

## Reflections on Equality, Value and Paradox

*By Saul Smilansky*

I consider two difficulties which have been presented to egalitarianism: Parfit's "Levelling Down Objection" (LDO) and my "Paradox of the Baseline" (POB). I show that making things worse for some people even with no gain to anyone is actually an ordinary and indeed necessary feature of our moral practice, yet nevertheless the LDO maintains its power in the egalitarian context. I claim that what makes the LDO particularly forceful in the case against egalitarianism is not the very idea of making some people worse off with no gain to others, but the disrespect for (non-egalitarian) value inherent in egalitarianism; and similarly that the POB is a reductio of choice (or luck)-egalitarianism because of its inversion of the intuitively correct attitude to the generation of value. I conclude that in the light of the absurdity and paradox so frequently lurking in moral and social life, and particularly with the complexity of modern life and obliquity of change, we need to be much more modest than egalitarians have been in putting forth ambitious moral and social models.

When they were young, my parents joined a kibbutz in the north of Israel. They did not stay there much longer than a year. As my mother told the story, she wanted to remain, but my father was too much of an individualist. Yet even for her the egalitarianism was often excessive. One of our family stories tells of a night when my mother was on guard duty. Suddenly she began hearing banging noises at a distance. Following the sounds to the kitchen of the kibbutz, she found herself staring at one of the more fanatical men in the commune, sitting with a hammer in his hand. He had placed all of the collective's dozens of cups on a table, and he was systematically lifting them, one after the other, and knocking off their handles. To my mother's horrified question, he replied quietly that a few cups had lost their handles, and so, in order to assure continuing equality among all

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the members of the kibbutz, it was necessary that no one should have a cup with a handle.

*Revisiting the Levelling Down Objection*

Derek Parfit would call this tale an instance of the “Levelling Down Objection” (LDO) (1998). If equality is a major value in itself, then knocking off the handles of all the kibbutz’s cups makes sense; but since making cups handle-less is manifestly absurd, the example (one of many possible ones, of course) discredits egalitarianism. The LDO has been a very influential objection against egalitarianism. The idea of making some people worse off merely for the sake of equality, even though no one benefits, is widely considered to be a *reductio* of egalitarianism.<sup>1</sup> But some egalitarians seem willing to accept a *limited* amount of levelling down, and so they are willing to swallow the objection in certain cases. Typical is Jonathan Wolff: “Sometimes, then, we should level down. But I have only suggested that this is relevant when there are symbolic factors at play, which send messages of deep political inequality. This is not the politics of envy, or a cancer that will spread to allow all sorts of levelling down. Thus I would provisionally conclude that levelling down can be reasonable in a very special sort of case. Those sympathetic to equality should not be ashamed of this” (Wolff, 2001.) The widespread agreement that the LDO is a big problem for egalitarianism nevertheless echoes Wolff’s apologetic tone.

The standard thinking here might be a bit too quick. Levelling down has two aspects: (a) making things worse for some people at no gain to anyone; and (b) doing so for the sake of equality. But large portions of commonsense morality countenance making things worse for some people even with no gain to anyone. This purportedly unique Achilles’ heel of egalitarianism as initially construed turns out to be an ordinary and indeed necessary feature of our moral practice, as the following common examples show:

- a. A temporary power shortage in a city of millions of inhabitants makes it imperative that the vast majority of them conserve electricity by refraining from switching on their air conditioners. If most people continue to use their air conditioners at peak hours, the electric grid will collapse, to everyone's detriment. Given the anticipated levels of usage, however, it is certain that the threshold consumption that triggers a collapse will not in fact be approached (and in any

case the usage of persons A, B, and C is too negligible to collapse the system). Whether A, B, and C will turn on their air conditioners, therefore, will have no effect on the functioning of the electric grid. Not using their air conditioners will make them extremely uncomfortable, and will bring no benefit to anyone.

