent, are oppressive to the former group. Second, exploitative economic structures systematically harm members of oppressed groups. According to Young, exploitation "occurs through a steady process of the transfer of the results of the labor of one social group to benefit another" (1990, 49). Exploitative economic structures oppress members of subordinate groups by organizing their labor toward the social benefit of some other social groups. Third, economic marginalization forces upon the marginalized acute material deprivation; being thrust to the margins of productive processes make it difficult for the individual to secure the material goods she needs. But economic marginalization distinctly harms the oppressed by also forcing social dependency upon them and blocking their opportunity to make socially-recognized contributions to processes of material production (Young 1990, 54). Economic marginalization systematically harms the marginalized by rendering them useless in the social production of material goods. Finally, economic powerlessness denies members of some social groups effective decision-making power in how they exercise their productive capacities. This distinctive form of economic injustice systematically harms the powerless by providing them little to no work autonomy, allowing them to exercise very little creativity or judgment in their work, and undermining their ability to command respect and recognition through their productive contributions (Young 1990, 57).

Political structures organize relationships with respect to the exercise of social power in determining how one's life goes. Primarily, political structures articulate the individual's basic

political rights and liberties, set limits on how individual agent's can exercise their political freedoms, and organize social mechanisms of coercion and force to protect individual rights and enforce limits on personal freedom. But political structures also distribute social power, differentially structuring individual influence and impact in political processes. Consequently, political structures deeply impact an individual's life by significantly shaping her ability to structure her social world in a manner that suits her interests.

Unjust political structures systematically harm members of politically oppressed groups by severely constraining their capacity to secure their interests through the exercise of social power. Political oppression operates in three different forms: 1) political exclusion, 2) political marginalization, and 3) political violence. Political exclusion is manifest in political structures that either do not allow oppressed individuals to voice their interests or ignore their interests in decision-making processes. Political marginalization is manifest in political structures that only marginally include members of oppressed groups in the political process, affording the interests they voice dramatically less impact or influence in political decision-making. Political violence is manifest in the exercise of physical force, by formal or informal political actors, to reinforce the subordination of members of some social groups.[21]

Social structures are pervasive in the sense that they significantly impact every aspect of one's social life. But social structures are also pervasive in a second sense: social structures forge relationships between individual agents and others both close to home and very distant.

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[21] In this sense, political violence is an act of social domination and can be perpetrated by individuals or groups. The distinguishing feature between oppressive political violence and generic violence is that the former systematically targets members of oppressed social groups. Oppressive political structures often enable, encourage, or legitimate the use of physical force to maintain the subordinate status of members of oppressed social groups. Here, I classify this type of violence as political, as I see it primarily as a physical exercise of social power, though I can also imagine both cultural and economic forms of social violence.

Locally, social structures shape relationships between individuals and their family, friends, and neighbors. At the local level, we participate in personal relationships with people that are, largely, unique in character; no other person has the same relationship that I do to my spouse, to my mother or father, or perhaps even to my neighbors. However, even these largely unique personal relationships are structured by social practices and norms that shape how the participants in these relationships act toward one another. For example, gendered roles and behaviors shape how my spouse and I interact with one another, how we divide up the necessary labor to maintain our household, and how we view ourselves in relation to one another. Despite the fact that we are both unique individuals, who often work to undermine the impact of broader social roles and norms in our lives, structural gender practices still influence how we relate to one another. The same can be said of other types of familial relationships; mothers and fathers have specific roles to fill and norms that govern their behavior in their relationships to their children. And sibling relationships have their own structure, comprised of roles, norms, and sanctions that influence how siblings interact. One's social position within a family, a friendship, or a neighborhood will affect her options for action, her share of the resources generated by those relationships, and the schema of incentives and disincentives that influence how she acts. Again, the character of our most personal relationships are largely shaped by the specific, unique characteristics of the individuals who participate in these relationships; still, social structures play some role in shaping how these individuals interact within these relationships.

Regionally, social structures shape relationships between individuals and fellow members of their state or province. Social structures at the regional level perhaps have the greatest impact on how our lives go, significantly shaping the cultural, economic, and political dimensions of our

everyday actions. The cultural groups that have the greatest impact on how we view ourselves, how we structure our aims, and our share of the cultural resources needed to meet our life plans are likely to be regionally focused. Regional relationships are often (partly) defined by a common language and dialect, shared traditions and values, and even a common way of life. Further, our regional relationships have a great influence over our economic opportunities and how we meet our material needs and wants. Regional economies will largely dictate the types and amount of food, water, and medical treatment, available to an individual, her prospects for secure employment, and her ability to meaningfully decide how to exercise her labor. Finally, our regional relationships are likely to have the greatest political impact on our lives. We are members of city, county, state, or provincial governments, which significantly shape our options for securing our basic rights, our fair share of social resources (such as police protection or public education), and the power to impact the way these political forces shape our lives. Regional social structures, such as localized cultural groups or a city government, position individuals in relation to one another in a manner that significantly shapes their social lives.

Nationally, social structures shape relationships between individuals and compatriots. The modern nation-state often has, for better or worse, a dominant national culture that helps to define a system of cultural relationships amongst co-citizens. Though no nation consists of individuals who all wholly identify with a dominant national culture, and though dominant cultures are often imposed upon members of marginalized cultural groups within the nation, we ought to still observe the way that national cultures structure how we relate to one another as co-citizens. For example, the exhibition of "American" patriotism by an individual may earn her the respect of some fellow Americans and the scorn of others. To explain these reactions, we must draw on some notion of an "American culture" and an evaluation of that culture.

Individuals will orient themselves in different ways to dominant national cultures, but, nonetheless, these cultures will shape how their members relate to one another. The nation-state perhaps has an even greater economic influence in the lives of its citizens. National economies dramatically affect opportunities for gainful employment, the distribution of material resources, and the schema of rewards and risks for capital investment and the exercise of labor. A national economy shapes relationships amongst venture capitalists, business executives, professionals, and nonprofessionals by, for example, articulating tax codes, setting the conditions for intranational and international trade, and defining appropriate standards for the treatment of employees. All of these national economic factors position individuals in relation to one another to have different options for meeting their material needs and wants. Moreover, the nation-state will significantly shape how we politically relate to co-citizens. National governments legislate a schema of political rights to be enjoyed by citizens, enact processes for protecting these rights, and coercively enforce those processes. Citizens of a nation relate to one another differently than they do to non-citizens, and the specific character of the political component of the nation-state will define the content of this difference. In other words, the specific political character of a nation state defines a system of social relationships that positions citizens to have different kinds and degrees of social power to enact their life plans.

Globally, social structures shape relationships between individuals and other participants in cultural, economic, and political systems that do not stop at national borders. Social relationships have never been entirely contained within official regional or national boundaries; however, with the increasing interaction and interdependence amongst nation-states brought on by globalization, much more substantive social relationships have been forged amongst individuals separated by great distances. The beliefs, foods, languages, traditions, and values of

regional and national cultures are shared with others through the export of commercial products, international communication (especially on the internet), and more affordable and safe forms of global travel. International trade agreements, global economic institutions (such as the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the World Trade Organization), and the export of capital across national boundaries have helped to grow an increasingly interlinked world economy. And the advent of the United Nations and International Criminal Court, for example, has even created official political entities whose political domain ranges beyond national borders. Now more than ever, we find ourselves more substantively connected—culturally, economically, and politically—to other individuals with which we have no or very little direct contact. Global social structures forge these connections and help to define the content of the relationships they generate.

All individuals are situated in nested networks of social relationships with local, regional, national, and global reach. Social structures can be conceptually sorted according to the scope of the relationships they define—we can distinguish between local, regional, national, and global structures. But social structures of the four different types described above are practically inseparable. Social structures at the local level interact with structures at the regional level, which interact with structures at the national level, all of which are situated within the broader global structural context. Given the interaction between social structures at the various levels, individual options for action are shaped not only by the thick, personalized social relationships that constitute local structures but also the perhaps thinner, de-personalized social relationships that constitute global structures. Social structures situate the individual in complex networks of social relationships with friends and family near to home as well as distant strangers throughout the world.

Structural injustice, then, is globally pervasive because the oppressive character of one's position in unjust systems of social relationships not only infects every aspect of her social life; it also infects the nested networks of social relationships in which she is positioned. In other words, structural injustice pervades both the cultural, economic, and political dimensions of the individual's social life as well as the local, regional, national, and global systems of social relationships that structure her social life. Because structural injustice is personally pervasive, it is incredibly difficult to escape and extremely detrimental to the individuals who suffer it. Because structural injustice is globally pervasive, it is highly resistant to personal remedies and implicates all participants in the wrongs it causes.

5. Extreme Poverty as Structural Injustice

There is an abundance of examples of structural injustice in our world, but perhaps the most striking (and the one that has received the most philosophical attention) is that of extreme poverty.[22] Many situations of extreme poverty, I argue, are structural injustices insofar as the social structures that cause or maintain these situations systematically but avoidably harm the poor by positioning them in oppressive social relationships.

Each day, millions of people worldwide suffer and die from poverty-related causes. The data on the widespread and severe problem of acute material deprivation are astonishing. The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the World Bank (WB) state that about 40% of the world's population, somewhere between 2.5 and 2.6 billion people, live below the poverty line of US$2 a day. Within this group, approximately 1 billion live below the US$1 a day poverty line, a number that amounts to about 15% of the world's population (UNDP 2007, WB 2008).

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[22] Extreme poverty is a concept commonly employed by social and political philosophers, but its meaning is difficult to locate. Here, I speak of poverty in terms of acute material deprivation, exemplified by extremely low income levels and lack of secure access to the resources needed to meet one's basic material needs.

Extreme income poverty causes and/or exacerbates a number of other problems of acute material deprivation, such as lack of access to basic sanitation, clean drinking water, and food. 2.6 billion people lack access to basic sanitation, while 1.1 billion do not have access to clean drinking water (UNDP 2006). Additionally, the number of undernourished people continues to rise as an estimated 923 million were undernourished in 2007 (FAO 2008) and 1,020 million people were undernourished in 2009 (Pogge 2010, 11). Extreme poverty engulfs nearly two-fifths of the world's population, contributing to "roughly one third of all human deaths" (Pogge 2010, 11) and some 50,000 deaths each day (Gosselin 2008, Pogge 2002, 2005).[23]

Extreme poverty persists alongside considerable and growing affluence. Thomas Pogge noted in 2002, "[t]he average income of the citizens of the affluent countries is about 50 times greater in purchasing power and about 200 times greater in terms of market exchange rates than that of the global poor" (2). And in a recent report, the UNDP states, "[t]he 40 percent of the world's population living on less than US$2 a day accounts for 5 percent of global income. The richest 20 percent accounts for three-quarters of world income" (2007, 25). The vast income inequality between the global poor and the global rich is accompanied by growing inequality within nations (UN 2007, UNDP 2008). Along with this vast income inequality, we also find an unequal burden exacted on the poor by a number of worrisome social phenomena, such as climate change, human migration, and the current economic crisis (UNDP 2007, 2009, WB 2009).

Below, I argue that many situations of extreme poverty are structural injustices. This argument proceeds in two parts: first, I claim that many situations of extreme poverty should be understood as instances of radical inequality, and second, I claim that many instances of radical

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[23] Peter Singer (2002) also provides a helpful description of the rampant and extreme poverty that characterizes the present global situation.

inequality are caused by unjust social structures and are oppressive. Thus, many situations of extreme poverty are structural injustices.

However, not *all* situations of extreme poverty are structural injustices. One can find themselves in a situation of extreme poverty as a result of natural disaster, poor luck, regrettable choices, or the wrongful interpersonal conduct of isolated actors. The resulting radical inequality is a morally bad state of affairs or, in the latter case, even a wrongful state of affairs. Some might view the mere existence of radical inequality to be wrongful; as Nagel notes, "[i]t does not take a strong egalitarian principle to indicate that something is wrong in these cases, and that it would be an improvement to raise the bottom even if the resulting distribution were still very unequal" (2008, 51). In other words, our egalitarian sympathies might lead us to the hold the belief that something is morally wrong with radical inequality itself.

But none of these situations of extreme poverty, as described, are unjust. Mere inequality in the distribution of material resources, no matter how radical, is not an injustice. Further, even radical inequalities that result from wrongful interpersonal conduct are not necessarily unjust; injustice is a different type of moral wrong than interpersonal wrongs. Even though interpersonal wrongs may cause radical inequality, and give rise to moral responsibilities to remedy that inequality, the inequality is not necessarily unjust. Rather, radical inequality is unjust only when it is oppressive.

In explaining individual moral responsibility for extreme poverty, it is important to distinguish merely morally bad situations of extreme poverty from unjust situations for two reasons. First, merely morally bad situations of extreme poverty are likely to only generate individual responsibilities to aid or help those that suffer in these situations. In other words, mere radical inequality might give rise to positive duties or duties of beneficence, which the

individual agent can choose to discharge in whatever way she sees fit. These moral demands are likely to be viewed as supererogatory. It is common for affluent individuals to view actual radical inequality as merely morally bad; consequently, they "think of the moral reasons it provides as weak and discretionary and thus do not feel obligated to promote worthy causes, especially costly ones" (Pogge 2002, 198). If our end in theorizing individual moral responsibility for extreme poverty is an account that actually guides individuals toward the remedy of poverty, then we have some reason to ask if there are stronger moral reasons for individual agents to act. If radical inequality is unjust, then we might have an alternative way of explaining remedial responsibility for extreme poverty.

Second, and more importantly, most radical inequality is actually unjust. As I argue below, many situations of extreme poverty are caused or maintained by oppressive and, thus, unjust social structures. That is, present systems of social relationships position some groups of people to suffer acute deprivation of the resources needed to meet their basic material needs, while at the same time affording other groups of people a wide variety of opportunities to flourish. These systems of social relationships fail to afford those they oppress the equal moral respect they deserve. We must distinguish this understanding of much of the radical inequality that exists in the world from the more common view that it is merely a regrettable state of affairs in order to re-examine our views on moral responsibility.

5.1. Extreme Poverty and Radical Inequality

Many existing situations of extreme poverty are instances of radical inequality.[24] According to Thomas Nagel,

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[24] I claim that many but not all situations of extreme poverty are instances of radical inequality to allow for the possibility that some situations of extreme poverty exist in isolation from situations of abundance and luxury. Though Nagel does not make this explicit, radical inequality involves some minimal relationship between the "worse-off" and "better-off." Because these groups are situated relative to one another, there must be some

A radical inequality exists when the bottom level is one of direst need, the top level one of great comfort or even luxury, and the total supply is large enough to raise the bottom above the level of extreme need without bringing significant deprivation to those above (2008, 50).

For Nagel, the global distribution of food is an instance of radical inequality; some individuals struggle in dire need of food while others enjoy abundance and even luxury, and much of the dire need can be alleviated by a shift in the present distribution without thereby "reducing most people to a place somewhat above [a place of dire need], or otherwise radically reducing their standard of living" (Nagel 2008, 50).

Pogge identifies five conditions of radical inequality to expand Nagel's conception:

1 The worse-off are very badly off in absolute terms.
2 They are also very badly off in relative terms—very much worse off than many others.
3 The inequality is impervious: it is difficult or impossible for the worse-off substantially to improve their lot; and most of the better-off never experience life at the bottom for even a few months and have no vivid idea of what it is like to live in that way.
4 The inequality is pervasive: it concerns not merely some aspects of life, such as the climate or access to natural beauty or high culture, but most aspects or all.
5 The inequality is avoidable: the better-off can improve the circumstances of the worse-off without becoming badly off themselves (Pogge 2002, 198).

As Pogge asserts, "[w]orld poverty clearly exemplifies radical inequality as defined" (2002, 198).

I will briefly explain Pogge's claim. First, the poor are very badly off in absolute terms; living on less than US$2 a day, or lacking basic sanitation and clean water, or being extremely undernourished are all very bad states of human existence. Second, the poor are very badly off in relative terms; while many millions of people struggle to meet their basic material needs, many others live with abundance and luxury. Third, the inequality between the poor and the

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connection between them. It is possible—but highly unlikely—that some people who suffer in situations of extreme poverty are completely isolated from any other group of people; we can, for example, imagine a group of people living in dire need on an island with no contact from the outside world. The situation of extreme poverty in which this group lives is not an instance of radical inequality; however, in the actual world, it is highly unlikely that such a group could still exist.

affluent is impervious; the extremely poor lack the options and the resources to improve their lot, while the affluent live insulated from the threat of acute material deprivation. Fourth, the inequality between the poor and the affluent affects every aspect of social life; drastic disparities in cultural, economic, and political opportunities and resources pervade the lives of individual poor people and shape every level of the present global situation. Finally, the inequality is avoidable; as Pogge notes, the "tremendous upsurge in global inequality" (2002, 7) makes it such that "[i]t would not cost [the affluent] much to eradicate the deprivations [of severe poverty]" (2005, 4).

5.2. Structural Causes of Radical Inequality

While it is important to note, the claim that many situations of extreme poverty are instances of radical inequality is relatively uncontroversial. The more controversial and philosophically important claim is that many existing radical inequalities are structural injustices. That is, there is a plausible story to be told about social structures, from the local to the global, causing or maintaining radical inequality. Here, I tell such a story, which identifies global social institutions and practices that contribute to bringing about extreme poverty; that exclude the poor from important cultural, economic, and political resources without compensation; and that are part of a shared history of violent conquest and domination.

As I claimed above, viewing many situations of extreme poverty as structural injustices both provides weightier reasons for agents to work to remedy poverty and more accurately describes the way that many of these situations come into existence. To support the claim that many situations of extreme poverty are structural injustices, I need to tell a "*plausible structural story*" (Young 2001, 16) that demonstrates how social structures partly create or maintain situations of extreme poverty. A plausible structural story, according to Young,

explain[s] how institutional rules and policies, individual actions and interactions, and the cumulative collective and often unintended material effects of [social] relations reinforce one another in ways that restrict the opportunities of some to achieve the well-being in the respects measured, while it does not so restrict that of the others to whom they are compared, or even enlarge their opportunities (2001, 16).

In other words, I need to do more than merely demonstrate that many situations of extreme poverty are radical inequalities; as I have already stated, not all radical inequalities are *unjust*. Rather, I need to tell a plausible story about how social rules and norms, roles and expectations, practices and processes, and systems of collective consciousness position the poor to suffer sever constraints on action while at the same time positioning the affluent to enjoy abundance and luxury. This story needs to plausibly demonstrate that some social structures both severely constrain the poor as well as privilege the affluent in meeting their basic needs and realizing their life plans.

The structural story that I offer explains that social structures, specifically economic structures, at the global level cause or maintain situations of extreme poverty to the benefit of the affluent. While individuals can find themselves living in situations of extreme poverty for a wide variety of reasons, many are structurally positioned to suffer the harms of extreme poverty. Local, regional, and national structures contribute, perhaps the most, to the existence of these situations, and the unjust character of these structures have, rightly, received great attention in the literature and in the popular discourse on extreme poverty. However, there is a growing recognition that processes of globalization have created or expanded social structures with global reach that have a significant impact on the local, regional, and national structures which cause or maintain situations of extreme poverty. The structural story I provide describes the way that structures position the poor to suffer the continual threat of acute deprivation and social domination while allowing affluent individuals to flourish.

For this story to be convincing, I must demonstrate that social structures at the global level cause radical inequalities and are oppressive. In response to the question of what conditions must be met for a radical inequality to "manifest" an injustice, Pogge claims,

> I see three plausible approaches to this question, invoking three different grounds of injustice: the *effects of shared social institutions*, *the uncompensated exclusion from the use of natural resources*, and *the effects of a common and violent history* (2002, 199, emphasis in text).

My structural story claims that there are: (1) shared social institutions, at the global level, which make some groups of people systematically vulnerable to the threat of acute deprivation or social domination; (2) uncompensated cultural, economic, and political exclusion of groups of people; and (3) a common and violent history which has positioned the poor to suffer and the affluent to prosper. This story invokes all three of Pogge's grounds to provide a plausible description of the global structural causes of many situations of extreme poverty.

Given this plausible structural story, I claim (in section 4.3) that we ought to view the global structures that contribute to the existence and maintenance of situations of extreme poverty as oppressive and, thus, unjust.

5.2.1. Shared Social Institutions

As I mentioned before, structural relationships have never been entirely contained within official regional or national boundaries. Travel and trade across official boundaries has always occurred. People from different cultures have always interacted. And transnational conflict and war has been part of the human condition since before the concept of the nation-state was formulated. Human history is characterized by social interaction by groups of people with varied cultural, economic, and political ambitions and practices.

However, processes of globalization have helped to make people throughout the world increasingly culturally, economically, and politically interdependent. There are many uses of the

term, 'globalization,' but what I am referring to in using the term is the set of cultural, economic, and political processes that have forged structural relationships amongst individuals throughout the world. Globalization, though arguably as old as humanity itself, is generally viewed as a development of the second half of the twentieth century, and this development has connected individuals throughout the world by means of increased cultural exchange, interaction amongst distant local economies, and transnational exercises of political power and violence (Jaggar 2002).

The contemporary stage of globalization has made individuals throughout the world increasingly interdependent with not only individuals of the same local community, state, or nation but also with distant strangers. One of the primary mechanisms for creating this growing interdependence has been the emergence of transnational social institutions. For example, the emergence of transnational financial institutions, such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB), as well as the international trade and tariff regulatory body, the World Trade Organization (WTO), has subsumed local and national economies throughout the world into a broader global economy. These global institutions deeply shape the structural relationships in which any individual, throughout the world, is situated by significantly impacting the local, regional, and national structures that condition her options for action.

And these institutions play major roles in causing much extreme poverty. First, IMF and WB Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) have caused nations that were already deep in national debt to become even more in debt. SAPs, also known as structural adjustment policies, are conditions that financial institutions set on rescheduled and new loans taken by developing nations that require the restructuring of local and national economies to be more open to foreign trade. Alison Jaggar describes the emergence of SAPs:

During the 1970s, when interest rates were low, many developing countries engaged in massive borrowing to finance their economic and social development. When interest rates rose sharply at the end of the decade, most debtor countries had difficulty paying the interest on their loans and in the early 1980s a world debt crisis resulted, threatening the failure of major U.S. banks and perhaps a collapse of the world economic system. In order to forestall default by large debtors such as Mexico, international lending institutions such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank rescheduled many debts. At the same time, they imposed new loan conditions that mandated policies of structural adjustment. Structural adjustment policies or SAPs are neoliberal economic policies that "adjust" the "structures" of local economies in order that they may be integrated into the global economic system (2002, 120).

Highly-indebted nations, unable to repay their loans with the drastically-increased interest, were forced to reschedule or take on new loans with institutions like the IMF and WB, and SAPs were the normal conditions on these loans. These conditions included requirements "that they stop sheltering infant industries, eliminate barriers to free trade (including but not restricted to tariffs), privatize publicly owned and run enterprises, end subsidies (including those on food staples), allow their currencies to float to world market levels, and, last but by no means least, balance their budgets" (Okin 2003, 282). SAPs were designed to stimulate local economies by easing barriers to the investment of foreign capital, increasing the export of locally-produced goods, and providing consumers in developing nations access to cheaper foreign-produced goods. SAPs, in theory, would help developing nations pay off their debts and grow into competitors in a globalized economy.

