EQUALITY, ROLES AND STATION

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Alex Barber

In this talk I look at the topic of distributive justice through a role-shaped lens. Specifically, I ask what happens to the egalitarianism debate if we split a familiar normative question, Q…

Q. *How and why should resources be distributed across a population?*

…into two less familiar ones, Q(i) and Q(ii).

Q(i). *How and why should resources be distributed across roles?*

Q(ii). *How and why should roles be distributed across a population?*

Whether Q(i) and Q(ii) combine to ask all that Q is asking will depend on how substantive a notion of role we invoke. If everything is a role—being a promise receiver, for example, or a winning-lottery-ticket finder—then there is unlikely to be much that is relevant to distributive justice that is not somehow related to roles. Restricting our use of the word 'role' to relatively complex and involving personal social functions, on the other hand, could well leave a residue of factors that, though relevant to the proper distribution of goods, are outside the scope of Q(i) and Q(ii). Either way, it is clear that the various and differing roles each of us occupies, and the resources directed towards or away from us by virtue of this occupancy, are large,

non-trivial and under-analysed determinants of 'who should get what' (though that way of talking about distributive justice is itself something I shall question).

The talk has two halves. The first is broad and analytical: I identify three characteristic features of any social role and describe how each is pegged to the distribution of a society's resources, both as a matter of fact (i.e. it is relevant to how resources *are* parcelled out) and normatively (i.e. it is relevant to how they *should be* parcelled out).

The second half is more focused, though still fairly speculative. Using ideas that emerge in §1, it develops, or sketches, a role-theoretic defence of structural inequality. The simple thought underlying this defence is that different but equally important roles call for different levels of resource, and so inevitably their occupiers must be differently resourced too. Structural inequality, on this picture, is a just consequence, if not exactly a welcome one. I think this argument deserves a serious response, if only because I suspect it is a plausible reconstruction of how many high-salaried professionals (including academics) would justify their relatively high standards of living. That said, all I do in this talk is outline the argument and sketch some possible egalitarian responses, incorporating some ideas of John Rawls and Gerry Cohen on the justifiability of structural inequality.[1]

§1 *Roles and distributive justice: a map*

Any role can be individuated according to three distinguishing facets or *characteristic features* of the type listed as A to C below. This proposal as such is not meant to be

[1] 'Egalitarian' is a spectral and perspectival term. Rawls is an egalitarian from, say, Nozick's perspective, but a non-egalitarian from Cohen's. It is a useful word all the same.

controversial. What will be controversial is the import of these features for resource distribution. This first section offers a map of possibilities rather than a specific way of accommodating roles within a particular theory of distributive justice.

A. THE ROLE'S ENTRANCE AND EXIT CONDITIONS

All roles have entrance and exit conditions that specify when some individual counts as having legitimately taken on or left the role. The entrance condition for POPE is to have been elected by the cardinals, while its exit condition is, or was until quite recently, to die. The entrance and exit (E&E) conditions for HOUSEHOLDER, and most other roles, are less extreme. Besides varying in their content, E&E conditions vary in their status. Some are formally expressed, others are implicit but widely understood, others still are up for grabs or in constant flux. Some are vague, some are precise. Some are strictly enforced in practice, others observed in the breach.

Entrance and exit conditions as I shall understand them are normative: they say what *ought* to be the case if someone is to take on the role. The role DOG OWNER brings this out for exit conditions. It is easy enough to leave this role in practice: kill or abandon the dog. It is relatively difficult to leave the role legitimately. Legitimacy requires waiting until the dog dies an unprompted death, or passing on the role (and the dog) to a new, willing and trustworthy occupant. That a role has been left illegitimately does not mean one is still in it.[2] The same goes for entrance conditions.

[2] In some cases the fact that one has left illegitimately may have moral significance, including obligations, but these are not obligations attaching to you qua role occupier. E.g. if you abandon a dog you may be said to owe someone who reluctantly takes it in; but that debt is one you have qua *ex*-owner.

The normal entrance condition for MONARCH is to be heir apparent (in accordance with the local laws of succession) when an existing occupant dies. This is normative in the sense that it specifies only what ought to be necessary and sufficient for become the monarch. That does not meant no one has ever become monarch through usurpation. I shall be concerned here with normative E&E conditions, not their real-world cousins.