b. Your country is at war, and there is a shortage of drinking water and food. You and your family, however, live on a small island off the mainland, and your house is just out of sight of the nearest beach. A stream crosses your land, and your numerous sheep graze on the nearby hill. Due to the war, all boats were confiscated, and hence it is impossible to send water or food over to the mainland. You have a beautiful flower garden you would like to continue to maintain, and you are planning a splendid feast. Not to water the garden or hold the feast would be worse for you and your family, and would benefit no one.

c. You are a police officer responsible for keeping safe the objects that prisoners must relinquish, and also those that belong to people who are hospitalized after car accidents. Yesterday you received the purse of a woman who died in a car accident. Her two children, aged 9 and 12 years, were her passengers in the car, but they were unharmed except for temporarily losing consciousness. You are told that this is a particular tragedy, because the children's beloved father had died from cancer two years ago. Going through the woman's purse, as is your duty, you find a page, which you read (looking for clues as to her medical condition). You learn the woman's secrets: she had not loved her husband (the children's father), who had repeatedly cheated on her, and she is sorry she had borne any children. The children, who are due to be released from the hospital tomorrow, and are unaware of these matters, will come to your office to pick up their mother's purse. If you give them the page, much pain will accrue to them, and no good will ensue to anybody.

Each of the three situations exemplifies a different type of moral position. The first seems to be based on contractual intuitions; the second, on virtue-ethical ones; while the third is primarily deontological. However we denominate these positions, we do insist that A, B,

and C cease using air conditioners during the specified hours. While the wartime island-dwellers cannot be expected to drink and eat only at the level of poverty then prevailing on the mainland, their continuing to nurture their water-intensive project of growing flowers, and their having a grand culinary feast, seem morally inappropriate. The police officer ought to do his duty and not sequester the mother's loose page. Perhaps not everyone shares my intuitions on all three cases, but I believe that most people share some of them. And even those who differ from me on all three examples would surely not think my moral judgment preposterous.

The very ordinariness of such consensus, however, has significant implications for Parfit's LDO. It would indeed be morally unfair that A, B, and C benefit while all the rest of us do not. Yet it would be similarly unfair for some kibbutzniks to have a handle with which to hold their cups while others will have to make do without handles. Following the constraints on using air conditioning meets the conditions of levelling down: it makes things worse for A, B, and C, and better for no one; yet we insist that they not use their cooling equipment. We probably also think that the islanders ought to delay their feast and restrain their gardening, and that the policeman ought to give their mother's papers to the children, although in both these cases as well matters will, as a result, be better for no one, and worse for some. (The third example does not involve equality, but makes things worse for some and good for no one.) Seemingly unaware that we are "levelling down", we habitually agree to make things worse for some and good for no one.

If my argument is convincing, we have taken egalitarianism out of the unpleasant corner in which it has found itself. For it turns out that there is nothing unique or even outstanding about the levelling-down tendencies of radical egalitarianism; we all do it. When Parfit asks whether it is not absurd to harm some at no benefit to anyone merely for the sake of equality, we can reply that levelling down in itself is not unacceptable. Something else, other than the mere fact of levelling down, would seem to be implicitly at work in cases of levelling down that we find unacceptable. Hence, the "obviousness" of Parfit's objection against egalitarianism is placed in doubt.

This, then, is the interim puzzle about the Levelling Down Objection: if levelling down is, in itself, so manifestly objectionable (as many of the anti-egalitarian examples show), then how to account for the fact that we level down a great deal of the time, and do so reasonably? By the same token, if our morality enables us to level down, then why is the

LDO so persuasive? How can levelling down be both a radical monstrosity and a reasonable commonplace? And what makes the LDO so persuasive in the egalitarian context?