However, SAPs failed in this promise. Many of the nations that fell deeply into debt in the 1980s and 1990s have been unsuccessful in repaying these debts; further, the current structure of these debts make it unlikely that most deeply indebted nations will ever pay off their debt (Sassen 2002, 264). Moreover, SAPs have been largely detrimental to many of the debtor nations. As Jaggar explains,

World Bank theory predicted that imposing these loan conditions would stimulate a virtuous economic circle of growth, rising employment, and rising investment. In fact,

however, the growth rates of most debtor countries have been significantly reduced, living standards in many have declined, and some have become trapped in a vicious cycle of stagnation and decline caused by the interaction of low investment, increased unemployment, reduced social spending, reduced consumption, and low output (2002, 120).

In addition to the strain of servicing crippling debts, debtor nations had the SAPs' additional requirements to "liberalize" markets, privatize national industry, and cut public spending to reckon with, which "frequently meant allowing infrastructure such as roads, bridges, and utilities fall into disrepair, or led to reductions of, or new charges for, services in the realm of health, education, and social services" (Okin 2003, 283). SAPs not only largely failed to stimulate growth in the economies of debtor nations; they also demanded that these already impoverished nations drastically reduce their public infrastructure. Consequently, SAPs have largely failed to decrease the number of people living in poverty within developing nations while, at the same time, reducing the options to escape poverty available to these individuals.

Second, the WTO treaty system has allowed so-called "developed" nations to insulate their markets from foreign competition. While SAPs demanded of developing and impoverished nations greater integration into the global market by requiring these deeply indebted nations to break down barriers to foreign investment and trade, affluent nations were working to protect their local economies from cheap foreign imports. "[T]hrough tariffs, anti-dumping duties, quotas, export credits, and huge subsidies to domestic producers" (Pogge 2010, 20), affluent countries protect their producers and markets from external competition. As Pogge explains,

> Such protectionist measures reduce the export opportunities from poor countries by constraining their exports in the affluent countries and also, in the case of subsidies, by allowing less efficient rich-country producers to undersell more efficient poor-country producers in world markets. In the absence of these constraints, poor countries would realize welfare gains in excess of $100 billion annually […] and reductions of several million in the number of poor people (2010, 20).

Richard Miller further explains the extent of these protectionist measures:

> In 2000, developing countries' exports faced trade barriers in high-income countries that were, on average, three times higher (value-weighted) than the barriers faced by other high income countries. […] If developed countries' tariffs on imports from developed countries were eliminated, benefits to developing countries of this improved access might well exceed $100 billion a year (Miller 2010, 78).

Affluent countries impose steep tariffs on imports from developing countries while paying out heavy subsidies to domestic producers that are less efficient than their foreign counterparts. Consequently, the export opportunities for developing nations are severely constrained. Were the WTO to limit affluent-nation tariffs on imports and subsidies to local producers, it would enable producers in developing nations to more effectively compete in world markets. Thus, the current WTO treaty system plays a significant role in causing and maintaining situations of extreme poverty by legitimating the protectionist policies of affluent nations.

The emergence of global social institutions, such as the IMF, WB, and WTO, have shaped an increasingly interdependent global economy in which poor nations are coerced to reduce barriers to foreign investment and trade while affluent nations are allowed to enact protectionist policies that severely disadvantage poor nations in global market competition. This current structure of the emerging global economy causes and exacerbates radical inequalities between the poor and the rich by further constraining the options of the poor and empowering the rich. Ultimately, the current global economy positions the poor to suffer the continual threat of acute material deprivation and social domination with few options or resources for escape, while enabling the rich to flourish.

5.2.2. Exclusion from Resources

In addition to its causal roles in perpetuating and even growing global poverty, the emerging global order also enables the uncompensated exclusion of the poor from important resources. Specifically, the SAPs of the IMF and WB along with the treaty system of the WTO

have structured relationships amongst the rich and the poor in a manner that excludes the poor from secure access to clean water and sanitation, inexpensive and nutritious food, and cost-effective versions of advanced medicines, while at the same time making these important resources for survival increasingly available to the affluent. Though the policies of these global institutions are justified by appeal to increased economic opportunities for the poor, such as the generation of new employment opportunities or greater access to cheap imported goods, they ultimately work to exclude the poor from the important material resources they have used to sustain life previous to their integration into the global economy.

> To explicate this claim, I first need to provide a bit of history. Vandana Shiva explains, The General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs (GATT) was created along with the World Bank and IMF to manage the global economy in the postwar era. The 1944 Bretton Woods Conference gave shape to these institutions and instruments. GATT was intended to become the International Trade Organization in 1948, but the United States blocked the move since the rules of trade favored the South. GATT therefore continued as an agreement until 1995, when the WTO was established on the basis of the agreements made at the Uruguay Round (2002, 92-3).

She continues,

> The Uruguay Round, negotiated between 1986 and 1993, expanded the scope of trade and the power of GATT by adding rules beyond goods and international trade. New rules were introduced on intellectual property, agriculture, and investment. Services were subjected to trade via the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) (2002, 93).

The 1944 Bretton Woods Conference set the stage for the founding of the IMF and the World Bank and helped shape the GATT. The Uruguay Round helped to renegotiate the structure of the GATT, expanding its power by including new rules about intellectual property, agriculture, and investments. Two new features of the GATT are especially important to note: the "Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights" (Pogge 2010, 20), or TRIPS, and GATS. The WTO was founded in 1995, inheriting the basic structure for international trade set out by IMF and WB policy, GATT, and the modifications negotiated in the Uruguay Round.

Again, the promise of the development of these global institutions and policies was and is that they would build a global economy in which all participants would prosper, especially poor participants, by stimulating local economies through foreign investment and increasing access to cheap foreign goods. Whatever constraints the emerging global economic order imposed upon participants would be more than compensated for by the benefits of inclusion in this order. However, the global order has failed to realize the universal benefits promised by economic globalization. Rather, economic globalization has largely excluded the poor from the benefits it generates, restricting their access to important material resources and passing along the bounty of this exclusion to the already affluent.

For example, the WB often places conditions on loans that require debtor nations to privatize and trade rights to the water within their borders. These conditions pave the way for private corporations, such as Mansanto, to invest heavily in the rights to water in developing nations, granting them control of water delivery and distribution (Shiva 2002, 88-9). Further, these conditions enable foreign companies to compete for contracts that are publically funded under the guise of "public-private partnerships" (Shiva 2002, 89). The public funds given to foreign contractors in public-private partnerships often come from foreign aid, and, thus, that aid functions as a subsidy to the private companies hired out to help build water infrastructure in poor countries. Basically, public-private partnerships shift the building of water infrastructure to private companies, granting those companies control over what would otherwise be publically-owned infrastructure and forcing citizens of the contracting nation into a consumer relationship with the foreign privately-owned company (Shiva 2002, 90-1). In addition to the SAPs of the WB, GATS sets requirements for the development of water infrastructure that works to the disadvantage of poor nations and the advantage of wealthy multinational corporations. GATS

"promotes free-trade in services, including water, food, environment, health, education, research, communication, and transport" (Shiva 2002, 93), requiring nations to decrease barriers to the provision of environmental and water services by foreign companies. Effectively, GATS requires poor nations to open the competition for environmental and water services to extremely-powerful, foreign water corporations, granting these corporations another form of control over the water of poor nations (Shiva 2002, 92-6). And finally, foreign corporations, such as Coca-Cola and Pepsi take advantage of clean water shortages in poor nations—partly created by the so-called "water giants" and enabled by WB and WTO policy that allows these giants to control the water of poor nations—to sell bottled water and reap the rewards of water shortages (Shiva 2002, 99-102). In the end, foreign corporations, working within the rules of international trade set by the WTO, seize control of the water of poor nations, squeeze profit from poor nations by securing infrastructure contracts and overcharging for services, and sell back water to a thirsty public suffering from a structurally-caused water shortage. This system, then, excludes the poor citizens of poor nations from the extremely important resources of clean water with no real compensation for this exclusion.

Another example of the way that global institutions function to exclude the poor from important material resources is found in the way TRIPS allows for the private ownership of food sources. Given its demand for a unified global patent system, TRIPS "globalizes Western-style 'intellectual property rights'" (Shiva 2000, 89) by determining ownership according to existing patents, which are much more commonly held by major Western corporations. Giant agricultural firms, like Mansanto, gain greater and greater economic control over industrial agriculture by purchasing smaller firms that control seeds. To ensure profits from the food sold by the seeds they control, large agricultural businesses (again, Mansanto is a good example) buy

up seed competitors, pirate seed knowledge from local growers, replace biological diversity in seeds with monocultures, genetically engineer monocultures to self-terminate, and patent the seeds that they have "created." These processes, largely enabled by IMF and WB policy and protected by WTO TRIPS, allow major transnational agricultural firms to take over food economies by destroying local competition through consolidation and piracy, creating dependency through seed-terminator genetic modification, and threatening litigation against competitors (Shiva 2000, 79-93). TRIPS allows major agribusinesses to control food sources through the international regulation of seed patents. This control is extremely profitable for the companies that hold it, but it is extremely detrimental to the people of poor nations who have relied on local, sustainable food economies—some of which generated the modifications in seeds that are now patented by large agribusinesses—for hundreds of years. In sum, global institutions help to facilitate, if not encourage, major agricultural firms in the takeover of food sources and the exclusion of the poor from these resources.

And one last example of the way that global institutions work to exclude the poor from important resources for survival is found in the way that the WTO enforces patents on advanced medicine. Pogge explains:

> Under TRIPS, WTO members are required to adjust their domestic laws so as to grant 20-year monopoly patents on a wide range of innovations, which, most importantly, include advanced seeds and medicines. In this way, TRIPS dramatically curtailed the access poor people have to cheap generic versions of advanced medicines. The absence of generic competition multiplies the prices of advanced medicines—often 10- to 15-fold—and thereby effectively excludes the poor (2010, 20-1).

By enforcing a 20-year monopoly on patents for new medicine, TRIPS insulates the producers of those patents from competitors, not only curtailing the production of generic versions of that medicine but also allowing the companies to charge much higher prices than they would be able to in the face of competition. Further, because of the insulation from market pressures that 20-

year monopoly patents provide, great financial incentive encourages medical research and development focused on the medical problems suffered by those that can afford higher-priced medicines. Consequently, TRIPS "discourages pharmaceutical innovators from doing any research and development focused on the diseases concentrated among the global poor" (Pogge 2100, 21). TRIPS not only excludes the poor from advances in medicine and medical treatment; it also discourages the industry from focusing on the medical problems of the poor by providing a strong financial incentive to develop medical products that cater to the affluent. The major pharmaceutical companies, the wealthy nations in which they are housed, and the WTO fail to compensate the poor for this exclusion from important medical resources.

The global economic order, as currently structured, excludes the poor from important material resources, such as sanitation and clean drinking water, food sources, and medicine. Further, this order, though it in theory is supposed to trickle down its benefits to all, does not compensate the poor for their exclusion from these resources. This uncompensated exclusion is not only extremely detrimental to those suffering in situations of extreme poverty; it is also unjust.

5.2.3. Shared Violent History

Finally, we should quickly note that the present global order is the result of a long and bloodied history of conquest and domination. Again, Pogge puts it clearly and succinctly:

> The present circumstances of the global poor are significantly shaped by a dramatic period of conquest and colonization, with severe oppression, enslavement, even genocide, through which the native institutions and cultures of four continents were destroyed or severely traumatized (2002, 203).

This shared and extremely violent history puts the nations of peoples victimized by conquest and colonization at a serious disadvantage in their dealings with nations that inherited the power and plunder of past aggressors. Moreover, this shared and violent history is not one only of the

distant past but is recently re-enacted by contemporary national actors in wars of aggression, re-incarnated in the current international slave trade, and re-created through processes of globalization. In short, all of humanity shares a violent history of conquest and domination, which partly structures the current global situation and significantly disadvantages the victims of that history. We must remember that, even when they have more or less chosen the conditions which continue to imprison many of their citizens in situations of extreme poverty, poor nations began from a position of subordination.

5.3. Radical Inequality as Oppressive

The social structures that cause, exacerbate, or maintain situations of extreme poverty are oppressive insofar as they meet the four conditions outlined above:[25]

1. *The avoidable harm condition*: Many situations of extreme poverty avoidably harm the poor. The harms of extreme poverty are often systematic insofar as the impoverished are positioned in a network of social relationships that extremely limits their options for action, provides few social resources for acting on nominally-open options, or shapes the set of incentives attached to their options for action in a manner that makes acting to escape poverty extremely costly. Further, these harms appear to be avoidable. As Pogge notes, the "tremendous upsurge in global inequality" (2002, 7) makes it such that "[i]t would not cost [the affluent] much to eradicate the deprivations [of severe poverty]" (2005, 4). While I am a bit less optimistic than Pogge about the ease with which extreme poverty can be remedied, I take his point that a shift in the make-up of the social structures that cause and maintain extreme poverty would prevent most of the harms suffered by the impoverished. Moreover, the structural story I provided above demonstrates that affluent nations often work to shape the global economic order

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[25] What follows is an explanation, not a defense, of the assertion that many situations of extreme poverty are structural injustices. A full defense of this claim is beyond the scope of this chapter.

in a manner that provides great social benefits for their citizens while passing on the costs to the impoverished. Shaping the system in such a way avoidably harms the poor by extremely and disproportionately burdening them with the social costs of a system that could be otherwise structured. For these reasons, we should view the types of domination and deprivation characteristic of living in many situations of extreme poverty as avoidable social harms.

2. *The social group condition*: The impoverished constitute a social group picked out by social structures to systematically suffer the harms involved in extreme poverty. When thrust into the position of structural impoverishment, individuals suffer deprivation of the social resources needed to meet their basic needs, become vulnerable to exploitation and violence, and confront significant social barriers to escaping that position. The choices and conduct of the individual may play a role in her occupying and possibly escaping her poverty; however, cultural, economic, and political processes create positions of impoverishment. The extreme and growing inequality characteristic of present social arrangements castigates large groups of people to suffer the severe deprivation and social domination characteristic of extreme poverty. Many of these people share a common set of severe social constraints in acting to escape poverty; consequently, we ought to view them as suffering the harms in 1 as members of a social group.

Of course, the poor are also, at the same time, members of many a number of other cross-cutting social groups; one's social group membership in the impoverished will also interact with and be shaped by her other forms of social group membership. The poor suffer in poverty not just as members of a unified social group but also as members of many other social groups, some of which work to further constrain their options for acting to escape poverty while others work to afford them relative social privilege. I suggest, here, only that there are a common set of severe social constraints suffered by the poor, which make impoverished individuals vulnerable to

similar forms of systematic harm and social domination; these shared systematic social constraints constitute a social group, 'the poor.' The actual experiences, options for action, shares in social resources, and schemas of social incentive of the individual members in this group will vary greatly depending on their other social group memberships, but this fact does not work to undermine the claim that they still have some set of social constraints on their action in common.

3. *The social privileges condition*: The presence of great and growing affluence alongside the existence of debilitating and even deadly poverty suggests that the systematic harms suffered by the impoverished are not inevitable. Moreover, the structural story I have provided details the many ways in which affluent nations tailor the global economic order to disproportionately benefit their own citizens. The affluent enjoy a great many more options for action, a much larger share of social resources to act on those options, and a considerably more favorable schema of incentive and reward, risk and cost, for acting than do their impoverished counterparts. It is not difficult to see that the affluent are greatly benefited, while the impoverished are systematically harmed, by the existing make-up of social relationships. However, the benefits enjoyed by the affluent are the product of systems of social privilege; that is, the affluent are structurally positioned to have wide-ranging options for pursuing their own wellbeing, and these options exist, in part, because of the suffering of the poor. For example, existing social structures make it possible for some multinational corporations in the apparel industry to exploit the labor of desperate, poor individuals. These corporations employ impoverished workers at low wages, in dangerous working conditions, to make their apparel at an extremely low cost. Impoverished, "sweatshop" workers are systematically harmed by these

exploitative social relationships.[26] But the agents that benefit from sweatshop labor are also systematically privileged in these relationships. The upper- and mid-management of those corporations, the share-holders that enjoy their profits, and even the affluent consumers of the products are afforded social privileges through their social relationships with the impoverished worker. These privileges are not just the result of hard work or even dumb luck; rather, they are privileges generated by the system of social relationships that allows for and incentivizes the exploitation of the labor of the poor. We should view the social structures that create and maintain many situations of extreme poverty as not only causing systematic harm to the impoverished but also affording social privileges to those positioned to benefit from their impoverishment. Consequently, we should view the relationships that comprise these structures as oppressive.

4. *Violation of equal respect*: The social structures that cause and maintain many situations of extreme poverty are wrongful insofar as they violate a minimal principle of equal respect. I believe, on any straightforward understanding of the fundamental moral commitment that social structures respect the equal moral worth of all human beings, the existence and persistence of structurally-caused extreme poverty violates this commitment. The preventable deaths of some of the 50,000 who die each day from poverty-related causes, occurring while many throughout the world enjoy luxuries, suggest that these people's lives are not being equally valued. But when we take notice that much extreme poverty is forced on the impoverished by existing social relationships, through the structural processes I discuss above, and that these same relationships afford affluent individuals a wide-range of social privileges, we have an even stronger reason to claim the lives of the impoverished are not being equally valued. Existing

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[26] For a fuller explanation of the structural processes involved in the exploitation of sweatshop workers, see (Young 2004, 2006, 2007, 2010).

social structures that cause and maintain extreme poverty violate the principle of equal respect, are wrongfully oppressive, and, thus are unjust.

Moving forward, I will refer back to the example of structurally-caused extreme poverty and articulate a moral basis of structural responsibility in relation to this particular form of structural injustice. Explanations of specific situations of extreme poverty are unique, and no general understanding of the phenomena of structurally-caused extreme poverty can provide a complete description of the structural processes or individual conduct that created or sustains the specific situation. But this general description of some situations of extreme poverty as structural injustices is adequate for providing a real-world example to illustrate later theoretical claims.

6. Structural Responsibility for Extreme Poverty

In this chapter, I have detailed a minimal account of structural injustice. I have argued that structural injustices occur when social structures systematically harm members of some social groups by positioning them in oppressive social relationships. To further explain this claim, I have outlined a conception of social structures as dynamic, yet enduring systems of social relationships that significantly shape an individual's options for action. Further, I have claimed that these systems of social relationships are oppressive when they avoidably harm members of some social groups, while at the same time privileging members of other social groups, in a manner that violates a basic principle of equal moral respect. Cultural, economic, and political structures permeate every aspect of an individual's social life and establish moral connections between her and distant strangers. Consequently, social structures are personally and globally pervasive, and the injustices they cause should be of extreme moral concern. Understanding the unique type of moral responsibility generated by our complicity in wide-

reaching and extremely detrimental structural injustices is of great moral importance. This chapter, then, has served to both explain what I mean when I refer to structural injustice and to motivate the project of the remainder of my dissertation.

Chapter 3: A Structurally-Situated Account of Social Agency

1. Introduction

Existing structural injustices—such as many situations of extreme poverty—necessarily generate weighty responsibilities for some set of moral agents to work to remedy them. In this chapter, I begin to build my account of this kind of remedial responsibility by providing a conception of the agents who bear structural responsibilities. I answer the first of the three questions of structural responsibility outlined in chapter one: how should we conceptualize the moral agents responsible for structural injustice? In response to this question, I argue that we ought to understand agents responsible for remedying injustice as structurally-situated. Specifically, I argue for a structurally-situated account of social agency that depicts the individuals who have structural responsibilities as situated in a network of social relationships that not only significantly shape how and why they act but also are affirmed or transformed through their actions.

The argument for this account proceeds in five sections. In the next section, I explain what I mean by social agency, drawing a distinction between the kind of moral agency relevant to analyses of moral responsibility more generally and the kind of moral agency more theoretically appropriate to analyses of structural responsibility in particular. I develop this distinction by discussing the way much of the literature on moral responsibility explores the three distinct issues of attibutability, moral assessment, and holding responsible.

After explaining what I mean by social agency and distinguishing this concept from the general notion of moral agency, I then examine two common philosophical models of social agency: abstract individualist and encumbered agency models. In sections three and four, I detail the main features of these two models and argue that they both provide theoretically inadequate

answers to the question of social agency stated above. Specifically, I argue that both models, in their own respects, misrepresent the relationship between individual agency and structural injustice.

To formulate an alternative to these two prominent models, I develop my account of structurally-situated social agency. This account describes the way individual agency is both enabled and constrained by the social structures in which the agent is situated. In the concluding section, I explain that social agency is exercised to both affirm and transform the system of social relationships that constitute structural situations. I also explain how my account of social agency avoids both the problematic voluntarism of abstract individualism and the equally problematic determinism of encumbered individualism.

2. Social Agency and Moral Responsibility

An adequate account of structural responsibility must offer a view of social agency. *Social agency* is just the way that individual agents formulate and act to realize their ends within social contexts. I assume that human agency is, minimally, "the faculty by which the self comes to its ends" (Sandel 1999, 58), chooses (in some sense) which of these ends to pursue, and decides on the means for realizing chosen ends. An account of social agency provides an explanation of how individuals exercise their agency in relation to social structures. And the specific conception of social agency we adopt affects how we understand who is morally responsible for remedying structural injustice. Consequently, my account of structural responsibility relies on a conception of the social agents who are responsible to remedy structural injustice. This chapter explains this conception.

To develop this conception, I begin by looking to the literature on moral responsibility to find how its exploration of the central issues of moral responsibility frames associated

conceptual questions about moral agency. As I explained in the first chapter, the philosophical literature on moral responsibility identifies moral responsibility with the conditions that make appropriate the moral assessment of individual agents. Questions of moral responsibility, on this analysis, are merely questions about whether or not an agent is an appropriate subject of moral assessment for her conduct's role in bringing about some state of affairs.

But this way of framing the questions conflates three distinct philosophical issues, namely that of being responsible, that of warranting moral assessment, and that of holding responsible (Smith 2007). To *be responsible* for a given state of affairs is to be in a relation to that state of affairs that makes it morally attributable to you. Typically, responsible agents have to, first, be moral agents and, second, stand in the right type of relationship to a state of affairs for it to be attributable to them. To warrant *moral assessment* for a particular state of affairs is to have to have done something right or wrong, praiseworthy or blameworthy in causing the state of affairs. And to be *held* responsible for a state of affairs is to be the appropriate target of certain forms of active appraisal.

Given this, and following Smith (2007), I take it that there are three distinct clusters of questions about moral responsibility:

1) Attributability—Is the state of affairs, S, in question attributable to the individual, A? Is A a moral agent? Did A's conduct play a causal role in bringing about S? Did A exercise her capacity for human agency in performing the actions that brought about S?

2) Moral assessment—What is the specific moral assessment of A's role in bringing about S? Did A do something right or wrong in bringing about S? Are A and her conduct praiseworthy or blameworthy? Are there "excusing conditions" (Fischer and Ravizza 1993, 7) for A's action that makes inappropriate the moral assessment of A for S?

3) Holding responsible—What type of moral appraisal should be carried out? Should we actively praise or blame, take up the associated reactive attitudes toward, A for her role in bringing about S? Ought we to *hold* A responsible or to account for S?

Though the three issues picked out by these sets of questions are often conflated, and are indeed intertwined, they ought to remain conceptually distinct—one can *be* responsible without warranting a specific *moral assessment* for a state of affairs or even warrant a specific *moral assessment* of her conduct without it being appropriate to *hold* her responsible by actively taking up reactive attitudes toward her.[27]

The three distinct clusters of questions about moral responsibility not only examine three distinct conceptual issues with respect to moral responsibility; they also point to the deep connection between moral responsibility and moral agency. Below, I articulate the three concerns in order to develop the connection between moral responsibility and moral agency. For each concern, I explain the distinctive aspect of moral responsibility it is meant to pick out and map, at a general level, some of the philosophical positions that one might adopt with respect to that concern's associated bundle of questions. I do not formulate or defend any particular answer to these questions; rather, I utilize this discussion to illustrate how conceptual analysis of the concept of moral responsibility necessarily leads to conceptual questions about moral agency.