Alongside the question of what the normative E&E conditions for a given role are is a distinct (and equally normative) meta-question: what ought to govern the choice of normative E&E conditions for a given role? The question matters in the present context—i.e. in the context of thinking about distributive justice—because an understanding of entrance and exit conditions will give us the answer we need to Q(ii), above. Take *entrance* conditions first, and on obvious illustration of this: MONARCH can only legitimately be entered into through having the requisite lineage. There is a purported reason for this, an answer to the meta-question: widespread popular belief in something like stock, or the hereditariness of a capacity and right to govern, encouraged by pageantry and real or apparent tradition, make hereditary monarchies a very stable form of government. A welcome side-effect for the lucky occupant is a massive reallocation of resources to support them in their role, a redistribution of resources based entirely on parentage. And for *exit* conditions, consider TENURED ACADEMIC. The tenure system operating in e.g. North America is designed to protect academic freedom. But a happy side-effect for the role's occupiers is jobs for life, a benefit available to very few.

These exceptional cases illustrate the mundane point that who gets to occupy which role, and for how long, has a significant impact on patterns of well-being in a

society. In the second part of the talk I describe how this fact about roles might be taken to support deep structural inequalities.

B. THE OBLIGATIONS AND ENTITLEMENTS GENERATED BY OCCUPANCY OF THE ROLE

The pattern of well-being across a society is affected not only by who gets to *occupy (and carry on occupying)* its various roles, but also by the second characteristic feature of roles: the set of obligations and entitlements associated with those roles and taken on by those roles' occupants.[3] More attention has been given to obligations than to entitlements in the literature on roles (and adjacent notions such as associative duties and special relationships). Whatever the reasons for this, it is an important omission in the context of wanting an answer to Q(i). Role entitlements—by which I mean the widely varying forms of power including a support structure, ability and permission to access high quality data, social prestige, a salary, expenses—are society's resources by another name. They affect the quality of the role-occupant's life.

It is not only the role entitlements—and certainly not only salary—that affects the occupant's well-being, however. Fulfilling the obligations associated with a role is itself rewarding, so long as the function of the role is one the occupier regards as

[3] The normativity of these second characteristics is not in question since *obligation* and *entitlement* are explicitly normative notions. Still, notice how a distinction can again be drawn between the normativity of the obligations and entitlements themselves, and the normative meta-question of what obligations and entitlements *should* attach to a given role.

valuable.[4] It is in this respect that the phrase 'who gets what' is misleading. Who gets to *do* what, and how *well resourced* they are as they do it, can be as important to well-being as passively received entitlements such as salary-plus-pension. Let us call the effect on an occupant's well-being of the package of obligations and entitlements that come to a person by virtue of their occupancy of a role the role's *welfare value* for that person. While welfare value needs to be relativized to the individual occupier—not all jobs are equally enjoyable for everyone—there is clearly some truth in the thought that we can abstract away from individuals somewhat and regard roles as having an unequal welfare value.

Entitlements are bound together with duties, not merely as the package that make up the welfare value of the role, *but by the need for entitlements to support performance of duties in a coherent way*. A medical professional, for example, is obliged to have regard for the welfare of her patients by virtue of her role; but alongside these role-generated obligations are role-generated entitlements, such as ready access to relevant medical records, a set of qualified colleagues occupying complementary roles, an office, access to surgeries, the means to travel to conferences and so forth. (Entitlements also, standardly, include a salary. It is conceivable that, even without a meaningful salary, a person could fill the role SURGEON effectively. But for this to be so they would need an *ersatz* salary in the form of a package including a company car, company accommodation, company crèche, company

[4] Rawls recognizes this in the passage: '[R]ealization of self… comes [at least in part] from a skillful and devoted exercise of social duties…, one of the main forms of human good' (Rawls 1990: 73).

pension, etc. Salaries are usually simply more convenient to both parties.[5]) Entitlements and obligations, we might think, should be glued together by the ought-implies-can principle: you are entitled to whatever you need to fulfil the obligations and no more. Fewer entitlements will render the duties a hollow list, while extra entitlements will be redundant or wasted resource.

This is echoed in the 'need to know' principle that now standardly governs permission to access data within public institutions . This particular entitlement is hardly, in and off itself, conducive to welfare value (to anyone other than a compulsive snoop); but it is part of a package of salaries and status that, together with the rewards of the work itself (even allowing for long hours), gives DOCTOR a relatively high welfare value. And notice how taking many of these entitlements away from the role —not just data-access permission but also effective staff support, robust career-long training, etc.—would not only reduce its welfare value (something we may want in order to create a more equal distribution of resources), it would warp the role itself, leaving the occupant unable to perform the role's obligations (something we wouldn't want if we value the function of the role). This truism, then—the fact that role entitlements and role obligations should be bound together by the glue of ought-implies-can—has the potential to conflict with any drive towards equality across roles.