*Choice-egalitarianism and the Paradox of the Baseline*

I have proposed (Smilansky, 2003; revised and reprinted in Smilansky, 2007) an argument against another strand of egalitarianism. Unlike previous egalitarian positions, choice-egalitarianism (or luck-egalitarianism, as it is commonly called) gives free choice a pivotal role by taking proper account of the role of choice and responsibility in moral justification. A person who requires more social resources because he freely makes himself dependent on an unequal share of such resources cannot demand of others that they finance his choice. If he develops a taste for expensive wines others need not finance this; and if he repeatedly lends his resources to risky business enterprises others need not pick up the tab when his gambles fail. Let us return for a minute to the handle-less cups. It does indeed seem to be less bad, even in terms of equality, if the handle of your cup is broken because you played catch with it, and the handle broke when the cup fell to the ground. It does not therefore seem fair that others should sacrifice the handles of their cups for your sake. Hence, choice-egalitarianism seems at one and the same time to be firmly egalitarian and to be able to avoid the charge of levelling down. In contrast, simple egalitarianism in this instance would be particularly outrageous: the only way it can compensate the grossly irresponsible for their own irresponsibility is to require levelling down at the expense of those behaving responsibly. Because of the role choice-egalitarianism allows for choice, incentives, free decision, and responsibility, this position also seems more compatible with a market economy and a society that enables individual self-development through open and diverse choices.

In egalitarianism, the normative baseline is equality. We can evaluate equality and inequality in terms of many factors: income, the existence of certain goods, well-being, and so on. Whatever factor we are evaluating, egalitarianism holds that the baseline is equality: our evaluation begins with the normative assumption that everyone should receive the baseline, unless we can justify the person's not receiving it. Divergence from this baseline requires justification. Justice is comparative among persons, for we compare people in the relevant respects, and inequality between them

needs to be justified. *Choice-egalitarianism* adds that the only acceptable justification for any inequality, for any person's having (receiving) less than others, is that the person has freely chosen it. (On choice-egalitarianism, see Cohen, 1989; Arneson, 1989, but see Arneson, 2000; Rakowski, 1991; Temkin, 1993. On the way in which the notion of the baseline operates in these contexts, see Smilansky, 1996a,b.)

The basic ethical idea of choice-egalitarianism is, more precisely, this: *if **a** is worse off than **b** in terms of factor F, choice-egalitarianism requires that **a** had an opportunity to be as well off as **b** in factor F, so that **a** is not as well off solely because of **a**'s free choices.*

Consider income. What is the normative baseline for evaluating inequalities, according to choice-egalitarianism? A first approximation is: the highest income that anyone possesses. Whatever this Highest Income may be, choice-egalitarianism holds that everyone ought to have an identical income, unless a given person's free choice led him or her to attain less.<sup>3</sup> For example, if at the end of the month one has less over-time pay because one decided to maximize one's leisure and not work over-time, then the ensuing inequality is perfectly justified (through one's choices), according to choice-egalitarianism.

But consider now the group of people who, however positive their motivation and however constant their efforts, they will not be able to gain most types of the goods that we have called 'factors'. They may, for instance, be so severely disabled that no one within a market economy that pursues self-interest has the slightest incentive to hire their services. Under capitalism, therefore, these people cannot generate any sort of income. Call these people Non-Effectives. According to choice-egalitarianism, Non-Effectives ought to get the baseline of Highest Income, since the basic moral implication of choice-egalitarianism is that *no one may have a higher income than Non-Effectives*. For if anyone's income is higher, this inequality cannot be justified since it was not by the free choices of Non-Effectives that they are worse off. Hence, for choice-egalitarianism, the social order in terms of income (or resources, or well-being, or whichever factors are to be equal under choice-egalitarianism) will find Non-Effectives at the top, permanently and unconditionally "stuck" at the baseline. People who are Effectives, that is, who are not Non-Effectives, will have progressively less and less income, according to the extent to which they fall short of Highest Income

(or of Highest Potential Income) by freely choosing to work less, or by choosing not to develop their income-enhancing abilities further, or by their other free choices.