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[27] While conceptually distinct, the three concerns may still have some kind of necessary relationship that works in only one direction. That is, while being responsible does not entail warranting a specific moral assessment, and warranting a specific moral assessment does not entail justification for being held responsible, it may still be the case that being responsible is necessary for warranting a moral assessment, and a warranted assessment is necessary for justifiably holding responsible. Smith makes just such a claim: "to judge that a person is morally culpable for an action or attitude is to judge that she is responsible for it and that it is morally wrong or unjustifiable, and to actively blame her is to have and perhaps also to express blaming attitudes toward her on the basis of this judgment" (Smith 2007, 477). For Smith, responsibility is necessary but not sufficient for warranting an assessment, and a warranted assessment is necessary but not sufficient for justifiably holding responsible. However, depending on the particular theory of moral responsibility, the three distinct concerns of moral responsibility may hold no or some other relationship. I remain agnostic, at this point, about the relationship between the three concerns so as to not to beg the question against some theories of moral responsibility in the remainder of my analysis.

And I suggest that there is a similar substantive connection between structural responsibility and social agency.

2.1. Attributability

Attributability is the feature of responsibility that allows a particular state of affairs to be morally attributable to a particular agent. To say a state of affairs is attributable to a moral agent is to say that the agent is, in principle, open to moral assessment for that state. For an individual to be open to moral assessment for a state of affairs, first, the individual has to be an agent and, second, she must have exercised her agency in performing the action that brought about the state of affairs. In other words, attributability depends on: 1) the general conditions of human agency and 2) whether or not the agent's conduct in bringing about the state of affairs exemplifies these conditions.

Theorists of moral responsibility offer differing accounts of what conditions must be met to make someone an agent. Typically, agency is grounded in some notion of freedom or the ability to rationally deliberate amongst options for action. For libertarian theorists of free will, freedom is grounded in the ability to do otherwise. One is a moral agent only if her actions are, in principle, rationally chosen, in the sense that she could have chosen to perform some other action. For compatibilist theorists of free will, moral agency doesn't require the ability to do otherwise. Rather, agency only requires that the actions the agent performs can be tied to some significant feature of who the agent is. On this view, the individual perhaps exercises her agency in performing an action if she is the "source" of her action, even if she could not have done otherwise. Attributability first depends on whether or not the individual to whom we might

attribute a given state of affairs is the kind of thing that can exercise agency, in some meaningful sense, to perform the actions that connect her to that state of affairs.[28]

I do not wish to argue for a particular position in the free will debate. I acknowledge that the position on the question of human freedom one endorses may shape our view of moral responsibility, especially if we endorse a determinist position that denies human freedom. I assume a conditional stance on the existence of human freedom: whether or not human freedom is metaphysically real, we must accept some sense of freedom, whether libertarian or compatibilist, to carry out an analysis of moral responsibility.[29] The conditional stance is just accepting the claim that if moral responsibility exists, then human freedom exists. Given that this is a dissertation on moral responsibility, I must assume at the outset that moral responsibility exists, and, thus, I must also assume that human freedom exists.

But I bring up the issue of human freedom to point out that the universal conditions of human agency are taken to be part of what determines moral attributability. To attribute a given state of affairs to an individual agent, we must first establish that the individual is the right kind of thing to have states of affairs attributed to her, namely an agent. But this means that a theory of moral responsibility must give an account of individual agency. Human freedom (in some sense) is, I assume, a necessary feature of this relation; however, it is not sufficient. We must develop a richer account of her agency to be able to warrant attributability.

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[28] For a helpful discussion of the relation between free will and moral responsibility, see Fischer and Ravizza (1993, 1-41).

[29] Though, controversially, some determinists might claim that there can still be grounds to moral responsibility in the absence of human freedom. Perhaps, practices of attributing moral responsibility play an important role in the causal nexus of human action such that we can justify attributability, even if none of the human actors have any meaningful sense of freedom. I think this view is highly controversial and that its supporters may just be talking about something other than moral responsibility. However, even if this kind of determinist position on moral responsibility were true, we would probably still have to act as though the actions that we performed were, in some sense, free.

Assuming the individual is of the right kind of thing to have states of affairs attributed to her—that is, an agent—the condition of attributability often comes down to whether or not the agent played the right kind of role in bringing about the state of affairs. That is, once agency is established, attributability rests on whether or not the agent's action meets specific conditions to count as the right kind of cause.

There is wide disagreement about which conditions the agent's action must exemplify to justify attributability. Mere causal influence is not enough to ground attributability. The individual's action must not only be a cause; rather, the individual must exercise her agency in the action she performs. Voluntarists about responsibility argue that a state of affairs can be attributed to a moral agent only if her *intentional* action brought about the state of affairs. For voluntarists, the agent is only responsible for her deliberate choices, and, thus, the agent is only responsible for those states of affairs that result from conduct under her voluntary control.[30] Only actions that are issued from a source under the control of an agent, and, consequently, only states of affairs that are caused by these kinds of actions, can be appropriately attributed to her. Non-voluntarists about responsibility, on the other hand, argue that a state of affairs can be attributed to a moral agent even when her action was not within her control. For non-voluntarists, conduct that reflects the internal attitudes, beliefs, dispositions, or judgments of the agent are attributable to her, even if this conduct or any of its possible sources are outside of her control.[31]

One of the central debates around attributability focuses on the question of what kind of, if any, control over her conduct an agent must have to legitimately attribute to her the states of

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[30] To be clear, voluntarists do not claim that the agent has to intend to bring about the resulting state of affairs but, rather, just that the action that the agent intends plays a significant causal role in bringing about the state of affairs, whether this state is intended, foreseen, or altogether unexpected.

[31] For a very interesting discussion of, and defense of a position on, this issue, see Smith (2008).

affairs her conduct causes. Again, I will not stake a position in this debate. Rather, I only wish to point out that many questions about attributability are questions about the conditions that must be met for some of the actions of an individual agent to be the result of the exercise of her agency. Whether or not theorists claim that voluntary control is a necessary condition for some conduct to count as a product of human agency, they all appear to agree that we can only be morally responsible for those actions that are connected in the right kind of way to the exercise of agency.

2.2. Moral Assessment

Demonstrating that a state of affairs is attributable to an agent is only the first issue—though the central issue for many philosophers—in establishing moral responsibility. The second issue revolves around whether or not the agent has actually done something right or wrong in bringing about the state of affairs. Once attributability is established—the agent is, in principle, open to moral appraisal for her role in bringing about the state of affairs—we can ask "whether any particular moral assessment is called for in the context" (Smith 2007, 470). We might also view questions about moral assessment as about whether or not the agent, because of her role in bringing about a particular state of affairs, is praiseworthy or blameworthy.

Questions of moral assessment revolve around which conditions the agent's action must meet to be able to justify some particular moral judgment of her action. Again, there is widespread disagreement about which conditions are the most morally salient. We may base moral assessment in the motive for action, making a moral assessment of the agent warranted by the moral character of the beliefs, desires, or attitudes upon which she acted. Alternatively, we may base assessment merely on the moral value of the resulting states of affairs, leaving the agent praiseworthy for actions that bring about morally good effects and blameworthy for actions

that bring about morally bad effects. Issues of moral assessment ultimately come down to which particular normative theory one endorses. In other words, the specific moral assessment that is warranted is determined by the judgment that the individual has done something right or wrong, and this judgment will vary with the general theory of rightness or wrongness one endorses.

While the conditions that warrant moral assessment will largely rely upon a specific normative theory, there are general conditions that most theorists of moral responsibility accept as making moral assessment inappropriate. Since Aristotle (1999), many theorists have recognized "excusing conditions" for moral assessment, in particular ignorance and force (Fischer and Ravizza 1993). An agent's ignorance of certain salient features of her action may excuse her from or diminish the positive or negative moral assessment of that action. For example, if I open the front door to take my dog for a walk without knowing that my neighbor was standing on the other side about to knock, I am not, or at least am less, culpable[32] for hitting her with the door. My ignorance excuses me from at least part, if not all, moral assessment for hitting my neighbor with the door. To make this point clearer, we can contrast this example with my hitting my neighbor with the door not out of ignorance but rather out of malice; my action is less wrong (if wrong at all) in the former case than in the latter. Consequently, I am less culpable for accidentally (because of ignorance) hitting my neighbor with the door than I would be if I intentionally hit her.

Force works, roughly, in the same manner. When an agent is more or less forced to perform a particular action, we believe that moral assessments of her conduct is at least less

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[32] Here, by culpability, I merely mean the condition take makes it morally appropriate to negatively assess an agent's conduct. Culpability, in this sense, is distinct from attributability, insofar as the conditions that establish the latter only makes an agent, in principle, open to moral assessment, whereas the conditions that establish the former warrants a negative moral judgment of her conduct. The claims made about culpability are generalizable to the overall issue of moral assessment, which means that the excusing conditions that eliminate or ameliorate the warrant for the negative moral assessment involved in culpability also eliminate or ameliorate the warrant for the positive moral assessment of praiseworthy conduct.

morally appropriate, if not altogether inappropriate. This is straightforwardly true of situations where the agent is physically forced to perform some action. If in walking to the door to take my dog for a walk, I trip down the stairs and fall into the door, causing it to fly open and hit my neighbor standing on the other side, I am again less culpable than if I intentionally hit her with the door. The fact that I was forced into the door, in this case by the physical force of gravity, diminishes, if not eliminates, the appropriateness of a moral assessment of my hitting my neighbor with the door. Physical forces are not the only kinds of forces that we typically acknowledge as excusing an individual from moral assessment; we also recognize (extreme) coercion or threat of violence as a force that moves an agent to perform actions for which she is responsible but for which no moral assessment (or at least not a particularly strong one) is warranted. The standard examples of a person holding a gun to the agent's head demonstrate that we will often excuse the agent from moral judgment if she was coerced into acting.

Moral assessment is the normative component of moral responsibility insofar as it establishes that some particular moral judgment of an agent's conduct is warranted. It establishes that an agent has done something right or wrong in, or is praiseworthy or blameworthy for, bringing about a state of affairs that is attributable to her. The discourse around this feature of moral responsibility focuses on the particular conditions that must be met to warrant this assessment. And in much of the literature on moral responsibility, the main questions with regards to moral assessment revolve around what kinds of features of an agent's action might count as an appropriate excusing condition.

Again, I do not wish to take a stand on any of the central issues with regards to moral assessment. Rather, I sketch these issues to highlight another connection between moral responsibility and moral agency. Moral responsibility is not just about establishing that an

individual is an agent and that she exercised her agency in the conduct that brought about a given state of affairs; it is also about making specific normative assessments of the way in which she has exercised her agency. Excusing conditions work to partially undermine, if not make altogether inappropriate, the moral assessments of the conduct of individuals, even if they are still morally responsible in the sense of open to moral assessment for the resulting state of affairs, because the specific exercise of their agency is neither rightful nor wrongful.

2.3. Holding Responsible

Finally, we can ask whether or not it is morally appropriate to *hold* an agent responsible for a state of affairs for which she *is* responsible. Holding responsible is the active component of moral responsibility that focuses on what types of moral reaction are justified by an agent's responsibility for a state of affairs. Even if a specific moral judgment of the agent's role in bringing about a state of affairs is warranted, there remains an open question as to whether or not any particular, active moral reaction is justified by this judgment.

Since Peter Strawson's "Freedom and Resentment" (1993), holding responsible has taken a central role in many conceptual analyses of moral responsibility. These analyses treat the concept of moral responsibility as merely the set of conditions that make appropriate the adoption of particular reactive attitudes. Reactive attitudes are those attitudes that actively express a moral assessment of an agent's actions. The most common of the reactive attitudes are praise and blame, but there are many attitudes a moral judge may adopt in reaction to some agent's actions—for example, the pride a parent feels when her child does something right or the disappointment she feels when that same child does something wrong. Reactive attitudes are our actively expressed moral judgments.

Holding responsible is the condition of moral responsibility that makes it appropriate to hold an individual to account for her conduct. Moreover, if it is appropriate for some person to hold someone else to account, then it is appropriate for that person to adopt certain reactive attitudes in response to the other's conduct. Perhaps, a wronged party is justified in actively blaming the individual who wronged her and in adopting the associated reactive attitudes of active blame, or even anger or resentment. But there are cases in which a holding an agent responsible, despite the fact that the agent *is* morally responsible and a specific moral assessment is warranted, could be inappropriate. Smith provides an example:

> If a good friend of mine is under a lot of stress, […] I may not "hold" her responsible, in the sense of actively blaming her, for some insensitive comments she makes to me. I can judge both that she *is* responsible for her comments, and that she *is* open to legitimate moral criticism for them (because they are hurtful). But given the circumstances, I may decide that it would be uncharitable for me to take up attitudes of anger and resentment, or to explicitly reproach her in any way (2007, 470).

Smith suggests that with respect to holding responsible, "[s]ince [the] question is about how we should respond to *the person as a whole*, […] we may need to take into consideration things other than her responsibility and culpability for her action or attitude in determining the appropriate response" (2007, 471). In Smith's example, it may be inappropriate to actively take up blaming attitudes in response to the stressed friend's comments, even though she is morally responsible for and has done something wrong in making those comments. For these reasons, the moral justification for *holding* responsible is not determined by either *being* responsible or being *praiseworthy or blameworthy*.

The moral appropriateness of holding responsible will partly depend on judgments about the individual both being morally responsible and having done something morally right or wrong; but it will also partly depend on the specific relationship of the agent to the individual who is reacting to her conduct (Smith 2007, 471). Had Smith's stressed friend made the same

comments to a stranger, the stranger may have been justified in taking up reactive attitudes it would have been inappropriate for Smith to adopt.

The exact moral conditions that must be met to justify holding responsible are difficult to identify, and I will not attempt to offer such an account here. Instead, I discuss the issue of holding responsible to highlight one more element of the relationship between moral responsibility and moral agency: moral responsibility involves being actively held accountable by others for the way we exercise our agency. When we are morally responsible for some state of affairs, not only is it the case that the state of affairs is attributable to us or that we have done something praiseworthy or blameworthy, but we also are perhaps justifiably *held* to account by other moral agents for a deliberate conduct.

2.4. Social Agency and Structural Responsibility

My discussion of the three main aspects of moral responsibility—attributability, moral assessment, and holding responsible—demonstrates a substantive connection between one's account of moral responsibility and one's account of moral agency. An account of moral responsibility, I have suggested, relies upon an understanding of what a human agent is, what kinds of acts exhibit human agency, what warrants a specific moral assessment of how one exercises her agency, and the conditions for being held to account for exercising one's agency in praiseworthy or blameworthy ways. A general account of moral responsibility is, thus, deeply intertwined with various aspects of an account of human agency.

But my focus in this dissertation is not on moral responsibility, in general, but, rather, on a structural responsibility, in particular. I have suggested that this account of structural responsibility must give an account of social agency, and we are now at a stage to better understand this claim. In the same way that issues of moral responsibility are deeply intertwined

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with issues of human agency, issues of structural responsibility are deeply intertwined with issues of social agency. In other words, the way we conceptualize the agents who bear structural responsibilities affects how we understand structural responsibility.

Additionally, there is a substantive interaction between one's view of social agency, on one hand, and her view of social justice, on the other. The way that we understand how individual agents formulate the ends that they seek in social interaction, how they choose to act to realize these ends, and what kinds of impact this action has on the prevailing social situation deeply shapes our understanding of what makes systems of social interaction unjust and what we ought to do to remedy these injustices. In his discussion of Rawls's method of reflective equilibrium, Michael Sandel suggests that Rawls's theory of justice is deeply interconnected with his view of the human subject:

> [W]hat issues at one end in a theory of justice must issue at the other in a theory of the person, or more precisely, a theory of the moral subject. Looking from one direction through the lens of the original position we see the two principles of justice; looking from the other direction we see a reflection of ourselves (1998, 48).

Sandel continues, "implicit in Rawls' theory of justice is a conception of the moral subject that both shapes the principles of justice and is shaped in their image through the medium of the original position" (1998, 49). While Sandel's claims specifically address the philosophical method by which Rawls formulates and justifies his theory of justice, the central insight is applicable to all theories of justice: a theory of social justice both relies on and shapes a generalized "conception of human abilities, needs, wants and purposes" (Jaggar 1983, 20). Theories of social justice must utilize a particular conception of the human subject[33] to explain

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[33] As Sandel notes, we may use a variety of names to describe the "constituent features of our self-understanding […]: a theory of the person, a conception of the self, a moral epistemology, a theory of human nature, a theory of the moral subject, a philosophical anthropology" (1999, 50). I do not intend to provide a robust theory of the moral subject or human nature; nor do I formulate a philosophical anthropology. Rather, I examine how agents act in

and evaluate their actions in relation to systems of social interaction, but these conceptions are also necessarily-shaped by the values that are at least partly reflected in one's theory of justice.[34] Conceptions of justice and injustice, of the possibilities for combating injustice, and of the moral requirements for doing so are all heavily informed by and strongly shape our view of social agency; as Sandel aptly notes, from the perspective of one, we see the reflection of the other. Consequently, I explicitly formulate my account of social agency as a necessary first step in discussing responsibility for structural injustice.

But before proceeding, I should make more explicit a point I have already made. I explore different accounts and defend my own account of social agency, while effectively bracketing off metaphysical questions of human agency. That is, the analysis that follows only examines the way that individual agents exercise their agency in relation to social structures, not the broader metaphysical preconditions of human agency. I only aim to locate the most theoretically-robust account of how individual agents exercise whatever deliberative capacities they have to seek their interests within systems of social interaction. The accounts explored here are, in Rawls's terms, "political, not metaphysical" (1985). In *Justice as Fairness: A Restatement*, Rawls succinctly makes the point: "[t]he conception of the person itself is meant as both normative and political, not metaphysical and psychological" (2001, 19). The accounts I explore only describe ways of understanding the relationship between individual action and

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social contexts to provide an account of social agency, or perhaps less precisely, *social subjectivity*. For this reason, I opt for the terminology of 'human subject,' instead of the more-metaphysically-laden alternatives.

[34] Alison Jaggar explains the connection between views of moral value and accounts of the human subject: "the core of any theory of human nature must be a conception of human abilities, needs, wants and purposes; but there is no value-free method for identifying these. Obviously, a theory of human nature requires us to separate out the 'real' or basic or ineliminable needs and wants from among the innumerable things that people in fact say they need and want, and there seems to be a strong conceptual connection between the notion of a basic need or want and the notion of human flourishing and well-being. What constitutes flourishing and well-being, however, is clearly a question of value, both with respect to the individual and with respect to the social group" (1983, 20)

social structure, not the preconditions for free action generally or a comprehensive account of human nature.

With all that said, I will argue that the two prominent philosophical models of social agency are inadequate owing to their problematic descriptions of how the individual agent formulates her ends and acts toward these ends through social interaction. Some of these claims may appear to be metaphysical, and certainly, some theorists who have utilized versions of abstract individualism and encumbered agency viewed their accounts as metaphysical. Still, my focus here is on the depictions of social agency that are assumed in alternative views of social justice and structural responsibility. For this reason, structurally-situated social agency may be an element of a broader social ontology but not metaphysically-robust enough to justify general ontological claims about human nature or agency.

The primary desideratum for assessing different accounts of social agency is how well their view of social agency captures the deeply-interconnected nature of individual action and social structure. I assume that an adequate account will not only explain how social structures condition social agency but also provide theoretical resources for understanding how agents can remedy injustice. The presumption, then, is toward an account that can offer insight into how pervasive structural injustice persists while still offering conceptual resources for understanding the power of individual agency to impact social structures. Accounts of social agency that depict agents as either overly powerful or effectively helpless in social processes are theoretically inadequate.

3. Abstract Individualism

The first account of social agency prominent in the philosophical literature is *abstract individualism*. Abstract individualism is "the assumption that the essential human characteristics

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are properties of individuals and are given independently of any particular social context"
(Jaggar 1983, 42). As Steven Lukes claims,

> [t]he crucial point about [abstract individualism] is that the relevant features of individuals determining the ends which social arrangements are held (actually or ideally) to fulfill, whether these features are called instincts, faculties, needs, desires, rights, etc., are assumed as given, independently of a social context (Lukes 1973, 73).

Abstract individualism views the social world as made up of isolated, individual agents interacting to seek their own personal ends. Further, these ends are formulated, chosen, and acted upon by individuals utilizing features of their ability to act that are given to them completely independent of any social situation. As a idealized model of social agency, abstract individualism depicts individual agents as acting independently to realize ends they choose utilizing faculties and prioritizing interests given to them prior to their interaction in the social context where they aim to realize those ends.

Abstract individualism provides a view of how individual agents: 1) formulate the ends that they pursue in social contexts, 2) the motivational forces that shape which ends they choose to pursue, and 3) the means by which agents realize chosen ends. With respect to 1, abstract individualism depicts agents as rational deliberators, who choose their ends apart from social influence. Sandel explains,

> if I am a being with ends, there are at least two ways I might 'come by' them: one is by choice, the other by discovery, by 'finding them out.' The first sense of 'coming by' we might call the voluntarist dimension of agency, the second sense the cognitive dimension" (1998, 58).

Abstract individualism focuses on the voluntarist dimension of social agency: the agent, abstracted from her social situation, comes by her ends by choosing them through a process of rational deliberation.[35] The faculty that enables rational deliberation is pre-social; this faculty is

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[35] In fact, the abstract individualist view must focus on the voluntarist dimension of agency. The cognitive interpretation of agency claims that the ends that agents pursue in social contexts are already determined and that

pre-social in the sense that it is a natural feature of human existence. Human beings are naturally given the faculty to rationally choose which ends they will pursue in social contexts. The faculty for rational deliberation is not only naturally-given, but it is also the distinctive feature of humanity; our ability to reason is what makes human beings distinctively *human*. Human beings are agents insofar as they are able to exercise this rational capacity towards deliberate ends, and, thus, our social agency is rooted in our ability to deliberate amongst ends outside of social influence.

Moreover, human beings exercise their rational capacities toward ends that meet a common set of personal needs and desires. Abstract individualism depicts human agents as having common pre-social needs, desires, and wants, given to them by their nature as humans. When we bracket off the contingencies of the social situations of actual agents, we locate a common set of needs and interests—such as, the means to meet their material needs, personal protection and security, freedom in action and thought—that guide human beings in exercising their agency. These needs and interests are given to human beings, not by their own particular conception of what constitutes a good life, but rather by the fact of their humanity. With respect to 2, abstract individualism claims that the primary interests upon which human agents act are pre-social. Consequently, the primary motivational forces that guide the agent in choosing which ends to pursue, like the distinctively-human faculty to reason, operate independent of any particular social context and are given prior to the individual agent's specific, socially-influenced

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agents merely discover them. These ends could only be socially or naturally given. But if these ends are socially given, then the individual agent, abstracted from the particular social contexts that have formulated these ends, would have no ends upon which to act. And if these ends are naturally given, then the individual agent's actions would already be determined, and she would not be, in any meaningful sense, an agent. Thus, because abstract individualism has to locate the formulation of ends in a realm outside of the social, it must conceive of agents as choosing their ends rather than merely discovering them.

understanding of what is important and valuable in life. The ends chosen by the rational deliberator are those chosen prior to the undue influence of their social situation.

