YAVUZ SELİM ŞEN POLITICAL OBLIGATIONS FOR STRUCTURAL INJUSTICE Bilkent University 2023

POLITICAL OBLIGATIONS FOR STRUCTURAL INJUSTICE

A Master's Thesis

by
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Ankara
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To the wretched of the earth and to the backs broken to lift Moloch to Heaven

POLITICAL OBLIGATIONS FOR STRUCTURAL INJUSTICE

The Graduate School of Economics and Social Sciences
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by

YAVUZ SELİM ŞEN

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By Yavuz Selim Şen

I certify that I have read this thesis and have found that it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts in Philosophy.

William Giles Wringe
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ABSTRACT

POLITICAL OBLIGATIONS FOR STRUCTURAL INJUSTICE

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The answer to the question of what unorganized agents' responsibilities can be regarding structural injustice has wide-ranging implications for almost anyone in the world. Global economic, social, and political connections relate agents to each other, and causal connections exist created by socio-structural processes that oppress and dominate some groups while benefiting others. Iris Young's social connection model details how structural injustices are created by the inadvertent actions of people acting against the backdrop of their usual circumstances. This thesis analyzes her claim that structural injustice gives rise to political responsibilities. An essential part of her discussion is related to the notion of structure and the insight brought by its application to the socio-structural processes that connect people. The thesis follows the framing of structural injustice and applies it to instances of structural injustice worsened by the pandemic and the measures taken to stop its spread. I argue that ordinary citizens' moral and political phenomenology paints complex pictures that cannot be captured with purely interpersonal and moral models. The social connection model of Young illustrates such pictures but runs into a problem of source of normativity in prescribing political obligations for structural injustice. To alleviate this problem, I employ Margaret

Gilbert's theory of obligations and her argument for a nonmoral source of normativity. I conclude that her understanding of joint commitments is pervasive in social facts and social phenomena, and it gives normative force for a distinctively political normative source that grounds political obligations for structural injustice.

Keywords: Structural Injustice, Political Obligations, Moral Obligations, Moral Phenomenology, Source of Normativity

ÖZET

YAPISAL ADALETSİZLİKLERE KARŞI SİYASİ YÜKÜMLÜLÜKLER

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Örgütsüz öznelerin yapısal adaletsizlikle ilgili sorumluluklarının ne olabileceği sorusunun cevabı, dünyadaki hemen herkes için geniş kapsamlı etkilere sahiptir. Küresel ekonomik, sosyal ve politik bağlantılar, özneleri birbirleriyle ilişkilendirir ve bazı grupları baskı altına alırken başkalarına fayda sağlayan sosyo-yapısal süreçlerin yarattığı nedensel bağlantılar vardır. Iris Young'ın sosyal bağlantı modeli, yapısal adaletsizliklerin, olağan koşullarında hareket eden insanların yanlışlıkla eylemleriyle nasıl yaratıldığını detaylandırıyor. Bu tez, yapısal adaletsizliğin siyasi sorumluluklara yol açtığı iddiasını analiz etmektedir. Young'ın çalışmasının önemli bir kısmı, yapı kavramı ve insanları birbirine bağlayan sosyo-yapısal süreçlere uygulanmasının getirdiği kavrayış ile ilgilidir. Tez, yapısal adaletsizlik konsepti çerçevesini takip eder ve pandeminin daha da kötüleştirdiği yapısal adaletsizlik örneklerine ve yayılmasını durdurmak için alınan önlemlere uygular. Sıradan vatandaşların ahlaki ve politik fenomenolojisinin, salt kişilerarası ve ahlaki modellerle yakalanamayan karmaşık resimler çizdiğini savunuyorum. Bununla birlikte, Young'ın sosyal bağlantı modeli, yapısal adaletsizlik için siyasi yükümlülüklerin belirlenmesinde normatiflik kaynağı sorunuyla karşı karşıyadır. Bu sorunu hafifletmek için Margaret Gilbert'in