Here, then, is the Paradox of the Baseline. For choice-egalitarianism, Non-Effectives must necessarily be at the baseline of Highest Income (or even Highest Potential Income), while Effectives are very likely to fall much below the baseline in spite of their lifelong efforts and contributions. Choice-egalitarianism indexes every Non-Effective to the person who has the highest income, whom we can call Bill Gates (or even to what his income would be were he to meet his maximal earnings potential), while normally hard-working people are very unlikely to come even close. This means that choice-egalitarianism cannot give Non-Effectives what it must (by its own tenets), and at the same time do comparative justice to hard-working Effectives.

This consequence ought to trouble egalitarians, even irrespective of the question of how it affects the issue of whether their position may remain attractive to others. The obligation to position the Non-Effectives as high as Bill Gates cannot be reconciled with the moral need to maintain a reasonable relation between the positions of Non-Effectives and Effectives. These two requirements are contradictory. Moreover, choice-egalitarianism “penalizes” the human ability to make choices, for it leads to the conclusion that those who are in a position to make choices that could enhance their incomes and their opportunities for contributing to the well-being of others are very likely to fall well below the level that those who cannot make such choices are unconditionally qualified to occupy. The hard-working Effectives are those who will finance the opulent life style of the unemployable Non-Effectives, whose income and resources will be indexed to those of Bill Gates.

This conclusion is both absurd and morally repugnant. The prospect that it or any comparable view might be applied to a free and modern society becomes impossible to entertain.

Two replies to the paradox may seem to be available. First, perhaps choice-egalitarianism need not use a ‘top’-baseline. Why not, for instance, use a ‘middle’-baseline? This might amount to a certain decent level of income or resources at which all citizens could function. By their free choice (say, by deciding not to work), some people would forfeit that level, or they could reach above it (say, by working extra hours). Persons with egalitarian sensibilities would find many attractions in a social

order with such a ‘middle’-baseline, among them that the income and resources of Effectives would depend on their choices, while the income and resources of Non-Effectives (who cannot fall below the baseline because they are unable to work) would be at the fairly high baseline despite their condition.

But this ‘middle’-baseline proposal is inadequate. From the choice-egalitarian perspective, *any* person’s being less well off than any other in terms of the pertinent factor can be in that circumstance only through that first person’s free choice. But this manifestly will not be the case in a ‘middle’-baseline world, because here some people will be significantly better off than the Non-Effectives, while the Non-Effectives will not have been able to choose to reach that much higher level. Hence only a ‘top’-baseline does justice to the deep intuitions of choice-egalitarianism.<sup>4</sup>

The second possible reply is to perhaps admit the Paradox but attempt to defuse it by claiming that choice-egalitarianism does not claim to be a complete account of how a society should arrange its social and economic affairs. This is a sensible move, and choice-egalitarians have indeed limited the range of their proposal in this way. However, it will not do as a way of confronting the Paradox of the Baseline any more than it does in its attempt to dismiss the LDO. The paradox does not threaten some marginal feature of the choice-egalitarian structure, or some feature that emerges only in the extremes of fully implementing choice-egalitarianism within social policy. On the contrary, the Paradox of the Baseline poses a fundamental threat because it follows from the basic ethical structure of choice-egalitarianism, and it therefore concerns any social order that is based on that version of egalitarianism.

Parfit’s Levelling Down Objection and my Paradox of the Baseline show the dubiousness of egalitarianism, although they do so in different ways. In the LDO, egalitarianism seems obliged to level down: equality is achieved, but at a price that is at best grotesque and - when matters become serious - terrible. In the Paradox of the Baseline, egalitarianism seems to level up (a certain group): it creates a particularly odd sort of inequality, and a ridiculous situation. But however they differ, both arguments show that egalitarianism is unacceptable. Even if my skeptical defense of “levelling down” works to some extent, the obligation to level down for egalitarian reasons frequently makes egalitarianism intuitively unacceptable.