The view of human agents as rational deliberators, capable of choosing their own ends, not only provides a view of the social agent but also suggests a view of how these agents meet their interests in interactions with one another. With respect to 3, abstract individualism views social interaction as the site where individual agents come together to pursue their own personal, rationally-chosen ends in social cooperation with others. When agents interact, they act to meet their own personal ends, which probably do not coincide with those of the agents with which they interact. Inevitably, conflict arises. However, the natural capacity to rationally deliberate amongst ends allows individual agents to detach from their own partial perspectives to contemplate how interaction can be mutually advantageous. Individual agents can consider impartial reasons for which ends to adopt and seek the adoption of ends that are justified by reasons that could be adopted by all. Abstract individualism, then, depicts social interaction as "a co-operative venture of mutual advantage, marked as it typically is by a conflict as well as an identity of interests" (Sandel 1998, 52). Social agency, on this account, is the way that individual agents act in cooperation and in competition with one another to realize ends that can be rationally justified to all those that participate.

At this point, I should note that abstract individualism does not depict *actual* agents as pre-social, perfectly rational, or always acting on naturally-given needs and desires. Real human agents are psychologically complex, influenced by their social situation, and act on a wide variety of, sometimes conflicting, interests. Proponents of an abstract individualist view of social agency must and can recognize that, in the actual world, human beings exercise their agency in many different ways. Abstract individualism should not be understood as a

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description of the way that actual agents operate; rather, abstract individualism is a normative

idealization of how we should understand those agents to operate when theorizing about justice

and, in this case, responsibility. It provides an idealized model of the human subject, abstracted

away from the social influences that shape the partial perspectives of actual subjects, in order to

locate the morally relevant (with respect to justice) features of human subjectivity. The idealized

human subject of abstract individualism describes how human beings would act if they were not

unduly influenced by their contingent social situation. And this idealized model of social agency

allows us to conceptualize justice and responsibility from an impartial perspective.

Further, abstract individualism's view of social interaction is not meant to be a

description of how actual agents interact with one another. Actual agents may act not only on

their own rational self-interest but also for the benefit of another or from motives not associated

with one's self interest. Proponents of an abstract individualist view of social interaction do not

have to deny that actual agents often act primarily to benefit another, especially in situations

involving strong personal relationships, and sometimes in ways that run counter to their own

personal interests; the reality of altruism and beneficence do not have to be denied by proponents

of abstract individualism. Abstract individualism, however, does imply that processes of social

interaction ought not to be organized around altruistic and beneficent motives. Rather, abstract

individualism implies a normative account of social interaction organized around the pursuit of

one's own rational self-interest. This account of social interaction is normative in that it claims

that an individual agent's pursuit of her own rational self-interest is the *morally-appropriate* aim

of her social activity. When agents interact with one another, according to abstract

individualism, they ought to act primarily to meet their pre-social interests in acquiring necessary

social goods, ensuring their own personal protection and private security, and allowing the

greatest amount of freedom in action and thought. Social interaction both enables new means for meeting these ends and constrains the agent in her meeting these ends; consequently, social interaction generates benefits and burdens, and the rational and, thus, proper aim of the individual agent is to organize interaction to afford her the greatest share of benefits and the smallest share of burdens possible. Interests outside of one's rational self-interest are understood as partial and socially-influenced and, consequently, are morally irrelevant from the perspective of justice.

Abstract individualism is the view of social agency that claims that, when conceptualizing the agents responsible for remedying injustice, we ought to view them as rational deliberators, with naturally given needs and desires, acting in cooperation and competition with one another to realize their chosen ends. However, this view of social agency, implicit in much utilitarian and liberal political theory, provides an inadequate account of the relationship between individual action and social structure. This inadequacy results from the account's problematic commitment to a robust form of voluntarism.

Abstract individualism is overly voluntaristic and, consequently, cannot adequately explain the way that social structures both constrain and enable individuals in choosing their ends, motivating them to act towards some ends over others, or deciding on the means for pursuing chosen ends. According to abstract individualism, social agency begins with the isolated individual's rational deliberation over ends. This rational deliberation is guided by the naturally-given, pre-social needs and desires that can provide an impartial motivation for pursuing certain ends through social interaction. And, through social cooperation and competition, agents work to realize their ends in a social context characterized by the conflicting interests of isolated individuals. The morally relevant features of social agency, then, are the

agents pre-social faculty for rational deliberation, the socially-prior needs and desires that motivate her in choosing her ends, and the social pursuit of her rational self-interest.

This view of social agency ignores the constitutive role one's position in systems of social relationships plays in shaping their ends, their moral motivations, and their social interactions. By isolating the agent's pre-social faculty to rationally deliberate about ends, abstract individualism brackets off other influential features of the deliberative processes of moral agents as morally irrelevant. The individual agent's actual emotional attachments, socially-influenced beliefs about what constitutes a good life, and personal experience are all actual constitutive features of her real-world choices about appropriate ends for action that must be bracketed off as morally irrelevant, from the perspective of justice, on the abstract individualist account. The problem here is that once we bracket off all of these admittedly contingent but constitutive features of actual processes of rational deliberation, it becomes unclear just what guides individuals in choosing their ends. Without a substantive self-understanding that informs our rational deliberations, we have no way for deciding which ends to choose. Abstract individualism must set aside as irrelevant many of the features of deliberation that make substantive choice possible because these features are socially-contingent and, thus, undermine the free and rational choice of ends. The abstract individualist view of social agency is overly voluntaristic in the sense that its strong commitment to voluntarism in the choice of ends forces the account to ignore as irrelevant many of the constitutive features that make such a choice possible. Consequently, the strong commitment to voluntarism in the choice of ends is self-defeating.

At this point, the proponent of abstract individualism might counter by claiming that there are constitutive features of the process of rational deliberation that are not tainted by social

influence and can guide agents in their free and rational choice of ends. These constitutive features are pre-social desires, interests, needs, purposes, or wants. Individual agents are guided in their deliberation over ends by the needs and desires that are given to them by their nature prior to any social influence. But this reply fails to resolve the self-undermining commitment to a strong version of voluntarism in abstract individualism. Whichever schema of pre-social desires, interests, needs, purposes, values, or wants that we adopt as the appropriate account of pre-social motivational forces involves the choice of these features as central to human agency and the rejection of other possible features as irrelevant from the perspective of justice. But to make this kind of choice, we need some sort of way of deciding which features of rational deliberation appropriately guide agents in their formulation and adoption of ends. However we make this decision, it will not be the result of pure rational deliberation. Rather, the choice of which particular schema of supposedly pre-social motivational forces we adopt involves a socially-informed evaluation of the possible options.

This evaluation can only be guided by either: a) pre-social motivational forces that provide the desiderata for valuing some options over others or b) socially-influenced conceptions of value that provide desiderata for determining which options are better suited to our theoretical ends. Option a is circular and, consequently, any justification of the specific schema of pre-social needs and wants that we adopt that relies on it is ultimately empty. Option b, on the other hand, is not a form of evaluation available to the abstract individualist, given the strong commitment to voluntarism adopted by the view. According to abstract individualism, the agent ought to be conceived as choosing her ends apart from any undue social influence, and our conception of her agency must explain this process without any appeal to socially-influenced values. But the only way to justify one's choice in the schema of human needs and desires one

adopts to explain how individual agents are guided in their choice of ends is to utilize some conception of value that is not pre-socially given. Consequently, any description of how individual agents can rationally deliberate to choose their ends for action must draw on some view of social value. Despite the critic's reply, we should still conclude that abstract individualism is overly voluntaristic insofar as, to preserve its robust version of voluntarism, it must offer an ultimately arbitrary explanation of the motivational forces that guide agents in their rational deliberation.

We should conclude that abstract individualism is overly voluntaristic in the sense that its strong commitment to a socially-detached form of voluntarism undermines its ability to explain how agents choose their ends or why they choose the specific ends they choose. When we abstract away social influence in the name of free and rational choice, we also ignore the constitutive social features of rational deliberation that make the evaluation of ends and justification for choosing some ends over others possible. The overly-voluntaristic view of social agency provided by abstract individualism fails to explain the way that social structures shape the way agents choose their ends and how they choose to act on those ends.

4. Encumbered Agency

The second account of social agency prominent in the philosophical literature is *encumbered agency*. Encumbered agency is the view that the individual agent is "thickly-constituted" (Sandel 1998, 178) by the specific sociohistorical communities in which they are embedded. The self is not prior to any interaction with a particular social context; rather, the self is constituted by the overlapping social contexts in which it is situated. Our social context cultivates the important features of our agency, such as our particular moral attachments, the

interests and values that shape our conceptions of a good and meaningful life, and our understandings about how to realize this view of the good life.

Like abstract individualism, encumbered agency provides a view of how individual agents: 1) formulate the ends that they pursue in social contexts, 2) the motivational forces that shape which ends they choose to pursue, and 3) the means by which agents realize chosen ends. With respect to 1, encumbered agency depicts agents as fully-constituted individuals, with "enduring qualities of character" (Sandel 1998, 180), cultivated in them by their particular social context. In contrast to abstract individualism, encumbered agency describes rational deliberation not as a process of impartial reasoning and free choice but rather as a process of self-discovery and self-affirming action. Sandel explains,

> [w]hen I act out of more or less enduring qualities of character, […] my choice of ends is not arbitrary [as in the case of abstract individualism]. In consulting my preferences, I have not only to weigh their intensity but also to assess their suitability to the person I (already) am. I ask, as I deliberate, not only what I really want but who I really am (1998, 180).

Rational deliberation about which ends to pursue in social contexts is a primarily "cognitive" process of "finding out" the "constitutive attachments" that already shape who we are (Sandel 1998). Sandel claims, "[w]here the self is unencumbered […], no person is left for *self-reflection*," and without a constitutive character to enable self-reflection, "deliberation about ends can only be an exercise in arbitrariness" (1998, 179-180). And, "[w]hile the notion of constitutive attachments may at first seem an obstacle to agency—the self, now encumbered, is no longer strictly prior—some relative fixity of character appears essential to prevent th[is] lapse into arbitrariness" (Sandel 1999, 180). In other words, rational deliberation of ends is only made possible by a socially-given, "more or less enduring" constitutive character to guide the agent in discovering the ends that reflect who she really is. According to encumbered agency, individual

agents formulate the ends they pursue in social contexts, not by choosing these ends from a detached and impartial perspective, but rather by discovering the ends given to her by her already-socially-constituted character.

Choosing ends to pursue in social contexts is ultimately an agent's affirmation of her own socially-constituted character. Encumbered agency views the individual agent as necessarily encumbered by the specific shared traditions, meanings, and values of the particular sociohistorical communities in which she is embedded; these features of the community are the motivational forces that constitute her encumbered identity and, concurrently, the conditions of her social agency. With respect to 2, then, encumbered agency claims that the choice to affirm oneself by pursuing the ends that make up an agent's socially-constitutive character is motivated by the desire to realize the formative traditions, meanings, and values inculcated by the sociohistorical communities which constituted her character. In other words, encumbered agents act to affirm the ends instilled in them by their constitutive sociohistorical communities. Again, as Sandel explains,

> to have character is to know that I move in a history which I neither summon nor command, which carries consequences none the less for my choices and conduct. It draws me closer to some and more distant from others; it makes some aims more appropriate, others less so (1998, 179).

To "move in a history" is to be situated in a social context which significantly shape which ends the agent choose to pursue through social interaction.

The constitutive character of this social context is explained, on this account, by the formative aspect of sociohistorical communities. Sociohistorical communities instill in their members a common sense of the appropriate ends of social interaction. Because these ends are the primary means for affirming one's own identity and agency, the process by which they are instilled is formative: social acculturation into a constitutive community is a process that actively

cultivates the moral character needed to affirm the community's traditions, meanings, and values. In these types of community, "[l]anguage, history, and culture come together […] to produce a collective consciousness" (Walzer 1983, 28); further, "the sharing of sensibilities and intuitions among the members of a historical community is a fact of life" (Walzer 1983, 28). This collective consciousness defines the community, dictates how individual members ought to interact with one another, and, ultimately, constitutes the identity of those members (Walzer 1983, 3-30). Not only are the ends to be sought in social interaction given by one's positioning in specific sociohistorical communities, but those communities actively inculcate the agent in a shared system of traditions, meanings, and values to encourage them to act to realize those ends.

According to encumbered agency, the specific sociohistorical communities in which we are situated foster the motivational forces needed to act to realize those communities' ends. With respect to 3, encumbered agency describes social interaction as fundamentally about the pursuit of a common social good. As I have explained, the common good for a community is formulated by the specific sociohistorical processes, which constitute the make-up of the community as well as shape the identity of its members. Social interaction is the process by which individual agents work in collaboration with one another to realize their common view of the good life.

Encumbered agency is the view of social agency that claims that when we conceptualize the agents responsible for structural injustice we ought to view them as socially encumbered. This view is meant to provide an actual description of the way in which individual agents are socially constituted and, concurrently, their social agency encumbered by the moral demands of the common good. Their self-understanding, the ends they pursue in social interaction, and the way that they evaluate these ends are products of their actual memberships in a moral

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community with a shared history. Consequently, the description of social agency offered by an encumbered account is not an idealized model of social agency. Rather, it is a descriptive and normative accounting of how individual social agency is exercised toward the realization of common communal ends that affirm both the structure of the moral community and the identities of its members.

This account of social agency is overly deterministic and, thus, cannot adequately conceptualize agents' abilities to reshape the social structures in which they are situated. According to encumbered agency, social agency begins with the encumbered agent's discovery of and reflection on the socially-inculcated ends for action that constitute her character. The agent utilizes the social traditions, meanings, and values to guide her in choosing which ends to pursue through social interaction. And ultimately, these values guide her towards the realization of the common good that shaped both her self-understanding as well as the motivational forces that guide her in affirming that understanding.

The problem, here, is that the account depicts the agent's ends for action, the reasons she might utilize for deliberating about which ends to pursue, and the process by which she aims to meet her ends all as ultimately determined by the specific make-up of the sociohistorical communities in which she is embedded. The cognitive emphasis on rational deliberation depicts this process as one of discovery, in which the agent comes to discover the socially-constituted features of her own self-understanding. But pure discovery of one's ends for action does not allow for a substantive form of agency in the subject's formulation of her ends. The ends are already given, and she merely works to discover them. Without conceptual space for contestation of socially-given ends, it becomes unclear in what way these ends are those of the individual agent or in what sense she exercises any agency in the rational deliberation over these

ends. We do not need to revert to a view of agency that depicts the self as ontologically prior to its social situation, but we do need to offer conceptual resources for understanding an active role for the agent in deliberating amongst possible ends for action.

Further, the account depicts the agent's decisions for acting to meet their self-identified ends as determined ultimately by socially-inculcated meanings and values. Not only does the account appear to deny the agent any significant role in formulating her ends and her own self identity, it also denies her any significant role in determining which ends she eventually pursues. Especially when we also take into account the view of social interaction as essentially a collaborative venture to realize a common good, the deliberate actions of individual agents disappear from the picture. Rather, individual agents on this account are depicted as passive objects, manipulated by social forces entirely outside their control, and indistinct from other members of their sociohistorical communities.

At this point, a proponent of encumbered agency would probably object to my characterization of their view. She might claim that encumbered agency does not depict agents as just passive objects manipulated by external social forces; nor does it claim that the ends that agents pursue are entirely socially determined. Sandel is careful to note, "[a]s a self-interpreting being, I am able to reflect on my history and in this sense to distance myself from it" (1998, 179). He continues, "the contours of my identity [are] in some ways […] open and subject to revision" (1998, 180). Walzer also claims that social meanings and values can be contested and revised: "[m]eanings change over time as a result of internal tension and external example; hence they are always subject to dispute" (1994, 27). The proponent of encumbered agency might reply to my objections above that I have ignored the conceptual resources for resisting social

determinism explicitly mentioned by theorists in the traditions that adopt this account of social agency.

But this reply does not adequately respond to my charge of social determinism. Specifically, this reply provides an unsatisfactory response because it fails to examine whether the assertions of some of the central theorists that explain encumbered agency are consistent with the view of agency they have provided. While Sandel and Walzer both assert that the individual, encumbered agent is able to distance herself enough from her specific sociohistorical situation in order to critically reflect on the meanings and values inculcated in her by that situation, these assertions appear to contradict some of the fundamental claims of the view of encumbered agency. In other words, it is unclear that encumbered agency has the conceptual resources to explain the agent's ability to distance herself from her own particular social location. Because the agent's self-understanding is an act of discovering the socially-inculcated meanings and values that constitute her character, they is no room for her to choose to distance herself from this self-understanding. According to encumbered agency, she is unable to contest her socially-constituted self-understanding because she plays no active role in shaping that understanding. Further, it is unclear how encumbered agency can explain the source of internal tensions or the reasons for taking seriously external example in a way that will consistently allow for social dispute of shared meanings and values. Encumbered agency claims that sociohistorical communities shape their members' views of the good life by instilling in them a shared set of social traditions, meanings, and values. Further, it claims that individual agents interact with one another to realize a common good. But these claims preclude the possibility of substantive moral disagreement within a community and, thus, the possibility for internal tension. Moreover, they imply that moral differences across communities are intractable, and thus, external example does

not motivate members of a community to change their view of the common good. In the end, encumbered agency is overly deterministic.

5. A Structurally-Situated Account of Social Agency

Rather than viewing social agency in an abstract individualist or encumbered manner, we ought to view social agency as structurally-situated. Here, I offer an account of structurally-situated social agency as an alternative to the two prominent models I have explained and critiqued above. A theoretically adequate understanding of social agency must conceive of agents as situated in systems of social relationships that significantly shape their options for action, distribute the social resources needed to act on these options, and provide social incentives and disincentives for choosing to act on some options over others. An agent's position in social structures, consequently, plays a significant role in formulating the ends of her action, in motivating her to choose some ends to act upon rather than others, and in presenting her with possible means for realizing these ends. However, though her position in social structures deeply conditions the agent's actions, it does not determine them. The agent is able to rationally deliberate, from the standpoint of their particular social location, amongst her options for action and choose to act on some options rather than others. And the deliberate actions of the individual agent impact social structures by either affirming or transforming the opportunity structure already in place.

This account of social agency depicts social agency as dually constituted by the individual and by the structures in which she is situated. This view of agency gives rise to three positive theoretical implications. First, I am able to explain the deep impact of social structure on the conditions of individual social action. Social agency is largely constituted by an individual's specific structural relationships. Insofar as social structures significantly shape an

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agent's options for actions, they also significantly define the conditions of her social agency. Further, an individual agent's position in overlapping social structures significantly impacts the way that she reasons about which ends to adopt, the motivational forces that move her to act toward those ends, and the social means she deems appropriate for realizing her chosen ends. Structurally-situated social agency is embedded—not abstracted from or determined by— systems of social relationships that significantly shape the agent's options for action. Consequently, social agency is always exercised from a specific structural location, which both enables and constrains the agent in this exercise.

Second, I am able to explain how individual agents can exercise their social agency to reconstitute social structures. Deliberate action can work to either affirm or transform the make-up of the social structures, which shape the conditions of that deliberate action. Even though an agent's ends are largely shaped by her social situation, and though her motives for action are significantly impacted by her structural position, she is still able to deliberate amongst possible ends for action and choose actions that have an affirmative or transformative impact on the social structures in which she is embedded.

It is important to note that this ability to deliberate does not stem from the agent's ability to bracket off the contingent features of her social existence. However, it is also important to note that her deliberative processes are not entirely determined by her specific social location. Rather, the view of deliberative action I offer here locates conceptual resources for understanding how individual agents choose to act in ways that affirm or transform social structures in the inherent complexity of the individual subject and structural positions. Individual subjects are not unified, internally-consistent deliberators. They have diverse and often conflicting desires, interests, needs, and wants, which are largely shaped by their specific

social position. Conflict within the subject largely results from her conflicted position in a number of complex and overlapping networks of social relationships, each with their distinct sets of social expectations, norms, and roles. Thus, we do not need to posit an abstract agent, deliberating apart from the influence of social context, to preserve a robust notion of deliberative agency; rather, deliberative agency is found in the individual's critical reflection over the conflicting forces of her specific social location and her active choice, from this site of conflict, to pursue some ends over others. And this deliberative agency can be exercised to affirm or transform the present structure of the social relationships in which the agent is embedded.

Finally, I leave open the possibility for other features of our moral life to guide our exercise of social agency in transforming unjust social structures. Structurally-situated moral agents are afforded transformative resources, through their natural capacities and the social development of these capacities, to resist the tendency of social structures to encourage action that maintain the structural status quo. The capacity to rationally deliberate is typically taken to be the capacity that makes us characteristically-human. Consequently, agency, in general, and social agency, in particular, are often automatically tied to this uniquely-human capacity. However, human beings have other distinctively-human capacities that shape the way that we deliberate about ends. I have already mentioned the capacity for complex emotion; I suggest that we view this faculty as a resource available to the human agent in her deliberation over just ends. Further, human beings have unique capacities of imagination and inspiration. I, in contrast to the overly rationalistic view of abstract individualism, recognize the important role that an agent's capacity for social imagination and inspirational leadership play in working to remedy the injustices of current social structures.

My account avoids the overly voluntaristic view provided by abstract individualism by refusing to bracket as irrelevant the actual social conditions of an individual's social agency. Also, it avoids the determinism of encumbered agency by both challenging the unified picture of identity and community offered by that account, as well as articulating new resources for acting against the prevailing social influences and transforming the present make-up of social structures. In the remainder of this dissertation, I utilize this account to explain how we ought to conceive of the agency of those who are structurally responsible.

Chapter 4: The Moral Basis of Structural Responsibility

1. Introduction

With my conception of social agency in place, I can now turn to the question of how to identify which of these structurally-situated agents are morally responsible for specific injustices. I answer this question by locating the moral basis of structural responsibility. To locate the moral basis, or *moral ground*, of structural responsibility, I critically assess the adequacy of four grounds of responsibility for injustice commonly offered in the philosophical literature on the subject. Ultimately, I argue that an agent's structurally-mediated social connection to specific injustices make her complicit in those injustices and her complicity is the only adequate ground of her structural responsibility.

This argument proceeds in three parts. First, I revisit the four criteria of theoretical adequacy that I outlined in the first chapter, and I explain the primary methodological commitment of my analysis in this chapter.

Second, I critically assess how well four kinds of principles of structural responsibility— culpability, capacity, communitarian, and social role principles—answer this question. I explain each of the four principles and demonstrate their inadequacy as the sole ground of structural responsibility. I claim that each principle, as it is commonly formulated in the literature, fails to provide an adequate ground of structural responsibility, but I also claim that each principle can be modified to meet these principle-specific critiques. However, I also argue that each principle, even in its modified form, suffers from the same theoretical flaw: they privilege one feature of the relationship between individual agents and unjust social structures while ignoring other morally-salient features of those relationships.   Despite this theoretical flaw, I argue that each

ground highlights a different form of a common, underlying moral basis of responsibility, namely moral complicity.

Finally, I provide an account of moral complicity, established by an agent's structurally-mediated social connection to specific injustices, as the only adequate moral basis of structural responsibility. I argue that our complicity in specific injustices morally implicates us in their wrongness, and this generates our obligations to work to remedy their harms. I claim that an agent is morally complicit for specific injustices when she is socially connected to them in some of the following ways: a) causally contributing to specific unjust social structures, b) possessing structurally-enabled capacities to remedy injustice, c) being a member of structurally-significant moral community, or d) occupying a social role that involves reasonable expectations to work to remedy injustice. Any one of these forms of structurally-mediated social connection makes the agent *complicit* in specific structural injustices and, consequently, generates weighty moral responsibilities to remedy that injustice.