The potential is apparent, too, in Marx's maxim, *From each according to ability to each according to need*. This can be read, not in the usual way as the Gold Standard of egalitarian principles, but as a defence of a modern form of *noblesse*

[5] This way of looking at salaries leaves open the question of whether the salaries people *in fact* receive as formal entitlements associated with a role they occupy are *genuinely* needed or sufficient to fulfil the associated obligations effectively. More on this below.

oblige.[6] For we can think of the abilities (e.g. an ability to teach) as themselves generating needs, perhaps even quite substantial needs if the abilities are to manifest themselves to best effect (e.g. training, equipment, respect from society, small class sizes, time to prepare, leisure and salary to recover, attendance at professional conferences for career development, a cosmopolitan existence,…). Meeting these needs, thereby permitting the abilities to be realized, will be hugely rewarding to the teacher herself, of course, in ways that push towards social inequality. Resourcing the TEACHER role properly, then, will unavoidably lead to inequalities in the welfare values of the various roles. REMOVALS OPERATIVE, after all, does not generate the same needs. It's a draining enough job, certainly, but one doesn't become significantly better at it through expensive career-development training. And while one can be exhausted and still lift things down a stairwell, it is hard to teach well when physically or psychologically depleted.

In practice a role's entitlements often fail to match up to the obligations and the role suffers a decline in welfare value. If teachers are not allowed to teach anything but a narrowly circumscribed curriculum, then the welfare value of TEACHER will be lower (for most individuals) than if teachers are given more flexibility. But there may independent reasons for wanting a narrow curriculum—reasons that lie outside the question of how a given teacher may be enabled to perform the role to maximum effect. Perhaps pupils benefit overall when there is no risk that their teacher will go off on some idiosyncratic tangent instead of covering a core topic properly. True, teachers won't do this (or won't do it in a way that damages their pupils' education) if

[6] Marx 1941 [1875], Part I. Marx was not the first to express the sentiment. One quirk to bear in mind was that Marx thought the maxim could only be implemented in a communist epoch of plenty. I am thinking of how the maxim plays out in the actual world.

the role attracts high-calibre candidates who are then properly trained. But perhaps it is easier to recruit and train people affordably if the job to be done requires less good judgement. Good judgement, properly honed, comes at a price, after all.

This last example is a reminder that which entitlements ought to be associated with which roles is going to depend not only on the obligations associated with the role but also on how *important* it is that the role is performed well.

C. THE PURPOSE OF THE ROLE

The occupier of the role performs, ostensibly anyway, some function, bringing about some good. This is the third characteristic feature of the role. (Most roles are systemic, meaning they have an institutional context. The purpose of such roles is to contribute in some specified way to the larger purpose of the institution.)

The import of this for the equality debate is simply that if the purpose of the role (or the institution into which it is embedded) is not significant, resourcing the role properly will be a low priority, and this will have an inevitable impact on the quality of life for the role's occupant. Individuals can shift between roles, of course. But if the roles available to shift into and out of are relatively fixed and unequal in welfare value, the result will be social mobility against a background of structural inequality.

Some roles' functions *are*, plausibly, more important than others. Societies certainly have varying perceptions of their relative importance. This is manifest in shifts in social policy that affect levels of resourcing (financial and less tangible resources like regard and security) for a given role and hence how well that role can be executed by the occupant. We've seen this in the case of TEACHER. Another

example is PARENT (the role as opposed to the biological relation[7]). The function of this latter role is to nurture one or more children, but how well the role's occupant will be able to perform this role will vary according to the quality of support—and the level of resourcing—they receive from their community and society. But, to remake a point made already, if resources *are* kept away from the parenting role (so that it has low status, is incompatible with a non-domestic career, does not entail state or employer financial support, nursery places are sparse or inadequate, etc.), this affects the *welfare value* of the role as well as the *performance* of the role. That is, it not only means children are less effectively nurtured, it makes life worse for the role occupant. Variations in perceived importance of the role's purpose therefore bear on the answer we give to Q(i).