yükümlülükler teorisini ve ahlaki olmayan bir normatiflik kaynağı argümanını kullanıyorum. Ortak taahhütler konusunda geliştirdiği anlayışın sosyal olgularda yaygın olduğu ve yapısal adaletsizlik için siyasi yükümlülükler üretebilecek farklı bir siyasi normatif kaynak için temel oluşturduğu sonucuna vardım.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Yapısal Adaletsizlikler, Siyasi Yükümlülükler, Ahlaki Yükümlülükler, Ahlaki Fenomenoloji, Normativite Kaynağı

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INTRODUCTION

The last three years have been exceptionally eventful, and the large-scale problems that plagued these times required the coordinated action of unorganized agents that make up the global community. The pandemic has put immense strain on the ways of life that people developed across the world in various states, societies, and cultures, and it has made more visible some of the most intricate issues that people face in their social lives. One crucial problem made more apparent by the COVID-19 pandemic is structural injustice, which occurs through socio-structural processes serving to dominate and oppress groups of people as the same processes benefit other groups. Structural injustice's complex nature and the seeming powerlessness of those affected by it make it challenging to develop an understanding of obligations for it. One possible starting point, and end goal, for such an inquiry is to understand the moral phenomenology of unorganized agents when faced with structural injustice.

By moral phenomenology, I refer to how a particular moral situation or event presents itself to an agent, influenced by the agent's opinions, beliefs, and perceptions. It explains the context as the event gives rise to the agent's experience of the moral situation. It is not solely focused on the agent's beliefs, and it considers, while also being aimed at understanding, the conflicting cultural codes one might adhere to, the differing socio-structural processes they are subjected to, and the actions, with the corresponding obligations, available to them. This understanding of moral phenomenology owes much to what Bernard Williams refers to as "a way of doing moral philosophy that started

from the ways in which we experience our ethical life", reflecting on "on what we believe, feel, take for granted" and "the ways in which we confront obligations and recognize responsibility" (Williams, 2015: 93). Different conceptions have also been used in the development of the area of social ontology, as it deals with the relations between agents, their actions, and their surroundings[1].

Margaret Gilbert takes a similar approach to explain social facts by analyzing how agents experience social phenomena. The moral phenomenology of structural injustice, thus, refers to both the method of analyzing phenomena to make sense of what an agent's experience and obligations can entail and the resulting picture of the moral landscape. This understanding of phenomenology does not serve the purpose of justification but explanation and does not entail that a view should be preferred on its basis. It is a method of understanding agents' experiences and can be an essential tool and resource for understanding and charting a course of action for resolving problems. It is an integral part of this thesis because it is focused on how unorganized agents experience structural injustice and whether they are responsible for providing a remedy for it.

I argue that people are jointly responsible for fixing structural injustice as it is a problem that can only be fixed with the joint efforts of a sizable portion of humanity, many of whom can be considered unorganized agents. However, people contribute to structural injustice daily with their everyday activities, complicating any effort to understand and

[1] See Wringe 2016 and Schwenkenbecher 2020.

solve it. This thesis claims that moral phenomenology will give a better understanding of structural injustice, especially the conflicting responsibilities people hold in such circumstances, and that it can be inferred that unorganized agents can jointly hold obligations regarding structural injustice, albeit in a domain different than the moral. It analyzes Iris Marion Young's claim that responsibilities for structural injustice are political responsibilities and inquires the possibility of a political source of normativity rather than a moral normativity.

The first chapter of the thesis focuses on Iris Marion Young's framing of the notion of structural injustice. Young focuses on responsibilities for justice, and her framing of structural injustice emphasizes how it differs from other moral wrongs. Her notion of structural injustice is a distinct moral wrong because it is structural, for which she suggests a new definition. The latter half of the first chapter focuses on the COVID-19 pandemic and both the structural injustices that existed before its emergence and the injustices that were made worse through the effects of the pandemic and the measures taken against it. It can be seen from such instances that a purely moral approach can have detrimental effects on remedying structural injustice, such as a 'lifeboat ethics' approach worsening the unjust structures people are subject to.