2. Criteria of Theoretical Adequacy

The growing literature on responsibility for injustice has attempted to locate the moral basis of wide-reaching responsibilities to remedy existing injustice. I call this basis a *moral ground*. A moral ground of structural responsibility is a moral reason for an agent to work to remedy structural injustice. In the next four sections of this chapter, I formulate four possible types of grounds as moral principles[36] of structural responsibility. I argue that each of these kinds of principles (when modified) provide strong reasons for individual agents to work to

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[36] My framing of the grounds as principles draws on David Miller's discussion of principles of remedial responsibility (2005, 2007), especially on the way that he that distinguishes and names two of the principles (capacity and communitarian). However, my analysis focuses on how well each principle explains one's responsibility to remedy structural injustice in particular and not how well each principle explains one's responsibility to remedy acute suffering more generally. My explanation and critique of each principle is uniquely formulated as a principle of structural responsibility. But, though the explanations and critiques offered are my own, I find Miller's work to be an extremely helpful guide.

remedy structural injustice; however, each of these principles, on their own, is a theoretically inadequate ground of structural responsibility. Specifically, I argue that each of the four types of principles is an inadequate ground because each only highlights one morally-salient feature of an agent's relatedness to existing injustices.

Before proceeding with my analysis, I should say a bit more about what I mean by a theoretically-adequate ground of structural responsibility. The reason for identifying the moral basis of structural responsibility goes beyond mere philosophical inquisitiveness; identifying the moral basis of structural responsibility provides us with principled reasons for attributing structural responsibility to other agents and for recognizing our own remedial responsibilities for structural injustice. Given the extremely detrimental and pervasive nature of structural injustice, understanding why individual agents ought to act to remedy injustice is of extreme moral importance. An adequate explanation of the moral basis of structural responsibility will be consistent with widely-shared moral intuitions about how agents ought to act to remedy injustice. In this sense, the principle that we identify as providing a theoretically adequate account of the moral basis of structural responsibility will be conservative. Further, this principle will be comprehensive, as it will explain the basis of a wide variety of our intuitions. A theoretically adequate account will also cohere well with our understandings of structural injustice and structurally-situated social agency. As an element in a systematic theory of structural responsibility, the moral ground must reflect while also clarify other parts of that theory. Moreover, it will offer a precise description of why an individual agent ought to act to remedy specific injustices. A precise explanation of the ground of structural responsibility will help us to make nuanced distinctions amongst possible reasons for acting to remedy injustice, taking into account the specific character of the social locations of differently-situated agents.

A theoretically adequate principle of structural responsibility, then, is conservative, comprehensive, coherent and cohesive, and precise. As you will see, the general tendency of my analysis is toward establishing a moral ground that assigns many more responsibilities than some alternative accounts of structural responsibility. This is partly due to the remedial nature of structural responsibility and partly due to the demand for comprehensiveness. But the account offered here is also narrower and more precise than some alternative accounts. As I demonstrate, my account provides a more detailed accounting of what makes an individual agent responsible for injustice, allowing for distinctions in kind and degree of structural responsibilities. Still, in the end, the theoretically adequate account of the moral basis of structural responsibility is one that captures as many of the reasons typically offered for attributing structural responsibility, while not sacrificing the kind of precision and nuance that makes the account both more reflective of actual social processes as well as more persuasive to actual agents.

Below, I argue that each of four principles of structural responsibility—culpability, capacity, communitarian, and social role principles—provide an inadequate account of the moral basis of structural responsibility. My argument is that, while the four types of moral reasons for remedying injustice are sufficient to explain why agents have some structural responsibilities, they fail to provide a comprehensive explanation of all the reasons that agents have to work to remedy structural injustice. In other words, the incomplete account of the moral basis of structural responsibility offered by each of the principles gives us reason to view it as theoretically inadequate: each principle, on its own, fails to adequately articulate a comprehensive, umbrella account of the moral basis of structural responsibility.

3. Culpability Principles

Perhaps the best place to start when assigning moral responsibility for a wrong is with those that have caused it. Culpability principles ground moral responsibility for a structural injustice in an agent's causal role (of a certain form) in bringing about that wrong. An agent is culpable for bringing about a wrong if her action significantly contributes to the causal chain that results in that wrong and if the resulting state of affairs was avoidable and foreseeable.[37] Culpability principles, then, are generally of the form: A is morally responsible for S if A's action has significantly contributed to the causal chain that results in S and if S was avoidable and foreseeable.

Different culpability principles can identify different levels of contribution as appropriately significant. Strong culpability principles claim that an agent is only morally responsible for those wrongs in which her actions played a fairly direct causal role. I call this kind of culpability principle "strong" because they set high, stringent standards on the causal role an agent's conduct must play in bringing about the wrong. Strong, as opposed to weak, culpability principles attribute structural responsibilities only in cases where the individual agent has clearly played a direct and significant causal role.

Christian Barry provides a succinct formulation of such a principle: "agents are responsible for addressing acute deprivations when they have contributed, or are contributing, to bringing them about" (2005, 135). Barry continues:

> Agent A contributes to Agent B's deprivation *if and only if*:
>   A's conduct was *causally relevant* to it;
>   A's conduct did not merely allow a causal sequence that had antecedently put B under threat of acute deprivation to play out, but rather *initiated, facilitated, or sustained* it (2005, 138).

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[37] I leave unanswered the question of how an agent's action can, if at all, *cause* a state of affairs to come into existence. I will not survey alternative theories of causation, as I view my claims here as compatible with most standard views on causality.

And,

> A's causally relevant conduct merely allows a sequence to continue rather than initiating, facilitating, or sustaining it *if and only if*:
>   1. There is a high antecedent probability, independent what A might do, that B will suffer acute deprivation.
>   2. B suffers acute deprivation.
>   3. Had B avoided suffering the acute deprivation, it would have been through A's assistance (2005, 138).

Barry's "contribution principle" (2005, 138) is a strong culpability principle: A's conduct has to play a fairly direct role in the causal chain that avoidably and foreseeably results in B's deprivation.[38]

Strong culpability principles provide an inadequate basis of structural responsibility. First, structural injustices are not caused by the isolated actions of specific individual agents. Even where some agent greatly contributes causally to some resulting injustice, her actions would not result in the injustice without the (sometimes unintended or coerced) collaboration of many other actors. Strong culpability principles only pick out the direct perpertrator(s) of injustice as morally responsible, failing to acknowledge the causal role of many other lesser contributing actors.

Second, the background social conditions for acting to bring about injustice have to be arranged in the correct manner to even allow the primary perpetrator(s) of injustice to be effective. That is, an individual agent can only act in a manner that "*initiate[s], facilitate[s], or sustain[s]*" (Barry 2005, 138) injustice if she has been structurally positioned to a) have certain options for action open to her, b) provided the social resources to effectively act on those

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[38] Barry argues, in the remainder of his chapter, that the burden of proof in determining responsibility lies with those trying to avoid responsibility and not with those suffering from acute deprivation. Barry claims, "there is a strong prima facie case for specifying standards of application for applying the principle of contribution *that expresses a willingness to err in favor of the acutely deprived subjects*" (2005, 146). Barry's "vulnerability presumption principle" (2005, 146) perhaps weakens the contribution principle's high standard for attributing responsibility, but only for cases where an agent's action could plausibly have initiated, facilitated, or sustained the causal chain that results in acute deprivation. Consequently, it is classified as a strong causal principle because it rules out mere causal contribution as a sufficient basis for responsibility.

options, and c) given a system of social incentives and disincentives that (minimally) encourage her to act. An agent can only act to bring about injustice if she is *structurally enabled* to do so. Strong culpability principles fail to adequately explain responsibility for the background social conditions that shape the options for action afforded to the perpetrator(s) of injustice.

Finally, strong culpability principles assume that moral responsibility is just about liability for a particular outcome. If, in determining moral responsibility, we are concerned with deeming an agent liable and therefore blameworthy and punishable for a given injustice, then a strong culpability principle is probably an appropriate moral basis of responsibility. But if we are less concerned with the attribution of liability, guilt, or blame and more concerned with remedying the injustice, then we ought to pay attention to a wider scope of causal factors of injustice.

A second type of culpability principle attempts to base moral responsibility in a weaker form of causal contribution to avoidable and foreseeable social harms. Weak culpability principles claim that an agent is morally responsible for those foreseeable and avoidable wrongs to which her actions causally contributed. As a ground of structural responsibility, a weak culpability principle establishes that any individual agent that causally contributes to structural injustice has a responsibility to transform the unjust structures. In this way, "weak" culpability principles base structural responsibility in a comparably different kind of causal contribution than their "strong" counterparts: an agent's conduct generates culpability-based structural responsibilities if it causally contributes in any manner to the foreseeable and avoidable harms of structural injustices, even if this conduct cannot be said to initiate, facilitate, or sustain the injustice. Weak culpability principles set a lower, more flexible standard—mere causal

contribution to an avoidable and foreseeable harm is enough—for justifying culpability-based structural responsibilities.

Thomas Pogge is perhaps the strongest proponent of this type of weak culpability principle.[39] He claims, "[h]uman rights-based responsibilities arise from collaboration in the coercive imposition of any institutional order in which some persons avoidably lack secure access to the objects of their human rights" (2005, 18), and continues, "the sorry state of human rights in many of the so-called less developed countries […] is the responsibility not only of their governments and populations, but also ours, in that we continuously impose upon them an unjust global order (2005, 23). We, citizens of affluent nations, become responsible "[b]y continuing to support the current global order and the national policies that shape and sustain it" (Pogge 2002, 144). Mere causal contribution, in the form of collaboration and support, to an avoidably and foreseeably unjust social order is enough to make us culpable for its injustice.

Weak culpability principles provide for a more complete account of structural responsibility than do their more stringent counterparts. First, weak, as opposed to strong, culpability principles acknowledge the significant role indirect causal factors play in creating and sustaining injustice. Second, weak culpability principles are able to identify structural responsibility generated by an agent's role in shaping the background social conditions in which the primary perpetrator(s) of injustice acts. Finally, weak culpability principles do not assume the same high level of burden of proof for structural responsibility that strong culpability principles do.

However, weak culpability principles are ultimately inadequate moral bases for structural responsibility. Weak culpability principles, like the one outlined above, push the limits on our

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[39] Pogge, at times, identifies additional grounds of responsibility to remedy injustice, such as unjust benefit or occupying a particular political office (Pogge 2002, 2005, 2010), and his account of responsibility should not be understood as limited to the type of weak causal principle I attribute to him.

understanding of culpability as a ground of moral responsibility. Our mere participation in a social order that avoidably and foreseeably creates and sustains injustice is not enough to make us culpable for those injustices. While our conduct may causally contribute to the continued existence of an unjust social order, our conduct cannot be said to be culpably responsible, even in a weak sense, for most of the injustices imposed by that order. Weak culpability principles causally connect our conduct to situations of injustice in which our actual conduct has very little impact. Because of this, weak culpability principles provide for a ground of structural responsibility that is unable to differentiate between those avoidable and foreseeable social harms we play an indirect but significant causal role in bringing about and those injustices perpetrated by an institutional order in which we merely participate. This failure distorts the concept of culpability.

A defender of weak culpability principles may respond with a more nuanced claim. Responding to the above challenge, she might argue that we should understand weak culpability principles as only a ground of structural responsibility in those situations where our conduct can be clearly causally connected to specific structural injustices. Even if we do not initiate, facilitate, or sustain a specific injustice, we might still causally contribute to the specific social processes that systematically harm those that suffer the injustice. On this reformulation, a weak culpability principle only establishes responsibility to remedy injustice if a clear causal link can be demonstrated between an agent's conduct and *the specific injustice* being addressed.

This provides us with a modified culpability principle capable of addressing the worry outlined above: agent A is structurally responsible for some specific structural injustice, S, if her conduct has played a significant causal role in bringing about or sustaining S. This modified

principle, I presume, adequately describes some of the moral reasons that individual agents have to work to remedy structural injustice.

However, it does not provide a comprehensive account of all the reasons an agent ought to work to remedy injustice. Even in this more nuanced form, the weak culpability principle is an inadequate ground of structural responsibility for three reasons. First, weak culpability principles cannot establish a non-culpable agent's remedial responsibility for injustices she can capably contribute to remedying. If an agent has the structural capacity to make a significant impact in remedying a specific injustice, she ate least plausibly has a responsibility to do so. Her mere capacity to do so may be enough to provide a reason, perhaps only a weak reason, to remedy the injustice. Weak culpability principles cannot account for this capacity-based form of structural responsibility.

Second, weak culpability principles treat agents as interchangeable causal factors, ignoring responsibilities generated by the specific relationship the agent has to those suffering the injustice. Moral agents are not mere causal factors in abstract social processes that result in suffering and death; they are also mothers and fathers, daughters and sons, friends and family to those that suffer injustice. Our participation in formative social relationships not only give meaning and value to our lives, they also (again, plausibly) shape our moral responsibilities. If the victims of injustice are people with whom we participate in these kinds of formative relationships, we (arguably) have structural responsibilities to help remedy their situation, not because we have causally contributed to bringing about this situation but because of the special relationship we have to the victims. Weak culpability principles cannot account for this communitarian-based form of structural responsibility.

Finally, weak culpability principles ignore the responsibilities inherited by occupying a particular social role. Elected officials, for example, occupy a social role that generates structural responsibilities unique to that role. Barack Obama has unique responsibilities with regards to working to remedy the extreme poverty suffered by millions of Americans in virtue of his occupying the office of the President of the United States of America, apart from whatever role his conduct played in causing the poverty. These responsibilities are the reasonable expectations placed on the individual who occupies this position. Weak culpability principles cannot account for this social-role-base form of structural responsibility.

For these reasons, culpability principles, even in the modified form, only provide sufficient explanation of one kind of reason individuals ought to act to remedy injustice, effectively failing to account for other (at least plausible) reasons they ought to do so. Consequently, culpability principles fail to provide a comprehensive and, thus, theoretically-adequate account of the moral basis of structural responsibility.

4. Capacity Principles

Culpability principles provide for an overly narrow basis of structural responsibility. Capacity principles, on the other hand, provide a much more expansive basis for structural responsibility. Capacity principles, unsurprisingly, base an individual's responsibilities to work to remedy structural injustice merely in her capacity to do so. Peter Singer provides the most persuasive argument for a capacity principle. In his "Famine, Affluence, and Morality," Peter Singer argues that individuals in affluent nations have moral responsibilities to work to remedy situations of preventable suffering and death. Two main assumptions justify this claim: 1) preventable suffering and death are bad; and 2) "if it is in our power to prevent something bad from happening, without thereby sacrificing something of comparable moral worth, we ought,

morally, to do it" (Singer 1972, 231). When taken together, these two assumptions entail that individuals of affluent nations, who presumably have the capacity to prevent some suffering and death from happening without sacrificing something of comparable moral worth, ought to do so. With respect to structural injustice, Singer's principle—and other capacity principles—bases individual responsibility to work to remedy injustice in the agent's capacity to prevent some of the suffering caused by injustice.

But capacity principles fail to provide a compelling reason to view one's mere capacity to aid in remedying injustice as a sufficient ground of responsibility to work to remedy specific injustices. A now popular objection to Singer's moral principle is the claim that it is too demanding of individual agents. Even if Singer's principle accurately captures the main moral intuition behind our belief that we ought to save the child in the shallow pond, it may not be a generalizable moral principle because it asks too much of individuals. This objection is not particularly convincing, and Singer does a good job of responding to it (Singer 1972, 238); but the demandingness objection points to a further problem with capacity principles. Insofar as they base moral responsibility in mere capacity, capacity principles have to claim that any agent that has the capacity to remedy *some* suffering has a moral responsibility to remedy *any* suffering. Capacity principles inadequately explain why any particular agent's capacity should make her responsible for a *specific* structural injustice. Another way to view the demandingness objection is to see it as the claim that Singer's principle demands way too much of the individual agent *for the reason provided*. Without an additional moral link between an agent's capacity to remedy injustice and the specific injustices she has a responsibility to work to remedy, capacity principles can only arbitrarily ground that agent's responsibility to work to remedy those injustices.

However, this problem is easily fixed. An agent's capacities to remedy injustice are often deeply connected to specific structural injustices. Those who can effectively work to remedy injustice, "without sacrificing something of comparable moral worth," are often situated by unjust social structures to be able to do so. Unjust social structures not only systematically harm some groups of people but also enable other groups to be able to act on a wide variety of options, and it is this system of options for action that makes the agent capable of successfully working to remedy structural injustice. In other words, an agent's capacity to prevent suffering and death is often made possible by the very same social structures that cause unjust suffering and death.

A structurally-situated view of an agent's capacities helps us to formulate a more adequate capacity principle: an agent, A, is structurally responsible for a specific structural injustice, S, when the unjust social structures that cause S enable A to successfully work to remedy that injustice. On this modified capacity principle, an individual's structurally-enabled capacities—or the specific structural privileges afforded her by unjust social structures—provides her with moral reasons to work to remedy specific structural injustices. This modified capacity principle is sufficient for explaining the privilege-based reasons an agent ought to work to transform the specific structures that grant her these privileges.

But even this more nuanced capacity principle is an inadequate ground of structural responsibility for three reasons. First, capacity principles do not recognize the causal history of structural injustices as a moral basis for determining responsibility. When we take capacity as the sole ground of structural responsibility, we fail to account for the most straightforward reason that an agent ought to work to remedy injustice, namely that she helped to cause the injustice. While the modified culpability principle is theoretically inadequate in its explanation of the reasons we ought to act to remedy injustice, it still provides a sufficient explanation of one kind

of structural responsibility, and capacity principles cannot adequately explain the reasons to remedy injustice captured by the culpability principle.

Second, capacity principles write off the specific relationship an agent has to those suffering from structural injustice as morally irrelevant. They are unable to explain the strong intuition that our specific personal relationships to victims of injustice generate responsibilities to remedy their suffering apart from whatever capacities we might have to do so. The specific formative relationships in which we participate provide us with reasons to remedy the unjust suffering of the people with whom we share these relationships, and these reasons are not accounted for by appeal to our structurally-enabled capacity to prevent this suffering.

And finally, capacity principles fail to ground the distinctive responsibilities generated by occupying particular social roles. To reiterate an earlier example, the President of the United States of America is reasonably expected to work toward ameliorating the unjust suffering of (at least) American citizens. These reasonable expectations are the moral bases of some of the President's structural responsibilities, and capacity principles, on their own, are unable to account for this fact.

A defender of capacity principles, at this point, might respond by claiming that capacity principles can actually account for an individual's causal role in bringing about injustice, her formative relationships with the victims of injustice, and the reasonable expectations of her social roles when attributing responsibility. Capacity principles can, for example, recognize the fact that, in many situations, the primary perpetrators of injustice are likely to have a much greater structurally-enabled capacity to remedy it. They can also make a similar kind of case with respect to the role of formative relationships: these formative relationships enable us to have greater capacity to remedy the suffering of those with whom we participate in these

relationships. Even the reasonable social expectations of one's roles might be explained in terms of the capacity that these roles provide to their occupier to be able to remedy the suffering involved in some injustices.

But this defense is ultimately unsatisfactory. For example, capacity principles can only acknowledge causal contribution to injustice as relevant to structural responsibility insofar as it plays a role in determining the agent's capacity to remedy injustice; they cannot acknowledge causal contribution as an independent ground of responsibility. That is, capacity principles can provide a moral basis for structural responsibilities that *consider* causal contribution but cannot provide a moral basis for structural responsibilities that *depend* on causal contribution. This type of defense is also an unsatisfactory response to the second and third criticisms outlined above for similar reasons. Capacity principles are unable to explain why causal contribution, formative relationships, or the expectations of a social role can provide reasons, in their own right, for an agent to act to remedy injustice.

For these reasons, capacity principles, even in a modified form, only provide sufficient explanation of capacity-based reasons individuals ought to act to remedy injustice, effectively failing to account for the other kinds of reasons I have offered. Consequently, capacity principles too fail to provide a comprehensive and, thus, theoretically-adequate account of the moral basis of structural responsibility.

5. Communitarian Principles

While capacity principles provide for a much more expansive ground of structural responsibility, they can only indirectly account for some of the salient features of our moral relationships to those that suffer injustice. Communitarian principles focus directly on the features of our personal relationships to locate the basis of structural responsibility.

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Communitarian principles base structural responsibility in the agent's "special relationship" to those that suffer injustice. On a communitarian principle, if an agent participates in a special kind of social relationship with the victims of injustice, she has structural responsibilities to work to remedy their suffering.

The most straightforward examples of special relationships that ground communitarian responsibilities are family relationships. We have strong moral intuitions that we have special responsibilities to our partners and children, mothers and fathers, sisters and brothers. But family relationships are not the only type of special relationship that appears to ground communitarian responsibilities. As Samuel Scheffler explains,

> [w]e have special duties to a person, we may say, because she is our sister, or our friend, or our neighbor. […] Perhaps the person is not a relative but a colleague, not a friend but a teammate, not a neighbor but a client. Sometimes the relationship may consist only in the fact that we are both members of a certain kind of group. We may belong to the same community, for example, or be citizens of the same country, or be part of the same nation or people (2001, 97).

Communitarian principles recognize the special role that these many forms of association play in shaping who we are, what is important to us, and the ways that we find happiness. These formative relationships generate responsibilities—sometimes called "special" or "associative" duties" (Scheffler 2001, 49)—because they give meaning and value to our lives. According to Richard W. Miller, "[r]esponding to a certain type of shared history (one's child's dependence, for example, or mutual liking, activities enjoyed in common and mutual emotional openness) with certain forms of special concern (parental nurturance, or the loyalties of friendship)" demonstrates "the proper valuing of one's relationship" to friends and family (2004, 102). Communitarian principles ground structural responsibilities to remedy a victim's suffering in "the nature of our relationship to that person" (Scheffler 2001, 97) and our proper valuing of that relationship.

Further, communitarian political theorists argue that membership in a political community deserves a similar type of popular valuing. Michael Walzer argues,

> [T]he political community is probably the closest we can come to a world of common meanings. Language, history, and culture come together (come more closely together here than anywhere else) to produce a collective consciousness. National character, conceived as a fixed and permanent mental set, is obviously a myth; but the sharing of sensibilities and intuitions among the members of a historical community is a fact of life (1983, 28).

The common histories of our community relationships—whether they are made up of the shared moments and memories of our relationships with family and friends, the unifying aims and efforts of a group or club, or the "collective consciousness" of a national group—generate special responsibilities to those with whom we share these histories.

Despite explaining our strong intuition that our special relationships to specific individuals generate responsibilities to prevent and remedy their suffering, communitarian principles are inadequate grounds of structural responsibility. Communitarian principles fail to capture our structural responsibilities to work to remedy injustice to which we have no special community ties. Consequently, these principles cannot provide an adequate ground of structural responsibilities to remedy the unjust suffering of strangers. Without shared traditions, cultural values, or collective consciousness, seemingly no structural responsibilities are generated by the injustice suffered by the socially distant.

Defenders of communitarian principles may respond to this now-common concern by claiming that communitarian principles can still justify wide-reaching, and perhaps even weighty, responsibility to strangers. From the perspective of our own "thick" moral communities, we can locate "thin" moral commonalities with members of groups that do not share our common consciousness. This type of "moral minimalism" (Walzer 1994) is enough to establish moral ties to distant communities. A defender of communitarian principles might claim

that humanity is a minimalist moral community, and membership in the community of human beings is a ground of structural responsibilities to remedy the unjust suffering of strangers.

This response is unsatisfactory. Even if there is a minimalist moral community shared by all of humanity, this community membership can only provide moral basis for weak structural responsibilities to strangers. Our weightier responsibilities, on communitarian principles, will always lie with those with whom we have the strongest communal links. Consequently, these responsibilities will always take priority over weaker humanitarian responsibilities. But communitarian principles fail to provide a compelling reason for weighing our communally-based structural responsibilities so heavily.