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To help draw the points made under A to C together, call the suite of roles available in a society (either there for the filling or potentially creatable), together with their characteristic features, the society's *role profile*. I have described how all three characteristic-feature types in a society's role profile have normative import for the quality of life for the potential role occupants who make up that society. (A) The E&E conditions affect who should be able to *access* the roles with high welfare value; (B) the obligations and entitlements that should attach to a role affect the *level* of welfare value for its occupants; and (C) the importance of the role's function should

[7] The biological relation is, though, relevant to the role's entrance conditions, in complex ways examined in Porter 2012. She ends up diagnosing two distinct roles, parent-as-creator and parent-as-carer, each with its own repertoire of obligations.

arguably govern how much resource is directed at the role, which again affects the quality of life for the occupant, either by causing a mismatch between entitlements and obligations, or downgrading the obligations into something it is less rewarding to do.

It is also true—though I have not played this up here—that the different characteristic features of a role are tied to each other. Within (B), the obligations and entitlements should be bound up with one another; between (A) and (B), the E&E conditions should be relevant to the successful execution of the obligations; between (B) and (C), the obligations should be such that the occupant's carrying them out means the role's function is fulfilled; and again between (B) and (C), the extent to which we value the function will affect.

Roles and their three characteristic features, then, form a complex web, the various threads of which tug the distribution of resources in particular directions. We should not approach either topic—the optimal role profile for a society or distributive justice—in isolation.

§2 *The role-theoretic case for structural inequalities*

In this section I use some thoughts that emerged in the first section to generate a case for structural inequality, built around what I'll refer to as three bold arguments. I don't endorse this case; I do, though, think it replicates or reconstructs popular *de facto* justifications for differing standards of living, which are often couched in terms of what a person does—their role. I'll then say how an egalitarian might respond, and an anti-egalitarian respond to that, and so on.

The first of these three bold role-theoretic arguments has already been given.

1. Roles with an important function should be properly resourced.
2. Sometimes, the proper resourcing of two roles of equal importance (e.g. BUILDER, TENURED ACADEMIC) unavoidably benefits the filler in unequal ways.

So: It is sometimes appropriate to benefit people differently according to their roles.

1 is plausible. The interest comes when we combine it with 2. 2 is an idea I illustrated by describing cases where we may want to properly resource the role rather than any specific occupant, but of course in resourcing the role we often unavoidably benefit the specific occupant. It will be next to impossible to resource the role TENURED ACADEMIC without leaving the occupant better off than the occupant of a properly resourced REFUSE COLLECTOR role, important though both roles clearly are. The former will, of necessity, receive years of educational attention, cultural privilege, space to do research, and all the rest (quite apart from any wage differences). So although both roles are important, and so both should be properly resourced, all is not equal for the occupants. They differ in welfare value. We end up with an inequality of roles—a kind of structural inequality because it is consistent with social mobility.

The second bold argument turns on another thought found in the first section: that sometimes the function of two roles will differ in their levels of significance. Where this is true, the level of resourcing should be also differ. Again, this is a decision grounded in the nature of roles that has (not necessarily intended) implications for the occupants of roles. Other things equal, one is better off in a properly resourced role than in an improperly resourced one. (The first thought, in

contrast, was that other things equal, one is better off in a role the proper resourcing of which rains more resources—entitlements—on the occupant.)

The third bold argument is one I have not yet mentioned, but is simple enough: the E&E conditions should be such that the occupant arrived at through their application will be able to fulfil the role's obligations (given its entitlements). The best person available for the job should be offered the job, theirs to keep until they are no longer the best person for the job. Again, this will justify different treatment for different people, given that different roles have different welfare values.

These three bold arguments have something in common. Each argues for a normative conclusion concerning a society's role profile with reference to roles' characteristic features and their relation to one another, *with no regard to the import of those characteristic features for the people who will sit as occupants within the roles* (or who won't, as it may be). This, an egalitarian can say, is entirely unmotivated. There is nothing to stop us (she can continue) constraining the role profile of a society in such a way that quality of life is equal for all occupants, or as equal as possible. 'As equal as possible' could be something like 'No other role profile would make the least well off better off'—a variant of Rawls' Difference Principle, though he expressed the point in terms of the institutions making up the basic structure of society rather than roles more narrowly conceived.