The second chapter follows the framing of structural injustice through Anne Schwenkenbecher's theory of jointly held obligations, which posits agents in situations where there exists no prior organization between them and other agents while the efforts of most, or in some cases all, are required to bring about the morally optimal result. The model uses the moral phenomenology of such situations to describe the context and

prescribe responsibilities, similar to this thesis's use of the notion. Although her model applies to small-scale moral problems, Schwenkenbecher is hesitant about its application to larger-scale problems. I argue against this scaling problem through Young's framing of structural injustice and her definition of structure, which gives a structural moral phenomenology that alleviates such scaling problems. The second section of the chapter argues that alleviating structural injustice depends on a more structural and political understanding of the phenomenology, especially reasons other than the moral for obligations regarding structural injustice should be favored.

The third chapter gives a more political and structural picture of the moral landscape with Young's social connection model. According to her model, both the disaffected and those benefiting from structural injustice are responsible for fixing it. She argues that the obligations resulting from structural injustice are political in nature. However, her understanding of such obligations as political is not consistent with different aspects of these obligations. Although they are discharged through public and political action, the reasons for such obligations remain in the moral domain. The first section of this chapter argues Young's political obligations have sources in moral normativity and are an obstacle to her purpose of de-moralizing and politicizing the problem of structural injustice. The second section makes the problem of a distinctive political normativity more transparent while outlining a solution for the source of normativity problem.

The fourth and final chapter focuses on this suggested solution. It describes Gilbert's theory of social facts and responsibilities. The chapter argues that Gilbert's distinction of obligation as moral requirement and obligation as owing can complement Young's

social connection model and give obligations that have their source of normativity in the conventions people live by, alleviating the problems with both Schwenkenbecher's and Young's models. Thus, with the three models brought together, a better understanding of the phenomenology of unorganized agents facing structural injustice can be given. The nonmoral obligations of joint commitment can ground the political obligations Young claims we possess for remedying structural injustice. I argue in this chapter that living in a society is a joint activity with obligations of joint commitment and that cases of structural injustice, such as the pandemic examples, give rise to political obligation.

Chapter 1

STRUCTURAL INJUSTICE AND COVID-19

This chapter argues that structural injustice is a distinct moral wrong that gave rise to further problems in the pandemic, which were made worse with the measures taken to stop its spread. It will argue that the structural aspects of such injustices cause some wrongs to go unnoticed, and actions taken to alleviate other problems can further entrench such unjust structures. The first section provides a clearer understanding of Young's framework for conceptualizing structural injustice. It discusses Young's use of structure as the foundation for an account of responsibilities that chart ordinary citizens' obligations when faced with and act within unjust socio-structural processes. This framework gives insight into the instances of structural injustices experienced during the pandemic and how they were experienced by unorganized agents, which is an essential factor for normative aspects. The second section provides such instances of structural injustice in the pandemic and problematizes a purely moral and interpersonal approach to understanding people's responsibilities.

1.1 Framing Structural Injustice

Young utilizes the concept of structural injustice for her account of responsibilities for justice and defines it as "a specific kind of moral wrong" that is "distinct from wrongs traceable to specific individual actions or policies" where the moral harm either "comes about through individual interaction" or "is attributable to the specific actions and policies of states or other powerful institutions" (Young, 2011: 44-45). She gives a picture of structural injustice that does not attribute culpability and is different from interpersonal moral situations, where the causal connections are more apparent than a structural situation.

Young conceives of a social connection model to further illustrate this moral wrong, where people are connected through the socio-structural processes that bind them together in economic, social, and political contexts. Global structures connect almost every person and serve as the background conditions for people's actions, through which they inadvertently replicate the conditions that make their decisions possible. This reproduction and responsibility for stopping it is the central phenomenon that Young aims to explicate. Her model shows how social connections benefit some members of society while contributing to the oppression and domination of other members, happening through the everyday action of unorganized agents.