This failure stems from the focus of communitarian principles on personal, cultural, and national relationships. Communitarian principles do not recognize other morally-salient types of shared histories between members of different moral communities. Specifically, communitarian principles ignore shared structural histories. Many agents of one moral community share a common structural history with members of distant moral communities given: a) their causal contribution to social structures that cross cultural and national boundaries, b) the inherited system of options for action that these structures provide them, and c) the particular roles they play in these wide-reaching structures. These types of structural connections are not adequately accounted for by the mere appeal to a common humanity.

Communitarian principles place too much weight on shared cultural practices, traditions, and values, failing to recognize the way that common structural histories can establish formative relationships between individuals who do not share in the same "culture." However, we might modify our communitarian principle to adequately explain the moral significance of personally-formative structural relationships in generating structural responsibilities. Our modified

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principle might state: an agent, A, is structurally responsible for working to remedy some injustice, S, if she participates in formative structural relationships with the victims of S.

Of course, our close personal relationships are likely to be the most formative in our lives, and it may be the case that the formative character of our structural relationships gets weaker as we extend outward in our social lives, as the communitarian might suggest. On this regard, the modified principle may, in practice, provide a system of moral reasons to act that are very similar in weight and distribution to the system of reasons picked out by the earlier formulation of the communitarian principle. But it does not assume from the outset that the only formative relationships we have with other human beings take place within a family, a culture, or a nation. Consequently, the modified communitarian principle avoids the issues raised by the critique above insofar as it explains that all substantively-formative social relationships—those structural relationships which shape who we are and what we value—provide moral reasons to remedy the unjust suffering of those with whom we share these relationships.

Still, this modified communitarian principle is theoretically inadequate for three reasons. First, it ignores the way that causal contribution, in itself, to the foreseeable and avoidable harms of specific structural injustices obligates us to work towards their remedy. Second, it ignores the way that structurally-enable capacities, in themselves, provide us with reasons to remedy injustice. As I stated above, modified culpability and capacity principles sufficiently explain, respectively, one kind of reason we are obligated to remedy structural injustice, and this explanation is sufficient for explaining that one kind of moral reason independent of any appeal to formative relationships. But appealing only to the formative character of some social relationships insufficiently describes the moral reasons to remedy injustice explained by the modified culpability and capacity principles.

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Finally, the modified communitarian principle fails to explain the reasons to remedy injustice provided by the reasonable expectations of a social role. If the expectations of the role are reasonable, the occupier of that role does not have to have participated in a substantive formative relationship, with the people to which these expectations are directed, in order to be obligated to work to meet those expectations. As I explain in the next section, the mere reasonability of the role's expectations provides reasons for the occupier of the role to act to remedy injustice. The modified communitarian principle does not explain why the social expectations, in themselves, provide sufficient reason to work to remedy injustice.

For these reasons, communitarian principles, even in their modified form, only provide sufficient explanation of communitarian-based reasons individuals ought to act to remedy injustice, effectively failing to account for the other kinds of reasons I have offered. Consequently, communitarian principles also fail to provide a comprehensive and, thus, theoretically-adequate account of the moral basis of structural responsibility.

6. Social Role Principles

Social role principles describe a different type of special responsibility to remedy injustice. They claim that when an agent occupies a position in society that has defined social expectations that she work to remedy injustice, then she has structural responsibilities to do so. H.L.A. Hart provides a succinct description of role responsibility:

> [W]henever a person occupies a distinctive place or office in a social organization to which specific duties are attached to provide for the welfare of others, or to advance in some specific way the aims or purposes of the organization, [s]he is properly said to be responsible for the performance of these duties or doing what is necessary to fulfill them (1967, 847).

As Hart notes, "the idea of a distinct role or place or office is of course a vague one" (1967, 847), especially in connecting social roles to structural injustice, but the notion that specific social

roles generate special responsibilities to remedy injustice is fairly straightforward. There are many formal or official social roles that involve clearly defined expectations to work to remedy injustice. To return again to an earlier example, the office of the President of the United States of America requires of the agent that occupies it to work to remedy the suffering of impoverished American citizens. Barack Obama has special structural responsibilities to work to reduce unemployment, lessen the economic burden of the poor, and provide greater social opportunities to escape poverty purely in virtue of his being President.

Formal or official social roles typically have clearly defined social expectations, and some of these involve the expectation to work to remedy injustice. But informal social roles might also involve reasonable social expectations to work to remedy injustice. We all have moral reasons to act as responsible citizens and consumers. For example, Abigail Gosselin claims, "[i]ndividuals have a variety of duties *qua* their institutional identities as citizen and consumer, including civic duties of being educated and involved with political decision-making, as well as duties of ethical and sustainable consumption" (2009, 144). Parents are responsible for working to remedy the injustices suffered by their children. We may plausibly expect teachers to remedy the injustices of the classroom. While most of these roles do not have explicitly defined social expectations to work to remedy injustice, these reasonable expectations still can legitimately ground special structural responsibilities. The agent's structural responsibilities may be partly rooted in her specific causal contribution to injustice, capacities to remedy injustice, or being a member of a community suffering injustice. But informal social roles provide the agent that occupies them an additional moral reason to work to remedy injustice.

Whether or not we have structural responsibilities generated by the reasonable expectations of the social roles we occupy might ultimately rest on whether or not these roles are chosen. We may think that the reason President Obama ought to work to remedy the unjust suffering of poor citizens of the United States is not just that this is a reasonable expectation of his role as President but also because he has chosen to take up this role. Citizens and consumers can be said to choose to occupy these roles, and their choice may help to explain why they are obligated to meet the reasonable expectations of those roles. We might also say the same thing about the structural responsibilities of parents and teachers.

I hesitate, however, to describe one's occupying a social role as a voluntary choice. For one thing, many of the social roles that we take to generate structural responsibilities on a social role principle may be voluntarily chosen in name only. A citizen may "choose" to be a citizen in the minimal sense of choosing to not move or to enjoy the benefits afforded her as a citizen, but this choice is not a substantively voluntary one. Unplanned pregnancies may be understood as involuntarily pushing new parents into their role, which makes tenuous the claim that these new parents voluntarily chose to occupy the role. Moreover, there may be other forms of informal social roles, such as some gender roles, with respect to which our choice to occupy these roles is minimally voluntary.

For another thing, an individual can choose to occupy a role without knowing the reasonable social expectations to remedy injustice attached to that role, and, consequently, it becomes implausible to say that the individual has made a voluntary choice to accept those responsibilities. In other words, the individual may choose to occupy the role without choosing to be responsible for meeting the structural obligations involved in that role. We could imagine someone deciding to run for President without recognizing some particular structural

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responsibility to be associated with holding the office; for example, perhaps someone running for the office of President does not recognize that occupying this official position generates reasonable expectations to try to change the United States's role in shaping global economic policy in a manner that causes extreme poverty. In this case, if the person were to win the Presidential election, she will have chosen to occupy the official role of the President of the United States, but it may be implausible to claim that she voluntarily chose all the structural responsibilities associated with that role.

For these two reasons, we should be cautious about the way that we talk about the relationship between occupying a role and the choice to occupy the role. Still, some social roles, which we at least in name choose to occupy, involve reasonable expectations to work to remedy some specific structural injustices. Our occupying these roles, then, generates moral reasons for us to work to meet these reasonable expectations.

However, social role principles are also inadequate grounds of structural responsibility. The primary inadequacy of social role principles is that they generate a set of structural responsibilities entirely from the existing system of social expectations attached to the existing set of social roles. Because of this, social role principles provide for an overly conservative attribution of structural responsibility. Structural responsibilities lie with those that are already reasonably expected to remedy injustice. But this picture of responsibility cannot locate responsibilities to remedy injustice in social roles that do not already have the legitimate expectation to remedy injustice or that do not yet exist. In other words, there may be social roles that ought to but do not already involve reasonable expectations to work to remedy injustice, and social role principles encourage us to ignore these additional possible sources of responsibilities.

This criticism does not discount social role principles as grounds of structural responsibility, but it does suggest that these principles are in need of modification.

Social role principles, moreover, are theoretically inadequate for the same reason as the three preceding principles, namely they fail to identify the sufficient moral reasons to remedy injustice provided by the alternative accounts. One's causal contribution to the foreseeable and avoidable harms involved in structural injustice, in itself, provides sufficient reason for an agent to act to remedy some injustices. One's structurally-enabled capacities to remedy injustice also provide a sufficient reason for her to remedy some injustice. And her personally-formative structural relationships also provide another sufficient reason to act to remedy injustice. Social role principles, on their own, fail to adequately explain these other kinds of moral reasons to remedy injustice.

7. Complicity and Structurally-Mediated Social Connection

To this point, I have argued that each of the four principles provides an inadequate ground of structural responsibility. I have suggested that the common formulations of each of the principles have their own principle-specific issues, though each principle can be modified to avoid these issues. However, even with these modifications, the four principles share the same theoretical inadequacy: each principle focuses only on one morally-salient feature of an individual's relationship to injustice. Consequently, each principle fails to account for the types of structural responsibilities better captured by alternative principles.

But the inadequacy of each type of principle is not the only conclusion we should draw from my analysis; my analysis has also demonstrated that each principle is irreducible to the others. That is, each principle highlights an important type of ground for structural responsibility that cannot be fully accounted by any of the other principles, namely structurally-mediated moral

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complicity. Each principle picks out a unique manifestation of structurally-mediated social connection that makes an individual morally complicit in injustice, and this complicity is an adequate ground of structural responsibility.

Below, I articulate a moral complicity principle of structural responsibility: an agent, A, is structurally responsible for a specific injustice, S, if she is morally complicit in S. As I will explain, unjust social structures forge social connections among individual agents that implicate those agents in their injustice. These social connections define the relatedness of individual agents to injustice, making those agents complicit in their wrongs. In the remainder of the chapter, I will provide a more full explanation of these claims and suggest that each of the four principles of structural responsibility already explored highlight a different manifestation of our structurally-mediated social connections to injustice and, consequently, a different form of our complicity in injustice

7.1. Structurally-Mediated Social Connection

It is an agent's social connection to injustice that makes her complicit in it. David Miller begins to articulate what he calls a "connection theory" of remedial responsibility (2005). He claims that the ground of A's responsibility to remedy P's suffering is A's *social connection* to P:

> A may be remedially responsible for P either because he is causally responsible for P's condition, or morally responsible for it, or has the (special) capacity to rectify it, or already has a communal relationship with P. Any of these relations—causal responsibility, moral responsibility, capacity, or community—may establish the kind of special link between A and P that enables us to single out A as the one who bears the responsibility for supplying the resources that will remedy P's condition (2005, 111).

Social connection, of at least one of the four forms Miller discusses, provides an adequate basis for an agent's remedial responsibilities.

Miller's social connection theory is "pluralist" insofar as it is "a multi-principle theory that combines [his] four principles in some fashion" (2005, 106); each of the four principles is a distinct form of social connection. But this formulation of social connection as the ground of remedial responsibilities is also inadequate. First, it doesn't explain what is special about social connection to make it the unifying feature of the four different types of principles (causal, moral, capacity, and communitarian) that Miller identifies. What is the morally-salient difference between social connection and the mere disjunct of the four independent principles as the ground of remedial responsibilities? Miller fails to explain the role that social structures play in socially connecting the agent to injustice and, thus, cannot provide a satisfying answer to this question. Miller's theory is not meant to explain structural responsibilities in particular but rather remedial responsibilities in general. But, by not recognizing that each principle highlights a different type of *structural* connection, his theory cannot explain why social connection provides any more explanation of an agent's responsibility to work to remedy injustice than does her mere causal contribution, remedial capacity, community ties, or special social roles.

At this point, we might just settle for a disjunct of the four principles discussed above as an adequate ground of structural responsibility. Since I have argued that each principle is ultimately inadequate owing to its failure to account for the other bases of structural responsibility, the disjunct (culpability principle or capacity principle or communitarian principle or social role principle) might appear to be an adequate ground of structural responsibility. I am tempted by this conclusion. However, the principle-specific critiques that I offered throughout the paper suggests that we already have to modify each principle to locate its specific relevance to remedying structural injustice. Without these modifications, the principles provide arbitrary or incomplete grounds of structural responsibility. Despite the inadequate explanation of social

connection that Miller offers, his analysis engages a fruitful philosophical project in trying to identify a common feature to the modified principles that the disjunct fails to capture.

Iris Marion Young's "social connection model" (2004, 2006, 2007, 2011) helps to further develop social connection as an adequate ground of structural responsibility. She explains her social connection model:

> The social connection model of responsibility says that individuals bear responsibility for structural injustice because they contribute by their actions to the processes that produce unjust outcomes. […] All who dwell in structures must take responsibility for remedying injustices they cause, though none is specifically liable for the harm in a legal sense. Responsibility in relation to injustice thus derives […] from participating in the diverse institutional processes that produce structural injustice (2011, 105).

For Young, an agent's participation in unjust social structures connects her to structural injustice and, thus, generates responsibilities to remedy injustice.

But Young's explanation of social connection as a ground of structural responsibility is overly vague. First, it doesn't explain why one's mere participation is enough to ground structural responsibilities. How does my mere participation in unjust social structures generate *moral* responsibilities to remedy the injustices they cause? Demonstrating that this participation connects our conduct to those injustices, does not adequately answer this question; the response only demonstrates an empirical connection between our conduct and structural injustice, not yet explaining how we are *morally* connected to the wrongness of the injustice. Without an account of why social connection is morally significant, we have not yet adequately explained the *moral* basis of our structural responsibilities.

Second, Young's account doesn't explain what counts as a morally-salient form of participation. Participation in social structures comes in many forms, some active and others passive, and some work to reinforce the current structure of social relationships while others directly aim to transform these relationships. Moreover, our participation may be identified with

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our causal contribution to injustice, our utilizing the privileges afforded us by unjust structures, our participation in formative structural relationships, or our occupying of social roles within unjust structures. Which of these kinds or forms of participation are morally-salient in establishing our structural responsibilities? Young's account does not adequately answer this question.

And finally, her account doesn't differentiate between responsibility for injustice generally and responsibility for specific injustices. Our general participation in unjust social structures makes us responsible to generally work to remedy injustice. As I will argue in greater detail in the next chapter, this depiction of the ground of structural responsibility divorces the potential normative prescriptions for discharging responsibilities detached from its accounting of the grounds of that responsibility. That is, if it we only identify our general participation in unjust social structures as the moral ground of our structural responsibilities, the normative prescriptions we offer will be divorced from the normative assessment of the forms of connection the agent has to specific structural injustices. The parameters for reasoning about how to discharge our structural responsibilities or schema for weighing and prioritizing our structural responsibilities we offer will be left morally arbitrary.

7.2. Structural Complicity

While social connection explains the empirical connection between individual agents and structural injustice, it does not yet explain the characteristically-moral feature of these connections that serve as the moral basis of our structural responsibilities. I offer the idea of moral complicity as the morally-salient feature of our empirical connections to injustice that is missing in Miller's and Young's models. An agent's moral relationship to specific injustices is established by her involvement in the social structures that create and maintain those specific

injustices. Individual conduct is mediated through social structures in a manner that forges this moral relationship. Her relatedness, or structurally-mediated social connection, to specific injustices makes her *complicit* in those injustices. This complicity generates weighty structural responsibilities to work to transform the unjust social structures through which she is socially connected to specific injustices.

Structural responsibility is established by one's complicity in injustice. Complicity, generally, is the moral condition of being involved with others in some form of wrongdoing. Complicity is a form of participation in injustice. An agent's structurally-mediated social connection to specific injustices makes her a participant in those unjust social structures, and her participation in those unjust structures implicates her in their wrongfulness. Our structurally-mediated social connections to specific injustices make us *accomplices* in the wrongs they cause. Consequently, we have forward-looking, remedial responsibilities to remedy those specific injustices, and our complicity in their wrongfulness is the only theoretically adequate basis of these responsibilities.

Complicity is a normative concept that captures an agent's involvement in wrongs for which she is neither liable nor culpable. Moreover, complicity in injustice only implicates the agent in the wrongfulness of the unjust social structures in which she participates; it does not establish her blameworthiness for the injustices of those structures. Our complicity in specific injustices may or may not make us blameworthy for their harms, but it does generate weighty responsibilities to work toward their remedy.

The four principles examined in this paper, once modified, should be viewed as partial grounds of structural responsibility because they are distinct manifestations of structurally-

mediated moral complicity. In other words, structurally-mediated moral complicity takes four different forms.

Culpability principles identify the way that an agent's causal contribution to unjust social structures morally connects her to the specific injustices caused by those structures. Her causal contribution to specific injustices, mediated through the social structures that cause those injustices, make her morally involved in their harms. Her structurally-mediated causal contribution to a specific injustice, then, is a form of complicity in that injustice, and this complicity is the basis of her structural responsibilities to remedy that injustice.

Capacity principles identify the way that an agent's options for action are shaped by the system of social relationships in which she is situated. If an agent is afforded capacities to remedy a specific structural injustice by the social structure that causes that injustice, then these structurally-enabled capacities socially connect the agent to and make her complicit in that specific structural injustice. Thus, an agent's structurally-enabled capacities also implicate her in the wrongness of the unjust structures that grant her these privileges, and this form of complicity also generates responsibilities to transform those structures.

Communitarian principles identify the way that an agent's special social relationships to family, friends, neighbors, and compatriots have a deep impact on her available options for action, her social resources for pursuing some options, and her view of which options are worth pursuing. We strive to build a life of meaning and value from our particular structural locations and our special relationships to others are deeply implicated in how this project goes. In this sense, we have not only a generalized social connection to those with which we have special relationships, but we also have a structurally-mediated social connection. This communitarian form of structurally-mediated social connection involves us in the injustices that are suffered by

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those with whom we participate in formative relationships. Thus, we are morally complicit in the continued suffering of those with whom we have these formative relationships, and we have weighty structural responsibilities to remedy the injustice suffered by those with which we have these relationships.

Social role principles identify the way that individuals occupying specific structural positions are reasonably expected to lead the way in remedying structural injustice. These positions are created by a system of social relationships to locate agents to fulfill certain socially-necessary responsibilities. When these roles involve the reasonable expectation to work to remedy injustice, the role socially connects the individual that occupies it with the individuals that suffer that injustice. Social roles are yet another manifestation of an agent's structurally-mediated moral complicity to specific injustices, as these roles again involve the individual in the wrongness of the injustices, this time caused by the social structures which define and shape the relevant social roles she occupies. Thus, social role principles also capture a form of structurally-mediated complicity and ground weighty structural responsibilities to remedy specific injustices.

8. Conclusion

I have argued that four prominent principles of responsibility to remedy injustice provide an inadequate basis of structural responsibility. Specifically, I showed that each principle suffers from the same theoretical inadequacy: the inability to account for the other morally-salient features of an agent's relationship to injustice that are picked out by alternative principles. However, I also argued that each of these principles, though inadequate on their own, points to an underlying, adequate basis of structural responsibility, namely structurally-mediated social

connection. An agent's structurally-mediated social connection to specific injustices makes her complicit in those injustices and grounds weighty responsibilities to work toward their remedy.

An agent's complicity in specific injustices provides reasons for deeming her responsible for their remedy. Further, by identifying the moral basis of structural responsibility as an agent's structurally-mediated complicity in injustice, I have provided a moral lens through which we can re-evaluate our own conduct. This account not only enables us to appropriately attribute, in a more precise and consistent manner, a wider variety of structural responsibilities; it also provides us a basis for examining how our own conduct may generate structural responsibilities.

Chapter 5: Meeting One's Structural Responsibilities

1. Introduction

In the last chapter, I argued that an individual agent's structurally-mediated moral complicity in specific injustices is the only theoretically adequate basis of her responsibility to remedy those injustices. An agent's complicity in injustice provides a strong moral reason for her to work towards its remedy. With this account of the moral basis of structural responsibility in place, I now turn my attention to questions of what responsible agents ought to do. In this chapter, I outline a normative framework for guiding agents in discharging the many and varied structural responsibilities they bear. I claim that how an individual agent discharges her structural responsibilities depends on the specific manifestations of her structurally-mediated social connection to the injustices for which she is complicit. Moreover, I argue that an adequate account of how agents ought to work to remedy injustice must draw on and cohere with the insights of the previous two chapters. The normative framework provided here is presented as a theoretically-adequate guide for responsible agents that takes seriously the situatedness of social agents and their complicity in specific injustices.

I argue for my normative framework in five sections. In section two, I examine some of the recent philosophical work on, what Iris Marion Young calls, "parameters of reasoning" (2004, 2006, 2007, 2011).[40] Parameters of reasoning are factors that can guide individual agents in how they choose to exercise their agency to discharge their structural responsibilities. I map some of the suggestions for how individuals can exercise their agency to work to remedy injustice. After mapping these suggestions, I argue that the parameters that we might formulate from these suggestions provide a normative framework for acting that is ultimately inadequate. I

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[40] Young first develops her parameters in her 2004 article on responsibility and continued to tweak them in subsequent articles and chapters. I cite all four here to note that her work on parameters of reasoning originated long before the posthumous publication of her 2011 book, though I will only cite the 2011 book going forward.

claim that this inadequacy is rooted in the fact that the parameters' guidance is detached from views of social agency and complicity. That is, the parameters offered inadequately answer the question of how an individual ought to act to discharge their structural responsibilities because they fail to explain why any particular set of parameters ought to be chosen as the appropriate guide.

While I agree that a theory of structural responsibility must provide parameters for reasoning about how to discharge one's responsibilities, I also claim that these parameters must be deeply connected to an adequate view of social agency and an adequate account of the moral basis of these responsibilities. In section three, I develop my normative framework for understanding how an agent ought to act to meet her structural responsibilities. This framework argues that an agent can weigh and prioritize structural responsibilities, generate by her complicity in injustice, by examining both the conditions of her social agency in relation to specific unjust social structures as well as her specific social connection to those injustices. We can understand structural responsibility from both a qualitative and quantitative perspective, and distinctions in kind and degree are directly tied to conditions of social agency and complicity. I argue that an agent must utilize the specific cultural, economic, and political resources of her social location to work to remedy the injustices to which she is socially connected. Moreover, an agent can only effectively work to remedy injustice when her remedial actions are directed toward the transformation of the very unjust systems of social relationships that make her complicit. My normative framework, then, guides agents in acting to discharge their responsibilities by providing parameters for weighing and prioritizing the structural responsibilities generated by their complicity in injustice.

The normative framework I provide is not an algorithm for determining specific actions an agent ought to take; rather, it is a set of parameters to help agents sort amongst their many responsibilities. Structural responsibilities, as I have explained, are not the same as moral duties. Responsibility does not prescribe a specific morally correct action that must be performed in a given situation, and structural responsibilities can be met by performing a variety of actions. Consequently, the standard model for morally assessing individual responsibility—the model that focuses primarily on blame and redress—provides inadequate guidance on how to assess individual agents on their successes and failures in meeting their responsibilities. In section four, I demonstrate how my normative framework both opens up new possibilities for how we morally react to the actions of complicity agents as well as explains how we might appropriately weigh our reactions.

The account of structural responsibility I offer threatens to leave individuals in a state of "social paralysis. In section five, I explain and respond to an objection to my account based in the worry of social paralysis. I argue that my account provides adequate normative guidance on how to work the specific structural injustices in which we are complicity.