We need to examine why the traditional LDO is so intuitively effective against egalitarianism even while equivalent practices are widespread in commonsense morality (as in the three cases we examined). Yet even that perplexing outcome does not lead us to doubt that the LDO is a serious objection to egalitarianism. The Paradox of the Baseline is also a reductio of (a prominent version of) egalitarianism. That a responsibility condition needs to be added to egalitarianism – a proposal that is prima facie plausible – turns out to be deeply self-destructive. Both the LDO and the Paradox point to deep problems with egalitarianism. I want now to investigate these problems.

*The first lesson: the destruction of value*

The first problem has to do with value. In considering the tension between equality and what sorts of things human beings consider valuable, let us assume that most people have a rough and not radically dissimilar understanding of what value is: such things as happiness, freedom, health, beauty, and knowledge. Although equality itself may also be considered a value (to decide otherwise would prejudge the issue), when I speak here of value I will refer to these other values. This stipulation lets us to consider the contrast between them and equality.

The LDO is a forceful objection, in my opinion, because it shows that egalitarianism is, by its very logic, problematically related to value: doing things simply in order to equalize everyone cannot take value into consideration; it is a different sort of concern, and easily becomes antithetical to value. Some people will be made to have considerably less happiness, freedom, health, beauty, and so on, *just* because other people cannot attain a similar level for themselves. In the Paradox of the Baseline, egalitarianism is likewise objectionable because it so strikingly disconnects value and the production of value from the level at which different people end up economically and socially. For the Non-Effectives who produce no value at all end up at the top, at the expense of the hard-working Effectives who, in spite of their productivity, end up at the bottom – and stuck with the responsibility to keep the NEs at a fabulous level of wealth. Both the LDO and the Paradox point to a (perhaps the) major problem with egalitarianism: its dismissive relationship to value.

Briefly considering the *Value-Focused Society* (VFS), a different social order that takes the production of value particularly seriously, can make this evident. This social order's focus on creating value does not mean that broadly egalitarian matters will be of no concern. Equality in voting rights and equality before the law will undoubtedly be strictly adhered to in order to enlist widespread support for the value-oriented arrangements. Moreover, because talents are spread erratically in populations, a value-oriented society will wish to find and benefit from those who have the greatest potential to produce value, whatever their social background. And even beyond the need for particular talents, a value-oriented modern society will require an educated, motivated workforce. For these reasons, broadly egalitarian practices (a social welfare net, opportunity for social mobility, some investment in all segments of the population) will be necessary.

The distinctiveness of a VFS society will be the high level of its effort to motivate its members to create value. Successful contributors will be strongly praised and rewarded. The understanding of the notion of the morally good itself will come closer to that of "a contributor to value". The culture will not emphasize those measures in which all people are equal whatever they do (or indeed whether they do anything or nothing). It will instead emphasize areas in which some people can become far more valuable – because they contribute so much more. And questions as to whether someone who has a native talent or an unusual social background has made great contributions with the help of that element, or whether others could have also made such contributions, will become much more subdued than they are today. In other words, social practices and reactions will closely track the concern with value and its production, while being fairly dismissive of questions related to equality and the need to justify inequality.

This is not the place to consider whether a VFS is to be preferred to what are in most ways the much more egalitarian societies of contemporary modern democracies. But through reflecting about such a sketch of a VFS we see at once that, on a spectrum of societies, it lies at the opposite end from a society bent on levelling down, with our societies located somewhere in the middle. This exercise helps us to see that what primarily troubles us about levelling down is the loss of value. The three examples of the ways we commonly "level down" almost without realizing and