Call this the *obvious egalitarian rejoinder*. I don't think it quite works, not without further work anyway. It is one thing to say that an egalitarian principle—such as this version of Difference Principle—should be respected. It is another thing to say that the society we end up with *if* we respect it will lack inequalities.

This gap is brought out clearly by Rawls himself in his discussion of the 'entrepreneurial class', which he envisages existing to the benefit of the least well off,

even if at the same time they benefiting themselves massively. The Difference Principle is thus potentially consistent with 'deep inequalities' and 'the most extreme disparities in wealth and income'.[8] So the creation and protection of inequality-generating roles like BANKER and ENTREPRENEUR is, potentially anyway, consist with endorsement of egalitarian scruples.

An egalitarian could at this point take advantage of G.A. Cohen's dismissal of the idea that the Difference Principle is consistent with inequalities created by the need to give incentives (in the form of high salaries and a permissive taxation policy) to wealth-generating entrepreneurs, bankers, the 'talented', and so on. Cohen says that *if* such inequalities are required to improve the lot of the least well off, that can only be because the entrepreneurs, bankers, etc., are not themselves committed to the Difference Principle. And as he points out, Rawls' theory of justice is predicated on the idea that the society his principles of justice apply to is made up of people who are themselves committed to the principles of justice, including the Difference Principle:

> The talented can be asked whether the extra they get is *necessary* to enhance the position of the worst off[.] Is it necessary *tout* court[,] or is it necessary only insofar as the talented would *decide* to produce less than they now do, or to not take up posts where they are in special demand, if inequality were removed (by, for example, income taxation which redistributes to fully egalitarian effect)?

[8] Rawls 1990: 67-8; 7; 136. Rawls does not take a stand on the empirical question of whether such disparities are an inevitable consequence of using the Difference Principle. G.A. Cohen (see below) reads him as implying that deep, incentive-based inequality can be just; Rawls himself says the Difference Principle will tend to lead towards a more equal society than the one we have.

> Talented people who affirm the difference principle would find those questions hard to handle. For… it is they themselves who *make* those rewards necessary, through their own unwillingness to work for ordinary rewards as productively as they do for exceptionally high ones, an unwillingness which ensures that the untalented get less than they otherwise would[.]
>
> Apart, then, from the very special cases in which the talented literally *could* not—as opposed to the normal case where they (merely) would not—perform as productively as they do without superior remuneration, the difference principle can justify inequality only in a society where not everyone accepts that very principle. It therefore cannot justify inequality in the appropriate Rawlsian way. (Cohen 2001: 127)

Cohen's thought, here, gives a pretty good reply to *one specific way* in which someone sympathetic to role-theoretic arguments for structural inequality might try to maintain that role-driven inequalities are consistent with an egalitarian principle such as the Difference Principle. That is, it effectively sees off the idea that promoting and protecting an inequality-generating role like SELFISH ENTREPRENEUR could be justified on egalitarian grounds.

Still, there may be *other* ways of reconciling deep, role-driven structural inequalities with egalitarian principles like the Difference Principle (and so accommodating what I called the obvious egalitarian rejoinder). One that I suspect corresponds to how many think about these matters is couched, not in terms of individual professions, but in terms of what I'll refer to using the old-fashioned word *station*. Let me first say how I am using the word before describing the argument.

Interlude: tasks, roles, stations

A map of the roles we occupy would show that all people occupy multiple roles. Some are held side by side, so to speak, like PARENT and CONSUMER. But sometimes the relation between a single individual's various roles is more like that between the "different" acts of killing someone, firing the gun, and pulling the trigger. Thus, it is possible to zoom in and zoom out, *à la* Google Earth, to obtain finer or courser grained images of the various roles in a society.

Zooming in on LITERATURE PROFESSOR will reveal sub-roles such as RESEARCHER, ADMINISTRATOR, TEACHER, or closer still to specific tasks like PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR, ADMISSIONS TUTOR, LECTURER ON MODULE LIT350A.

Zooming out will reveal deeper social patterns. Typically—statistically that is—one does not enter LITERATURE PROFESSOR after being born into deprivation. The overwhelming majority of academics (especially but not only) in the humanities are from relatively privileged backgrounds. The people who have this background, we can say, have the station PRIVILEGED PROFESSIONAL. Other roles will be associated with different stations.

I use 'station' rather than 'member of a social class' because I want to draw out parallels between stations and other kinds of role. A station, for instance, like any other role, is something one can move into and out of, even though there is a strong statistical correlation between being born into, say, PRIVILEGED PROFESSIONAL, and occupying that station later in life.