Ultimately, the normative framework of this chapter provides not only parameters for prioritizing responsibilities or a guide to how to morally assess agents in meeting their responsibilities but also a foundation for a view of social solidarity and "political friendship" (Young 2011). In the final section, I argue that the normative framework outlined in this chapter helps agents to see the deep interconnections of their everyday actions and structural opportunities for others to flourish. This type of recognition, I claim, allows agents to build more respectful social relationships. Moreover, it is an important first step in repairing the human connections that obfuscate or even legitimate social inequalities.

2. Parameters for Reasoning

An adequate account of structural responsibility must answer not only the question of who is responsible but also the question of what responsible agents ought to do. I have argued that agents who are complicit in specific injustices, given their structurally-mediated social connections to those injustices, have structural responsibilities to remedy them. Moreover, I have claimed that virtues of this account are that it provides a more complete view of the varied intuitions about remedial responsibility that we hold and, consequently, for any specific injustice, it identifies a greater number of responsible agents who have strong moral reason to work towards its remedy. My account introduces a complex and nuanced understanding of how individual agents are morally related to unjust social structures and of why this obligates them to work to transform those structures.

But this complexity and nuance makes it much more difficult to understand how one ought to discharge their responsibilities than alternative explanations of structural responsibility. The account of social connection and complicity I have offered appears to make agents structurally responsible for many instances of injustice that they may not have previously acknowledged. Further, my account suggests that individual agents need to continually be working to remedy the many injustices to which they are socially connected. To avoid the threat of, what I call, social paralysis, my account must provide a view of how an individual agent can discharge her responsibilities.[41]

However, my account cannot provide a definitive list of duties that each agent must perform. As Young claims, "[b]ecause responsibility is more open and discretionary than duty, a theory cannot provide a set of rules or even a method for calculating what to do" (2011, 144). Or

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[41] I return to the problem of social paralysis in the final chapter. I believe this is a serious challenge to my account and, consequently, will develop and respond to the challenge in a more systematic manner in the next chapter.

as David Miller asserts, "there is no algorithm" that can tell us how to directly apply the different principles of social connection, and, Miller claims, "when connections have to be weighed against each other, we can do no more than appeal to shared moral intuitions about which is stronger" (2005, 112). Structural responsibilities come in many forms, are often overlapping, and admit of varied weights; consequently, no account of structural responsibility can issue a list of concrete actions that an agent must perform to meet her responsibilities. Rather, an agent must reason for herself the best way to exercise her agency to transform unjust systems of social relationships.

Still, an account of structural responsibility must provide some guidance on how agents ought to discharge their responsibility. Even if the account cannot provide a method for determining concrete moral imperatives upon which the agent ought to act, it can provide, as Young suggests, parameters for reasoning about how to exercise one's agency to meet her structural responsibilities. For Young, "[s]uch parameters ought to respond to the intuition that different agents properly have different kinds and degrees of forward-looking responsibility for justice" (2011, 144). The parameters that an account must identify need to provide reasons for viewing some responsibilities as more weighty than others, either because of a difference in kind or because of a difference in degree. By guiding agents in weighing their responsibilities, these parameters also offer agents a method not for determining concrete duties but rather for prioritizing open-ended responsibilities. An adequate account of structural responsibility must answer the question of how an agent ought to discharge her responsibilities by providing not imperatives of action but rather parameters for reasoning amongst options for action.

Young's parameters for reasoning are derived from differences in the "*social* positions agents occupy in relation to one another within the structural processes they are trying to change in order to make them less unjust" (2011, 144); she offers four parameters:

1. *Power*—an agent should examine her particular location in the system of social relationships for what types of power it affords her to potentially impact and transform social structures.

2. *Privilege*—an agent should locate the social privileges afforded her by her position in oppressive social structures for special opportunities to undermine injustice.

3. *Interest*—an agent should identify the specific interests that she holds in relation to her particular social position to locate those interests that coincide with the promotion of justice.

4. *Collective Ability*—an agent should draw on the collective resources of organized social actors available to her because of her particular social position. (2011, 144-6)

Young claims that these parameters ought to be considered by individual agents and organizations in meeting their structural responsibilities.

These parameters provide a helpful way of analyzing the features of one's social position as a resource for working to remedy injustice. Young aptly recognizes that the way we ought to reason about how to discharge our structural responsibilities is deeply connected to the way we are structurally positioned. However, these parameters provide an inadequate guide for generating a normative framework for how to meet one's structural responsibilities. Young's parameters are inadequate for three reasons.

First, Young's parameters do not provide a reason for seeing the identified features of one's social position as connected to moral responsibilities to remedy injustice. The

identification of power, privilege, interest, and collective ability as features of an agent's social position may help us to better understand what a social position is in general or the specific character of our own social position in particular. But the identification and explanation of these features does not yet tell us why they are morally relevant parameters for reasoning about what to do to discharge structural responsibilities. Young has not provided an argument for why an agent's social position is morally relevant to decisions about how to discharge her responsibilities, nor has she explained why we should focus on these specific features of the agent's social position. The parameters of reasoning that an account offers need to not only help the agent understand her social resources to combat injustice but also must offer her moral reasons for utilizing those resources. In other words, *how* an agent ought to discharge her structural responsibilities must be connected to *why* she ought to. Without this connection, whichever parameters we identify run the risk of being morally irrelevant.

Second, Young's parameters do not provide concrete recommendations for how to utilize the resources of one's social position. Even if we recognize some connection between the features of an agent's social position and how she ought to act to discharge her responsibilities, the mere recognition of these features does not give the agent a clear guide for how to utilize these resources to combat injustice. The recognition of an agent's social position as tied to how she *can* work to undermine injustice does not yet tell us how she *ought* to work to undermine injustice. Though the parameters that we seek cannot determine the specific action that an agent ought to perform, they should at least guide the agent in working out which types of actions she ought to perform. That is, an adequate set of parameters for reasoning about how to discharge structural responsibilities must help the agent determine which *kinds* of actions discharge her responsibilities. Young's parameters may help the agent locate the resources available to her to

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undermine injustice, but they cannot guide the agent in determining what type of action that she ought to perform.

Finally, Young's parameters do not provide a basis for comparing the relative weights of the various features of our social position. If we were able to establish a moral connection between Young's parameters and an agent's structural responsibilities and, further, articulate a manner in which these parameters could guide the agent towards specific kinds of action, we still would be left with no means for weighing and prioritizing the types of actions we ought to perform. We might acknowledge that varied degrees of power, privilege, coinciding interest, or collective ability give varied weights to an agent's structural responsibilities. Moreover, we may even recognize some way in which the different features of one's social position guide the agent towards performing certain types of remedial action. But we still are left without an account of how to compare the different types of remedial action, and consequently, the agent is left without an adequate normative guide for how to exercise her social agency to discharge her structural responsibilities.

Ultimately, Young's parameters of reasoning are theoretically inadequate. An adequate account of how an individual agent ought to discharge her structural responsibilities must provide moral reasons for the agent to act one way rather than another, map out the kinds of actions that appropriately discharge her responsibilities, and guide her in prioritizing her varied responsibilities. Still, Young's project of formulating general parameters of reasoning is an important one; any adequate account of structural responsibility must answer the question of *how* agents discharge their responsibilities by providing a normative framework for reasoning amongst options for action.

An account of structural responsibility cannot provide definitive rules for determining the exact actions responsible agents must perform, nor can it provide a definitive list of imperatives to be performed by responsible agents; rather, the account must be action-guiding in a different manner. An adequate account must provide a normative framework for reasoning about how to act to discharge one's responsibilities that go beyond appeals to shared intuition in particular cases, as Miller suggests, or to general features of one's social position, as Young argues.

In what follows, I develop a normative framework that guides agents in reasoning about how to discharge their structural responsibilities that focuses on: a) the actual conditions of their social agency, b) the possibility of performing transformative actions, and c) the specific manifestations of structurally-mediated social connection which make them complicit in specific injustices. I explain that agents must utilize the actual cultural, economic, and political resources afforded them by their social location. In determining which types of action agents ought to prioritize, they must first consider the social resources available to them that enable them to perform transformational actions. Further, I claim that agents ought to prioritize remedial responsibilities for structural injustices for which they are more complicit. We can evaluate an agent's level of complicity in specific injustices by both the quality and strength of her social connection to that injustice. The quality and strength of one's social connection to specific injustices marks out which types of actions the agent ought to perform as well as how much is required of her to discharge her responsibilities in relation to that specific injustice.

3. Structural Resources and Social Agency

Young's parameters of reasoning, while ultimately inadequate, provide a good starting point for thinking about how we ought to discharge our structural responsibilities. I have argued that Young's parameters do not explain *why* we ought to examine features of our social position

in reasoning about how to discharge our structural responsibilities. Further, I have argued that she does not provide a clear connection between the social resources of one's social position and the specific types of actions she ought to perform to discharge her duties. Despite these shortcomings, Young's parameters identify a morally significant relationship between an agent's structural positioning and her ability to discharge her structural responsibilities. The insight we ought to capture from Young's work is that the various dimensions of our social position—for Young, power, privilege, interest, and collective ability—significantly shape our ability to work to remedy injustice. Young's parameters identify the conditions of an individual's social agency as a guide for thinking about how to exercise this agency. To formulate parameters for reasoning about how to discharge structural responsibilities, I suggest that we start with a more explicit accounting of the conditions of social agency.

As I argued in the third chapter, the only adequate account of the social agency of those responsible to remedy structural injustice is a structurally-situated account. In contrast to abstract individualist and encumbered alternatives, a structurally-situated account of social agency claims that: a) an agent's options for action are significantly shaped by their position in complex networks of social relationships, and b) an agent's actions work to reinforce or transform the constitution of these networks in a way that re-shapes the broader system of options for action. Not only do social structures enable and constrain agent's in their meeting their basic social needs and realizing their life plans, but also the way that individuals exercise their agency reconstitute these structures. An individual's social agency is neither independent of structural processes nor completely determined by those processes. Thus, while social structures largely shape the system of options for action in a manner that encourages agents to

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reify prevailing social structures, individual agents ultimately have the power and social resources to transform those structures.

The first step in reasoning about how to discharge an agent's structural responsibilities is to examine the specific conditions of her social agency. That is, in deciding what one ought to do to remedy injustice for which she is complicit, she has to first examine the conditions of her ability to transform the unjust social structures to which she is socially connected. As Young explains, our structural positions afford us differing degrees and kinds of social power, privilege, interests, and ability to inspire collective action. Recognizing the types and degree of one's power and privilege is an important part of beginning to reason about how to discharge her structural responsibilities. But this recognition is not yet enough to guide the agent in exercising the abilities or utilizing the social resources afforded her by her social position. The agent must also recognize the different forms that these abilities and resources take as well as focus on the way that these abilities and resources enable her to reshape specific social structures.

An individual's social agency has cultural, economic, and political dimensions, and the structurally responsible agent must draw on the specific cultural, economic, and political resources available to her particular social position. Culturally, agents can act to affirm or change social meanings, values, or practices of recognition. Individual agents have the ability to resist or defy cultural stereotypes, moves toward cultural hegemony, and processes of dehumanization. In other words, they have the ability to remedy forms of cultural imperialism and social stigmatization by drawing on the cultural resources afforded them by their social position.

These resources include access to mechanisms of cultural production, cultural authority, and social epistemic credence. By having access to mechanisms of cultural production,

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individual agents are able to provide new information about the facts of injustice, challenge imperialist and stigmatizing representations of those that suffer injustice, and promote values of social solidarity. By drawing on their positions of cultural authority, individual agents can take a leadership role in changing how people think and feel about structural injustice and their role in maintaining it. Positions of cultural authority afford individual agents a privileged place from which to speak and lead others in reshaping the social relationships in which they are situated. By recognizing the way that their social position shapes their social epistemic credence, agents can notice the way that their social position both enables and constrains them in their ability to convey information to others and to have others take this information seriously. It is important for structurally responsible agents to not only realize their limitations in this respect but also utilize the credence afforded them because of their social position as well as work to develop credence by defying imperialism and stigmatization. The forces of cultural imperialism and social stigmatization are incredibly strong, but they do not exist apart from the actions, beliefs, and values of individual agents, and, thus, they are responsive to the deliberate reformative actions of those agents.

Economically, agents can act to re-organize processes of social production directed toward individuals meeting their material needs and desires. Individual agents have the ability to alter existing distributions of social resources needed for material production, to resist prevailing patterns for organizing how and for what purpose individuals exercise their labor, and to undermine authority schemas that deny individuals decision-making power, autonomy, and creativity in their work. Agents, in other words, ought to draw on the resources of their specific social position in economic structures to combat radical income and wealth inequality, exploitation, marginalization, and powerlessness.

These resources include the agent's actual share of material resources, labor power, positions of economic authority, and ability to collectively organize. The most obvious economic resource made available to many agents is their actual share of material resource or, in clearer terms, their income and wealth. Structurally responsible agents must utilize the specific social resources made available to them by their social position to combat radical inequalities in income and wealth for which they are complicit. Economic agents not only have material resources that ought to be used to remedy economic injustices for which they are complicit; they also have the power to decide how and to what end they exercise their material labor. While this power to decide is severely constrained for many and (almost)[42] completely denied to others, economic agents have labor power and responsible economic agents ought to consider how they might use this labor power to remedy the injustices for which they are complicit. Many agents also occupy positions of economic authority, as members of the board and executives, or as directors and managers, which afford them power to not only decide how they exercise their own labor but also to shape divisions of labor and systems of economic incentive that significantly shape how others exercise their own labor. Structurally responsible agents afforded this kind of economic authority ought to consider how they can utilize this authority to reshape divisions of labor and systems of incentive to be less oppressive. Further, economic agents in various positions throughout the economic structure have the ability to collectively organize with other economic agents in order to collectively pool their labor power to effect change. Again,

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[42] I insert this qualification into the claim to recognize that even in cases where the agent has no real effective decision-making power over how she exercises her labor, like in instances of slavery, she still has the ability to choose an alternative option for exercising her labor to the one that is being forced upon her. This point is partly conceptual: to be an economic agent requires that the individual have some power, even if nearly nominal, to decide how to exercise her labor. But also make this qualification to acknowledge that individuals positioned in even the most horrible of economic positions, such as that of the enslaved, have and do work to change or escape these positions. This may sound a bit like victim-blaming, but there is no reason to interpret what I am saying here as a justification for blaming the victim of this type of extreme economic injustice for her situation; I certainly do not do so.

responsible agents must recognize the economic resources, such as the ability to collectively organize, afforded them by their specific social location to transform unjust social structures.

Politically, agents can act to shape the system of conditions that afford individuals power to shape how their life goes. Agents can act to include a greater number of individuals in political processes, empower marginalized voices in political discourse, and work to deter and avoid political violence. Consequently, structurally responsible agents must utilize the political resources of their social position to combat the political injustices of exclusion, marginalization, and violence for which they are complicit.

These resources include formal political privileges (such as the vote), political authority, and the ability to collectively mobilize. Structurally responsible agents ought to utilize whatever formal political powers (such as those given by holding political office or the vote) in local, regional, national and international contexts to work toward formal institutional reform. This requires responsible agents to consider more than their own self-interest and rational ends in deciding how to exercise their political powers; rather, responsible agents must also consider how theses powers can be used to inspire and support public policy that remedies injustices for which they are complicit. But agents also have informal political power that must be put to use to work to remedy injustices for which they are complicit. Differently-situated agents are afforded different types and degrees of informal political authority which allow them to impact political discourse and policy outcomes. Agents must consider how to utilize both formal and informal political power to reshape unjust social structures. Responsible agents, however, need and must not exercise these powers in isolation. Conceptually, political power necessarily involves interaction between individual agents; the political is the realm of how individual agents exercise their social agency to shape systems of interaction to enable them to pursue their life

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plans. Thus, political powers are always exercised in manner that influences the way that others are able, allowed, and incentivized to act. Much of the history of Western political philosophy, especially in the Modern era, engaged the question of what types of constraints on individual options for action, primarily legislated and enforced by the state, are morally justified in social interaction. But political power is not only exercised to restrict the freedoms of individual agents to secure liberty for all; it is also exercised to collectively mobilize agents, build political solidarity, and encourage action toward a common cause. Responsible agents must examine their resources for collectively mobilizing other responsible agents to work together toward the common, moral end of remedying the injustices for which they are complicit.

4. Transformative Action and Social Imagination

In deciding how to discharge one's structural responsibilities, the agent should first consider which cultural, economic, and political resources are afforded by her social position and how to utilize these resources to work to remedy injustice. But she must also consider what are the appropriate ends of the actions she performs to discharge her responsibilities. The second element of how an individual agent should discharge her structural responsibilities requires her to aim her action at transformative actions.

Transformative actions are actions that the agent performs that reconstitute the way she relates to other individuals. In other words, transformative actions transform the present system of social relationships that constitute a social structure to reshape that structure. An agent's complicity in specific injustices generates structural responsibilities for her to work to remedy those injustices. But structural injustices are more than merely bad states of affairs or interpersonal wrongs. Consequently, beneficent action to offset the badness of a given state of affairs or discontinuing the behavior that interpersonally wrongs someone are not appropriate

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remedial responses to structural injustices. Rather, structural injustices require a *structural* remedy, and structurally responsible agents have a moral responsibility to work toward this type of remedy. To decide how to discharge their structural responsibilities, responsible agents must perform actions that attempt to not only alleviate or avoid harm but also empower members of oppressed groups by easing the system of social constraints that oppress them.

This approach to discharging one's responsibilities for injustice demands of the agent something different than two more commonsense approaches. The first commonsense approach, *the assistance approach*, urges responsible agents to aid those that suffer injustice. Singer's Shallow Pond (1972) or Unger's Envelope (1996) encourage this type of thinking about how to discharge one's responsibilities. The responsible agent ought to remedy the suffering of the child drowning in the shallow pond or the dying children that will benefit from placing a check to UNICEF in the envelope by offering her assistance. This assistance is usually assumed to come in the form of a personal monetary contribution to a suitable charity[43] or a political commitment to increasing the foreign aid of affluent nations to poor ones.[44] Neither Singer nor Unger are committed to the position that providing financial assistance is the only appropriate way to discharge one's structural responsibilities. In fact, neither of them must be committed to the position that this type of assistance is even an appropriate way to discharge one's responsibilities. Both are only committed to the position that one ought to prevent bad where one can without sacrificing something of comparable moral worth. And they both only suggest that the way to prevent the suffering involved in extreme poverty is through financial assistance.

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[43] For example, Unger repeatedly provides the contact information for relief organizations such as UNICEF, OXFAM, or CARE and suggests that a modest $200 donation is enough to help a dying two-year old become a healthy six-year old (1996, 146-9). Singer reiterates this point and argues that wealthy individuals ought to provide this donation (1999).

[44] Consider Singer's long list of state expenditures versus levels of foreign aid in "Famine, Affluence, and Morality" (1972) and his noting levels of foreign aid in his reformulation of the argument in *Practical Ethics* (1999, 222).

Moreover, Singer and Unger aim to demonstrate how easily an individual can remedy the suffering of innocent children.

However, the approach they suggest guides responsible individuals to act in ways that do little to nothing to transform the social structures that cause and maintain situations of extreme poverty. As a parameter for reasoning about how to discharge one's structural responsibilities, mere impact on bad states of affairs prioritizes actions short-term solutions that may or may not have long-term structural impact. In responding to the injustice of an economic system that results in radical inequalities in income and wealth, Nagel claims, "[t]he appropriate remedy is not an exhortation to charity, but a revision of the system of property rights to remove its objectionable features" (2008, 54). Nagel's claim is that any economic system that creates radical inequality (in the sense outlined in chapter 2) is *structurally* unjust and the appropriate remedy must go beyond charitable actions to aid those that suffer; rather, the economic system must be fundamentally reformed. Nagel's point can be extended to unjust social structures more generally: any system of social relationships that are oppressive, even if the individual actors situated in these structures have acted permissibly, must be fundamentally reformed. Charitable or beneficent acts may alleviate the suffering of some of the victims of injustice, but they do not combat injustice. Consequently, responsible agent must focus their energies on performing actions that aim to transform the structure of social relationships to remedy, not the isolated suffering of individual victims, but rather the structural injustices that cause this suffering.

In the end, merely-charitable[45] actions leave intact the structure of social relationships that oppress groups of individuals, even if they work to alleviate some of the suffering of some

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[45] I use the phrase "merely-charitable" to mark out those actions that are only directed at providing immediate assistance to those suffering the harms of injustice and not those charitable actions aimed at long-term structural change. Not all charitable or beneficent actions are focus on short-term assistance, nor are all charitable actions focused merely on the immediate prevention of an individual's suffering. Some charitable actions are directed

of those individuals. Charitable or beneficent actions, directed at the one-time, temporary prevention of suffering, do not discharge structural responsibilities; a transformative option for discharging these responsibilities must be sought. The second commonsense approach to discharging structural responsibilities, *the clean-hands approach*, demands that the responsible agent go beyond merely performing actions to ameliorate suffering and actually refrain from any action that might cause suffering. The clean-hands approach guides agents to discharge their structural responsibilities by severing whatever connection they might have to specific structural injustices. If structural responsibilities are generated by an agent's structurally-mediated social connection to specific injustices, then a seemingly-natural way to discharge the generated responsibilities is to end one's connection to those injustices. Agents, on this approach, are encouraged to "wash their hands" of their complicity in injustice by opting out of the social practices that connect them to injustice, refraining from performing the actions that forged their relationships to victims of oppression, or maybe even compensating the victims of injustice. The clean-hands approach, then, guides responsible agents to discharge their responsibilities by cutting them off at their moral source, namely by severing their connection to unjust social structures.

But, as with the assistance approach, the clean-hands approach guides agents to discharge their responsibilities in ways that do little to nothing to combat structural injustice. First, it is not clear that an individual agent can actually opt out of unjust systems of social relationships. Even if an individual agent stops performing actions that play a more direct causal

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toward growing the long-term options for action available to the individual, re-distributing the social resources needed for acting on these options, or building social infrastructure to make acting on these options less costly. Pledging personal financial assistance or working to increase foreign aid toward these kinds of ends is not "merely charitable" but, rather, is transformative of oppressive social structures. I am not arguing that agents should avoid all charitable actions; instead, I am claiming that whatever charitable actions they perform must be directed at transformative ends.

role in bringing about a specific structural injustice, the alternative actions that she performs may still play a more indirect causal role in the existence of that same injustice. Further, the alternative actions that she performs may causally contribute to the existence of some other structural injustice; many times agents opt of a certain unjust social practices only to create or sustain some other form of injustice. Moreover, even if the agent were able to end her causal contribution to a specific injustice and avoid contributing to some other injustice, she may still remain complicit in injustice owing to some other form of structurally-mediated social connection. The ability to opt out of a specific unjust social practice may in itself be a form of structurally-mediated social privilege that makes the agent complicit.

We have strong reasons to think that agents cannot, in fact, completely wash their hands of their complicity in structural injustices. But even if they were able to, we would still have a second reason for finding the clean-hands approach as an inadequate guide for discharging structural responsibilities; namely, cleaning one's hands doesn't discharge structural responsibilities. Structural responsibilities require individual agents to remedy injustice, and an individual agent opting out of whichever unjust social relationships in which she was situated does little to nothing to actually remedy injustice. An individual agent's actions, in isolation, do not have much impact on the organization of oppressive social relationships. By opting out of some of these relationships, the agent may have washed her hands of her complicity in the ongoing injustice, but she has not discharged her responsibility to work to remedy the specific injustice for which she was originally complicit. Rather, she has left (nearly-)completely intact the unjust system of social relationships in order to assure herself of no future responsibility to transform that system. This is often an abdication of structural responsibility not a means for

discharging it.[46] Altering one's behavior to no longer incur structural responsibilities does not discharge responsibilities already incurred.