without being troubled by our doing so are not instances of significantly harming value. They display circumstances in which some people are made worse off without benefiting anyone. Even so, some positive moral purpose is served without great loss of value (in at least the examples of the island dwellers and the users of air conditioners), and hence we approve or accept them. It is unfair that some people continue to enjoy the pleasures of air conditioning while benefiting from the abstinence of others; it is unvirtuous to enjoy feasts while others in one's society are hungry under wartime conditions; and it seems wrong for a police officer to withhold a deceased mother's papers from her children. The wrongness in these cases is not fundamentally (or even at all) about inequality as such; they are distinctly moral arguments of different kinds. A case such as that of the handle-basher, by contrast, essentially places equality in opposition to value (of aesthetics and of pleasure in life), and to that person no other moral concern applies. In more serious examples, such as withholding medical treatment from some people just because there is not enough of it to help everyone, levelling down seems similarly counterintuitive. By the moral lights of most people, equality by itself cannot carry the intuitive burden. It cannot justify such a significant loss of value.

A similar conclusion follows from the Paradox of the Baseline. The idea that, for the sake of some egalitarian theory, hard-working producers of value will support nonworking Non-Effectives in a life of opulent ease is unacceptable. It is true that the Non-Effectives are not at fault for their disabilities, and that hence they do not deserve to have less than anyone else. But their misfortune is insufficient to justify social arrangements that are so harmful to and disrespectful of value, and that run so strikingly counter to a morality that takes into account producing value. It seems to me, then, that the force of the LDO and the Paradox of the Baseline primarily lies with the idea that value, beyond egalitarianism, matters a great deal, and the attitudes and rewards that people receive cannot be too radically divorced from the role that persons play in producing value. These ideas, it seems to me, are responsible for the force the LDO and the Paradox of the Baseline exert against egalitarianism.

When considering egalitarianism, philosophers habitually make concessions unnecessarily, and we limit the scope of our attention. If a man's parents did not love him, they thereby hand him an enormous problem that stunts his emotional

development, affecting his life negatively beyond all comparison to many other disadvantages. Yet even convinced egalitarians are not inclined to allocate resources so that the best therapists can be hired in order to help such a man for as long as he might need them. Philosophers typically exclude the strictly personal sphere from their egalitarian concerns. And yet if we did not, levelling down here could lead to disallowing *other* persons to associate with their own parents until every person with unloving parents has been treated and has recovered emotionally. Likewise, since few things matter more to most people than loving someone and being loved, we might also be led to allocating and switching partners by some egalitarian mechanism, evening things out so that no one ends up spending a whole life with his or her beloved while others without beloveds remain deprived. Just so, we would fall ever more swiftly into the fatal jaws of the Levelling Down Objection. Love, companionship, marriage, and family life are major sources of value, and to sacrifice them for the sake of equality is ludicrous.

The Paradox of the Baseline leads egalitarianism to similar absurdity. If happiness or honor are the factors to be equalized, then, according to choice-egalitarianism, no one may be allowed to be happier than the greatest depressive, nor may anyone be honored more than the least respected person, whatever his or her achievements or contributions, unless the depressives or disrespected persons have freely made themselves so (see also Smilansky, 1995).<sup>5</sup>

*The second lesson: complexity, change, and the need for modesty*

Our situations as social beings are immensely complicated, and they are frequently in flux. Handles will fall off mugs, medical resources that can serve only some of the potential beneficiaries will become available, and the “working class” will shrink. At every level, change soon makes our habits, predictions, and expectations outdated. The strict egalitarianism of the handle-basher is not the sophisticated choice-egalitarianism of contemporary philosophers and social theorists, but every such ideology and theory will in time fail. It will run afoul of change, or it will too radically destroy value, or it will be entangled in its own paradoxes – indeed, probably all three.

We need to modify our moral theories and social constructions, molding them to serve the often erratic series of changes. Moral systems that greatly harm the

enlargement of value, or that cannot accommodate radical change, will wither away, but they will probably also cause much damage before they do so. Moreover, the evolutionary perspective has been radically shortened: within our lifetime, radical changes in human nature itself will become possible for the first time in history. Transhuman, subhuman, and nonhuman beings (robots) will soon transform our societies, including the ways we think about value, human rights, and equality. Such extreme technological changes are likely to generate new paradoxes.