Instead of appealing to incentive to argue that role-driven structural inequalities are consistent with, say, the Difference Principle, an anti-egalitarian could appeal to

the need for different stations. The thought would be that the privileges associated with the role LITERATURE PROFESSOR or JUDGE are part and parcel of the entitlements associated with the background role/station of PRIVILEGED PROFESSIONAL. A society that doesn't properly resource this station—a society that fails to protect pockets of heritage, private education, spaces in which refinement can flourish and professional values and character can be nourished—is a society that simply won't contain enough people able to perform the principal obligation of the station, which is to occupy, and to occupy *well*, finer grained professional roles such as JUDGE, etc.

This argument is resonant with the *noblesse oblige* argument used to defend the aristocracy, but there is a clear difference: there is no claim to natural superiority. On the contrary, supporters of this argument can say it doesn't really *matter* who is born into which station. For that matter, someone could be born outside the station PRIVILEGED PROFESSIONAL yet, through chance of nature, be talented enough to move into the station, or at least into particular professional roles, later in life. But if we want these roles to be filled reliably and consistently, we must (runs the thought) maintain and protect the station of PRIVILEGED PROFESSIONAL as something one can be born into. High salaries, etc., are simply the station's own entitlements.

Before turning to some weaknesses in the argument, let me—in the spirit of giving it as charitable reading as possible—mention a couple of points that could be said on its behalf.

First, one might try to defend the thought that having the station is, if not essential, then clearly helpful to the performance of most professional roles. To deny this would leave one having to explain the extraordinarily strong correlation between a certain kind of upbringing and occupancy of professional roles. To repeat, there are

extremely few occupants of LITERATURE PROFESSOR from deprived backgrounds. This suggests that a background of privilege is what I have been calling an entitlement for the role—in that, without it, it is extraordinarily difficult to fulfil its obligations effectively.

An egalitarian will reply, of course, that the mechanisms that exclude people from deprived backgrounds are multifarious, but a large part of it is simple bias. There's an argument to be had, here. But it is not *obviously* wrong to say that, for example, an expensive private education will, *other things equal*, equip a person more effectively than a regular state education for a professional role. That is, after all, one reason parents are willing to fork out such large sums.

Second, a supporter of this argument can make important disclaimers. The role-based argument does not, for example, justify the extremes of structural inequality that are grounded in incentives, bonuses and inherited fortunes. Moreover it is compatible with social mobility, so that a talented individual from a deprived background may often take on a professional role or even the background station; and conversely, under-talented people from the privileged backgrounds may fail to become equipped to be professionals so can exit the station.

As to the argument's vulnerability's, it is obvious that a good deal of what goes into have the station PRIVILEGED PROFESSIONAL is not about equipping its occupants to be excellent professionals but about knowing a code. Exactly how far this, rather than abilities essential to performing a professional function, explains the social apartheid that exists in some professions is clearly an empirical question.

Another thought is that the disclaimer does not go far enough. Some professions, it is true, require a long education. But is training to enter and then occupy LAWYER *so* onerous that it entitles a person to a youth of privilege and a

salary eight times (or whatever) the salary of CARPENTER in order to pass that privilege on to the next generation in the privileged station. It tempting to suppose that *Zweckpessimismus* and social ignorance are at work in the mind of anyone who would argue otherwise.

Finally, roles aren't set in stone—or most aren't, anyway. If some roles in a society are so difficult that they require gross inequalities in station, that could be said to serve as a reason to restructure the society's role profile. Instead of entitling a lucky few to fulfil the obligations of a small number of roles, entitle more people a little less so they can share in the benefits.

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To summarise, roles have various characteristic features, all of which can be used to argue for (limited) structural inequalities. Egalitarian principles may be even be compatible with such inequalities. I dismissed one way of maintaining this compatibility, namely, arguing that role entitlements could include incentive packages. But I then suggested there may be other ways of arguing for the compatibility, grounded in an updated version of *noblesse oblige*. The entitlements support a station such as PRIVILEGED PROFESSIONAL, a background role whose central obligation is to enter a profession. I ended by listed some strengths and weaknesses of this argument but didn't try to settle the matter. Whether one sympathizes with the argument or not, I think it deserves attention if only because it corresponds to something like the *de facto* justifications of many wealth differences in the middle and lower tiers of Western society and beyond.

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