Both the assistance and clean-hands approaches to discharging structural responsibilities fail to guide agents to act in ways that would actually remedy structural injustice. I am not claiming that these approaches do not guide agents to act in ways that might be overall beneficial or even lead to structural reform. The actions these approaches encourage individuals to perform may prevent a great deal of suffering and may even be a means to actual structural reform. But as parameters for reasoning about how to discharge one's structural responsibilities, they fail to draw attention to the fact that these responsibilities must be discharged by directly working to *transform* the unjust social structures for which one is complicit.

Structural responsibilities, thus, require more than mere beneficent action or washing one's hands of her complicity; rather, these responsibilities require the agent to act toward social transformation. Young claims that structural responsibilities are "shared responsibilities" (2011, 109-11)[47] and, consequently, they must be "collectively discharged" (2011, 111-3). She explains, "forward-looking responsibility can be discharged only by joining with others in collective action" because "[o]ur forward-looking responsibility consists in changing the institutions and processes so that their outcomes will be less unjust" and "[n]o one of us can do

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[46] I owe my view here in part to Linda Alcoff and her, "The Problem of Speaking for Others" (2006a). In "The Problem of Speaking for Others," Alcoff discusses what she calls "the retreat response" to the problem; the retreat response recognizes the inherent epistemological and political problems in the act of speaking for someone outside of one's own social groups and advocates refusing to speak as the only legitimate response to these problems. Alcoff argues not only that retreat "significantly undercuts the possibility of political effectivity" (2006a, 84) but also, in not speaking for others, I am "abandoning my political responsibility to speak out against oppression" (2006a, 80). And not speaking "may result merely in a retreat into a narcissistic yuppie lifestyle in which a privileged person takes no responsibility whatsoever for her society" (2006a, 84). Alcoff's claims can be extended as a critique of the clean-hands approach; the approach encourages agents not to actively take up their structural responsibilities but rather to find a way to avoid them.

[47] Here, she is following Larry May in his discussion of shared responsibility (May 1992).

this on our own" (2011, 111). Structural responsibility is, according to Young, "political,"[48] or, according to me, *social*, in the sense that it involves "public communicative engagement with others for the sake of organizing our relationships and coordinating our actions most justly" (2011, 112). Structural responsibilities are social[49] responsibilities that require agents to act collectively either "by means of state institutions" or "through collective action in civil society independent of or as a supplement to state policies and programs" (2011, 112). In the end, social structures "can be altered only if many actors from diverse positions within the social structures work together to intervene in them to try to produce other outcomes" (2011, 111).

Young's claim that structural responsibilities must be collectively discharged is only partially correct. Structural responsibilities do require agents to work to remedy injustice, a task which requires transformation of oppressive systems of social relationships, and this transformation cannot be pursued in isolation. As Young notes, no one individual can carry out the task of transforming social structures on her own, and, thus, structural responsibilities are inherently social. Structurally-responsible agents must utilize the social resources afforded them by their specific structural location to collectively mobilize other responsible agents toward the aim of transforming unjust social structures.

But structural responsibility does not have to be collectively discharged in the sense that the individual must organize a critical mass to effect change. From Young's view, it appears that structural responsibilities can only be discharged when an individual organizes a somewhat large number of other individuals around a collective cause. However, this ignores the possibility that

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[48] Here, Young is building on the work of Hannah Arendt. For a clearer picture of Young's notion of political responsibility, see her chapter, "Guilt versus Responsibility: A Reading and Partial Critique of Hannah Arendt" (2011, 75-93).

[49] I shift from Young's term 'political' to the term 'social' to both remain consistent with my previous description of the political as a realm of the social and to not collapse structural responsibilities of a cultural and economic form into the political. The shift is purely terminological, at this point, and should not be understood as implying any substantive critique of Young's view.

individual agents might be able to discharge some of their structural responsibilities by shifting their own personal behavior. In addition to considering how she might collectively organize others to pursue remedies of injustice, the responsible agent ought also to consider how she can reform her own behaviors, beliefs, desires, and values to allow her to interact with others in a more just manner. If I am correct in my account of structurally-situated social agency, individual agents impact social structures not only when they act in collectively-organized concert with other agents; on the contrary, much of the personal conduct of individual agents has an impact on the structure of social relationships that condition that conduct. For this reason, responsible agents must both consider the ways that their personal conduct reinforces or subverts prevailing unjust systems of social relationships and work to alter the former for a more just structuring of the latter. While it is true that structural responsibilities are inherently social and, consequently, must be directed at social transformation, it is false that social transformation only occurs when we collectively mobilize around prescribed interventions. Rather, social transformation begins with individual agents altering their social conduct to opens up new options for action, shift distributions of social resources, or transform systems of social incentive, all toward the aim of reconstituting the unjust social relationships in which they are situated.

It is important not to overstate the transformative possibilities of an agent merely changing her everyday conduct, revising problematic beliefs, or reshaping her wants and desires. Doing these things, alone, cannot transform oppressive social structures. Further, the agent who does these things does not wash her hands of her complicity in injustice. But it is important for the agent to recognize that her conduct is not confined to a private realm and that the effects of her conduct do not end with her isolated interpersonal interactions. Rather, even personal conduct has a public component, social effects, and, consequently, transformative power. While

it is a mistake to believe that education, self-reflection, and modified social behavior on the personal level can, on their own, transform unjust social structures, it is also a mistake to ignore the roles that these processes play in changing social relationships and inspiring wide-reaching social reform.

5. Social Connection and Weighing Responsibilities

I have argued that responsible agents ought to recognize and utilize the specific cultural, economic, and political resources afforded them by their social position in discharging their structural responsibilities. Further, I have argued that agents have to exercise their social agency toward transformative action both in collaboration with other responsible agents and in the modification of their personal beliefs and conduct. But neither of these parameters yet provides an adequate explanation of how we should prioritize our various and layered structural responsibilities. The final parameter of reasoning that agents ought to utilize in deciding how to discharge their responsibilities is the specific character of their structurally-mediated social connection to injustice. A stronger social connection, in either kind or degree, generates weightier responsibilities, and weightier responsibilities ought to be prioritized.

In his discussion of how a social connection theory assigns remedial responsibility for the situation of a person, P, suffering acute deprivation, Miller claims, "we will fix responsibility on the agent who is already connected to P in some way; if several agents are so connected, we will choose the one whose link to P is strongest, or else, […] divide up the responsibility according to relative strength of connection" (2005, 110). Miller's project is to demonstrate how his connection theory is able to identify some agent(s) responsible to remedy P's suffering; consequently, his claims about the strength of social connections focus on how to order responsible agents and assign the appropriate amount of responsibility and not on how individual

agents should discharge their responsibilities. Still, his claims are instructive. Individual agents should examine how they are socially connected to specific injustices and prioritize remedial actions for those injustices to which they are most strongly connected.

The idea here is that *how* an individual agent ought to discharge her structural responsibilities is deeply related to *why* she is responsible in the first place. The stronger the structurally-mediated social connection an agent has to a specific injustice, the greater her complicity in that injustice, and the weightier her responsibilities to remedy it. Weightier responsibilities provide stronger moral reasons for the agent to act, and, owing to this, they ought to be prioritized in reasoning about how to discharge one's responsibilities. Thus, individual agents must discharge their structural responsibilities by prioritizing those responsibilities to remedy injustice to which they are most strongly connected and for which they are most complicit.

Agents ought to weigh their responsibilities by examining the strength of their social connection to specific injustices; but how ought we to determine the strength of a social connection? Miller, as I have already quoted, asserts that when connections must be weighted, "we can do nothing more than appeal to shared moral intuitions about which is stronger" (2005, 112). Ultimately, Miller is correct: we cannot provide a lexical ordering of the various manifestations of structurally-mediated social connection, assigning greater strength to all connections that appear earlier in our ordering and urging agents to always prioritize the responsibilities accordingly. In specific cases, the agent herself must decide how to prioritize her responsibilities by utilizing the earlier parameters, common intuition, and sensitivity to the specific context in which she is discharging her responsibilities.

Still, we can go beyond Miller's appeal to common intuition to help guide responsible agents in discharging their structural responsibilities. While we cannot provide a definitive algorithm for determining which responsibilities are weightier than others, we can still sketch general guidelines for weighing responsibilities against one another. There are two features of an agent's structurally-mediated social connection to specific injustices that can help us weigh the responsibilities these connections generate, namely the *kind* and *degree* of her connection. The kind of her connection, as I explain in the previous chapter, must be at least one of four possible forms: causal, capacity, communitarian, or social role. Any manifestation of one or more of these four forms of structurally-mediated social connection makes an agent complicit in injustice and generates structural responsibilities for that agent. But each of these forms of social connection generates structural responsibilities of varied weight. Again, we cannot command agents to always prioritize the responsibilities generated by one of these forms of social connection over some other form. However, this does not mean that the different forms cannot be compared, generally, to guide agents in discharging their responsibilities. Generally, causal contribution is a stronger *kind* of structurally-mediated social connection to specific injustice than having structurally-enabled capacities, being a member of culturally-significant community, or occupying a social role. Further, unjustly benefiting from oppressive systems of social relationships, while not as strong a connection as causally contributing to their existence, is a stronger *kind* of structural connection than that of community or social role. And the formative relationships of a culturally-significant community establishes a connection that, though weaker than that created by causal contribution or unjust benefit, is stronger than merely occupying a social role with reasonable expectations to remedy injustice.

Though I can only appeal to common intuition, I suggest that responsible agents view structural responsibilities generated by the following *kinds* of social connection as generally weighted in this order: causal, capacity, communitarian, and social role. Generally speaking, causal contribution is a stronger *kind* of social connection than the others and, thus, generates weightier responsibilities, and this type of comparison can be carried out for determining relative strengths for the remaining three types of social connection. But this general observation is not enough to determine how an agent ought to prioritize her responsibilities. We must also take note that the strength of one's connection to specific injustice does not only depend on the kind of connection but also the *degree* of her connection. Roughly speaking, the degree of an agent's structurally-mediated social connection is *how much* of the specific form of her connection is manifest. For example, an agent can have varied degrees of causal contribution to a resulting injustice and, consequently, her causal connection can be of different strengths. An agent can have a range of social capacities enabled by her position in unjust social structures, and, thus, the responsibilities generated by her structurally-enabled capacities vary with that range. Community relationships can be more or less formative and, concurrently generate connections of greater or weaker strength. Social roles demand varied levels of commitment to combating injustice, giving rise to responsibilities of corresponding weight. Responsible agents must take into account the strength of their social connections to specific injustices to weigh the responsibilities these connections generate.

In the end, an agent ought to weigh their structural responsibilities according to the strength, understood in terms of both kind and degree, of the structurally-mediated social connections which generate those responsibilities. There is and can be no algorithm for doing so. Because the strength of the connection varies with both the kind of connection that it is and

the degree of the connection, the agent can only utilize these features of her connection as a general guideline. Even so, the final parameter urges the agent to act to remedy the injustices for which she is most complicit and, consequently, offer concrete guidance for weighing responsibilities as well as moral motivation for prioritizing some responsibilities over others.

6. The Charge of Social Paralysis

Because my account describes agents as complicit in and responsible for many instances of structural injustice, it may appear to critics that it makes every agent morally responsible for every injustice. The wide-reaching implications of my account of complicity, the critic might claim, burdens individual agents with the responsibility to fix all the world's problems. Given the extreme burden it places on individual agents, my account of structural responsibility may cause, what I call, social paralysis. The (theoretical) threat of social paralysis is just the worry that the account offered is not practicable because it presents agents with a moral burden that they cannot understand how to bear.

The charge of social paralysis can be interpreted as two distinct philosophical concerns. First, the charge may be just about the demandingness of the account. On this interpretation, the critic is just claiming that the mere fact that my account demands so much of individual agents is enough to demonstrate that cannot be appropriately action guiding. Any account of structural responsibility, on this interpretation, that depicts agents as responsible for so many distinct social wrongs, with little personal recourse to remedy those wrongs, demands too much of the individual agent to be a practicable account. This kind of account, according to the critic, implies that agents ought to devote all their time and energy to combating injustice. The sheer demandingness of the account provides a compelling reason to reject it.

The overdemandingness version of the charge of social paralysis, while a popular response to demanding accounts of responsibility for injustice, is ultimately unconvincing. There is no reason to view the level of responsibility an account demands as a relevant factor in assessing the theoretical adequacy of that account. If anything, a highly demanding account of individual moral responsibility for structural injustice may be, on its face, more adequate than an account that demands little of agents; in a deeply unjust and interconnected world, there are going to be a great many moral responsibilities to work to remedy injustice. Unease about the high level of structural responsibility my account attributes to individual agents is properly directed, not at my account as a theoretical concern, but rather at the present social situation as a moral emergency. The overdemandingness interpretation does not appear to offer a morally relevant reason for viewing my account as theoretically inadequate.

However, a proponent of this particular interpretation of the challenge of social paralysis might attempt to bolster their critique by appealing to the philosophical principle of "ought implies can." Such a critic might claim that my account violates this principle by assigning to individual agents moral responsibilities that they cannot completely discharge. Given my claims that no individual agent can discharge their structural responsibilities through isolated personal conduct and that individuals have a great many responsibilities to which they cannot fully attend, the account that I offer may appear to a critic to demand of agents moral actions that they cannot perform. My account, according to this critic, is overdemanding because it prescribes to agents remedial responsibilities that they cannot discharge. This version of the overdemandingness interpretation is more persuasive. There are far more structural responsibilities generated by an individual agent's social connections to injustice than she can be reasonably expected to discharge. Especially if we are being sensitive to the serious constraints on action for many

responsible agents, we might view my account as placing on individual agents a burden of responsibility that they cannot bear. We may worry that my account violates the basic moral principle of "ought implies can" by demanding too much of individual agents and, consequently, is not practicable.

Even if more compelling, this version of the overdemandingness objection misses its mark. My account of moral responsibility does not issue a list of imperatives that an agent must perform; rather, it establishes moral connections that obligate individual agents to work to transform unjust social structures *in some way*. These obligations are contextually-situated and open-ended. As I argue above, the individual agent discharges her structural responsibilities by drawing on the specific social resources afforded her by her social position, by aiming her actions at transformative ends, and by prioritizing the weightier responsibilities generated by her stronger connections to specific injustices. While the individual agent may have a great many structural responsibilities, the normative framework I have outlined suggests that the agent's strict obligations are to work to remedy injustices in which she is complicit in a manner appropriate to her social situation. The bounds of this obligation are the limits of her ability to work to remedy injustice; in other words, my account does not violate "ought implies can" because it only claims that the agent ought to do what she can. This means that an agent may have a great many structural responsibilities that she is not currently, given the constraints of her present social situation, able to discharge. Yet, she still has an obligation to work to remedy her weightiest responsibilities.

A second interpretation of the threat of social paralysis provides a much more substantive challenge to the practicability of my account. This interpretation focuses on the fact that social structures are amorphous and wide-reaching, making our connections to injustice not only

numerous but also unclear. My account claims that agents have a great many and weighty moral responsibilities to transform the unjust social structures in which they participate. However, discharging these responsibilities requires that we are able to identify our connections, discern the strength of those connections, and decide on the appropriate forms of transformative action. But this requirement is difficult to meet on an account that draws so many and amorphous social connections. This second interpretation claims that my account succumbs to the threat of social paralysis because it does not provide an adequate account of how to definitively discharge or even prioritize the many structural responsibilities it helps to enumerate.

This interpretation of the challenge posed by the threat of social paralysis is convincing. However, the objection it offers is not fatal for my account. Rather than a theoretical challenge that demonstrates the inadequacy of my account, the threat of social paralysis is a condition of any adequate account of structural responsibility. All adequate accounts suffer the threat of social paralysis for three reasons. First, the mere fact that our social world is deeply unjust confronts individual agents as a serious obstacle to their ability to discharge their structural responsibilities. The more unjust the social situation in which the individual agent finds herself situated, the greater the structural barriers to a more just world are; owing to this, a deeply unjust world is paralyzing to the individual agent.

Second, accounts of structural responsibilities are necessarily open-ended, which means that the account cannot provide a strict list of duties that the agent must perform. Responsibilities are not the same as duties. Responsibilities obligate the individual to act *in some way* to meet their responsibility, whereas duties require the individual agent to perform *some specific action* in a given context. Because of this difference, responsibilities are necessarily less definitive about how agents ought to proceed to meet their moral obligations.

Thus, accounts of moral responsibility for injustice cannot avoid the threat of social paralysis because they cannot definitely prescribe certain actions for agents to perform.

Finally, adequate accounts of structural responsibility cannot avoid the threat of social paralysis because they must remain sensitive to the specific characteristics of each individual agent's social position. This sensitivity requires that an adequate account of structural responsibility only offer generalizable claims about the conditions of social agency, the manifestations of structural complicity, and guidelines for discharging responsibilities. Greater specificity runs the risk of normalizing a narrow perspective on what constitutes structural injustice or how individual agents act in social contexts. Toward the aim of providing a comprehensive and systematic understanding of structural injustice that remains general enough to capture the wide variety of structural injustice and the diverse social situations in which responsible agents are embedded, an adequate account of structural responsibility must accept the threat of social paralysis that comes along with sacrificing specificity.

With all that said, my account ameliorates this threat better than alternative accounts. My account provides a more comprehensive and precise answer to each of the central questions to be answered by a theory of structural responsibility. Consequently, the conceptual resources it offers are more clearly action-guiding than those of alternative views. In particular, the normative framework for reasoning about how to discharge one's responsibilities I argue for above, though necessarily indeterminate, provides concrete guidance to responsible agents in deciding how to work to remedy injustice. Even offering a normative framework for discharging responsibilities is fairly unique for an account of responsibility for injustice, and my specific framework, because it coheres with the other components of my account, is both more specific and morally motivating than alternatives in its recommendations. My account does not escape

the threat of social paralysis, but it does the most to ameliorate this threat of the philosophical accounts available.

7. Parameters for Weighing and Prioritizing Responsibilities

An adequate account of structural responsibility must provide some form of guidance on how agents ought to discharge their structural responsibilities. Though this guidance cannot come in the form of a list of moral imperatives or even a definitive algorithm for determining which actions to perform, it must offer responsible agents a way for weighing and prioritizing their many and varied structural responsibilities. Further, the guidance offered must draw on other aspects of the account so as to not appear morally arbitrary. Throughout the chapter, I have explored possible parameters for reasoning about how to discharge one's structural responsibilities, and I have now come to the point where I can explicitly state these parameters. In deciding how she ought to discharge her structural responsibilities, the agent must consider:

1) Actual conditions of social agency—the agent must examine the specific cultural, economic, and political resources afforded by her structural positioning.

2) Utilizing social resources for transformative actions—the agent must exercise her agency toward the end of transforming the unjust systems of social relationships for which she is complicit.

3) Strength of her social connections—the agent must consider the relative strength of her structurally-mediated social connections to specific injustices, by examining both the kind and degree of these connections, to weigh the responsibilities these connections generate.

These three parameters provide a normative framework for understanding how an agent ought to go about discharging her structural responsibilities.

Given that we live in a deeply-unjust and heavily-interconnected world, individual agents are going to have a great many of differently-weighted structural responsibilities. The normative framework I have developed in this chapter provides parameters for reasoning about how to work to meet these responsibilities. In the end, there is no one correct way to work to remedy injustice; rather, we ought to do our best to identify the injustices for which we are most complicit, prioritize the responsibilities this complicity generates, and keep doing so to the best of our social capabilities.

Conclusion: A Situated Account of Structural Responsibility

In this dissertation, I build a situated account of individual moral responsibility for structural injustice. Much of the suffering and death in the world is neither natural nor inevitable, but rather is caused by the current structure of systems of social relationships. When systems of social relationships systematically harm members of some groups by positioning them to suffer in oppressive social relationships, they are *structurally* unjust. And, necessarily, there exists some set of agents who are morally responsible to remedy these injustices. We ought to conceptualize these agents as structurally-situated. Structurally-situated social agency explains that the conditions of our deliberate action are significantly shaped, but not determined, by how we are situated within complex and nested networks of social relationships. The capacity for deliberate action, however, allows us to transform the very structures that condition our agency. A structurally-situated agent's social connections to specific injustices make her complicit in those injustices, and her complicity in those injustices generates weighty responsibilities for her to work to remedy them. And In order to meet these responsibilities, a structurally-responsible agent must utilize the actual resources afforded her by her structural location, direct her action toward transformative action, and prioritize her weightier structural responsibilities.

These claims can be synthesized to offer the following definition of structural responsibility:

> *Structural responsibility* is a person's moral responsibility to work to remedy the specific injustices in which she is complicit because of her structural situation. This responsibility requires her to work to reform or transform the specific social structures that systematically produce and reproduce injustice in which she is situated.

This definition of structural responsibility can be unpacked by briefly explaining each of its four constitutive features:

1) A minimal account of structural injustice. The dynamic, yet enduring systems of social relationships in which an agent is positioned significantly shape her options for action in meeting her basic social needs and pursuing her life plans. Some of these systems of relationships, or social structures, place severe constraints on the actions of members of some social groups while also enabling members of other social groups to flourish. These structures are oppressive and, thus, are unjust. Necessarily, unjust social structures generate structural responsibilities to remedy them.

2) A structurally-situated account of moral agency. We ought to conceptualize the agents who bear structural responsibilities as structurally-situated. A structurally-situated account of social agency depicts an agent's options for action as largely shaped by her position in social structures, thus resisting the voluntarism of abstract individualist accounts. But it also depicts agents as having the ability to act in ways that affirm or transform the structures in which they are situated, thus resisting the determinism of encumbered agency accounts. Structurally-situated social agents are constrained by the specific conditions of their structural location but are also able to impact the make-up of the social structures in which they are situated.

3) Structurally-mediated moral complicity. An agent's structurally-mediated social connection to specific injustices makes her morally complicit in those injustices, and her complicity in those injustices is the only adequate moral basis of her structural responsibilities to remedy them. Her complicity provides weighty moral reasons for her to act to remedy those injustices to which she is connected.

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4) Normative parameters of reasoning. Structurally responsible agents ought to discharge their structural responsibilities by utilizing the cultural, economic, and political resources (such as powers, privileges, interests, and collective abilities) afforded them by their specific structural positions. They ought to utilize these resources to perform actions that aim to reconstitute the social structures in which they are situated in a more just manner. And they ought to prioritize the weightier structural responsibilities generated by the stronger kinds and degrees of their structurally-mediated social connection to specific injustices.

I offer this account as a theoretically-adequate understanding of the unique kind of individual moral responsibility generated by participating in unjust social structures.

My aim in the dissertation is to provide a systematic understanding of why and how we ought to work to make the world a more just place. The work of my dissertation is not just meant to satisfy my own intellectual curiosities, though these certainly play a significant role in how I have carried out the philosophical analysis in this dissertation. Rather, this work is meant to provide us with the conceptual and theoretical tools, as well as convincing moral reasons, to change the world. I realize that this aim is not perfectly realized in this dissertation and, moreover, that the philosophical standard it sets may not be realizable in an entire career of philosophy let alone a few short chapters of a dissertation, but it guides me to do philosophy in a way that is not only intellectually stimulating but also (hopefully) socially useful. This dissertation represents, to me, my first sustained, written contribution to both the field of philosophy and to the continued movement to realize social justice. My account of structural responsibility will be further developed, in a number of ways, in future work, but, here in the dissertation, this account provides a systematic and cohesive understanding of why it is I believe

we should work to realize a more just social world and how it is that we ought to go about doing

so.

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