So the upshot of this second lesson, which is also indirectly about value, is not that Karl Marx got the questions of economic motivation and information spectacularly wrong (although he did); or that John Rawls made glaring mistakes in his estimate of the results of the veil of ignorance (which he did); or that choice-egalitarians did not foresee the implications of the mixture of egalitarianism and choice (they did not). The lesson is not that here or there a mistake has been made, but that some other, nonegalitarian, grand theory is correct, but that we need to be skeptical about the quest for a grand theory as such. Levelling Down societies have been tried, and they led to Mao's cultural revolution and to Pol Pot. Choice-egalitarianism has yet to be tried in such a broad and systematic way, but the Paradox of the Baseline shows its inherent potential for generating similar social dementia.

Others before me have argued for broadly similar conclusions. Mine are not fundamentally different from those taught, in different ways and in different disciplines, by Frederick Hayek, Karl Popper, and Isaiah Berlin, to name but three of the more prominent thinkers. Well-meaning intellectuals seem particularly tempted to devise grand theories, and so every generation needs to learn anew some crucial lessons in modesty. Paradoxes are particularly effective teachers. It is telling that moral paradoxes have been so largely neglected, unlike in other parts of philosophy.<sup>6</sup> There is possibility for rational understanding, and room for social improvement, but when pursuing them we must think critically and skeptically, and step gingerly. Absurdity and paradox wait to ambush us as we make our philosophical turns in moral and social life, just as in other parts of our lives.<sup>7</sup>

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## Notes

1. The LDO gains much of its force from the egalitarian tenet that some persons will be deprived by others of goods or services, and is less persuasive when voluntary self-deprivation is involved. We might be able to see some potential attractiveness in a supererogatory ideal of choosing never to drink with a cup, not even with a handle-less cup (as Diogenes reportedly did). But requiring that everyone do so for the sake of equality is completely different, and this is the matter that concerns us.

2. A notable exception is Larry Temkin (1993), who argues against what he calls “The Slogan”, the idea that something cannot be good if it is not good for anyone. He claims that levelling down for the sake of equality can be morally better, in one sense, even though it is not better for anyone.

3. Arguably the baseline is located even higher. For choice-egalitarianism, the baseline could perhaps be the earning level of the persons most able to earn high incomes if those persons were to decide to work as hard as they can at the position at which they could have the highest income. I call this Highest Potential Income. However, even Highest Income suffices to let the paradox be revealed.

4. But see Manor (2005) and my reply (2005).

5. Kasper Lippert-Rasmussen (2004) indeed attempts to defuse my challenge by focusing on well-being rather than on income or resources. He does so because perhaps no one is strictly “non-effective” in his or her capacity for well-being. But taking this direction would make matters worse overall for the egalitarian, since the need for compensation would then not stop with income (even with equalizing Bill Gates’s income!). Better for the egalitarian that we think about these matters in terms of the standard factors such as income and resources (Smilansky, 2004).

6. The importance of paradoxes in epistemology, logic, metaphysics, and philosophy of science is manifest, with hundreds of books and papers available, and more appearing regularly. While many survey articles, special issues of journals, and numerous collections of papers are devoted to paradox in these areas, and often to individual paradoxes, to the best of my knowledge only three academic books on moral paradoxes have appeared in English: Derek Parfit's *Reasons and Persons* (1984), the late Gregory Kavka's book on paradoxes of nuclear deterrence (1987), and my *10 Moral Paradoxes* (2007).

7. We must not, however, lose sight of the benefits of theorizing and of idealism: one of the contributions made by Juha Räikkä to our contemporary understanding of moral and social problems is the way he has showed how we are frequently (as with the idea of the “second-best”, or with Sidgwick’s “dilemma of conservative justice”) too quick to see difficulties and think that we should compromise our theories and ideals (Räikkä, 2014).