Young defines structural injustice as: "when social processes put large groups of persons under systematic threat of domination or deprivation of the means to develop and exercise their capacities" while "these processes enable others to dominate or to have a

wide range of opportunities for developing exercising capacities available to them" (Young, 2011: 52). She gives two such examples to illustrate structural injustice as a distinct kind of moral wrong. The first mentions a single mother of two who faces homelessness while trying to relocate. Her apartment is bought to be renovated, and she decides to move elsewhere. However, she is in danger of becoming homeless through an interlocking of several factors, such as gentrification, poor infrastructure, safety in lower-income neighborhoods, and severed safety nets for the financially disadvantaged (Young, 2011: 43-44). Although this is a wrong that needs remedy, no specific person or group agent can be singled out as being responsible for her situation.

In the other example, Young discusses the prominence of sweatshops in countries with poor worker compensations and rights and how their local and the global economy worsens their unjust conditions. The injustices they experience are the consequences of agents carrying on their everyday lives, such as low-income consumers buying sweatshop products that further entrench sweatshop conditions (Young, 2006: 107-109). As in the former example, the injustices that sweatshop workers face are results of the combination of a wide variety of factors and cannot be traced to agents that are directly culpable. In both examples, Young invokes a wide range of causes to show that the injustices mentioned are not rooted in the wrongdoings of specific people, groups, or policies.

Young points this out by stating: "structural injustice occurs as a consequence of many individuals and institutions acting to pursue their particular goals and interests, for the most part within the limits of accepted rules and norms" (Young, 2011: 52). An

advantage of Young's approach, it is pointed out that instances of structural injustice are brought about by ordinary citizens following the desires and goals shared and prescribed by many members of society, acting upon the usual background for their actions, such as the rules of their state institutions or conventions of their societies. The social connection model that Young uses in analyzing how ordinary citizens are implicated in structural injustice utilizes both a non-ideal account of justice that analyzes social conditions and a corresponding notion of obligations to frame the complex picture of the moral and political phenomenology of structural injustice.

Young argues that in contrast to interpersonal moral wrongs, the instances of structural injustice that the social connection model illustrates, happens in a manner that makes it difficult to ascribe blame and culpability to certain agents and this conception of the moral situation calls for a structural-level analysis that will give insight into unjust circumstances, actions that reproduce them, and the required actions to remedy them. This is evident in Young's claim that the causes of this distinct moral wrong "are not so immediate as the persons with whom the wrong sufferer interacts, and not so focused as a single policy" and that they are caused by "many policies, both public and private, and the actions of thousands of individuals acting according to normal rules and accepted practices contribute to producing these circumstances" (Young, 2011: 47-48).

Young's account of responsibilities for justice builds upon a claim that she makes in an earlier work, where she argues that the "scope of justice extends beyond" the distributive paradigm of prior theories of justice that take the distribution of social goods as their primary focus and that "oppression and domination … should be the primary terms for

conceptualizing injustice" (Young, 1990: 8-9). Her account diverges from well-known theories of justice in that she takes a non-ideal beginning point with the notion of structural injustice, and non-paradigmatic primary terms by focusing on the concepts of domination and oppression rather than distribution. Young argues that the "distributive focus … obscures other issues of institutional organization at the same time that it often assumes particular institutions and practices as given" and overcoming this problem requires a clearer understanding of the notion of structure and a structural-level analysis of such phenomena (Young, 1990: 8).

Young explicates upon the structural aspects of said injustices and introduces her conception of structure through four properties. The notion of structure that Young uses in her notion of structural injustice conceptualizes "aspects of social relation more often as social-structural processes than as structures" and emphasizes how these processes, or structures, are "objective social facts experienced by individuals as constraining and enabling" (Young, 2011: 53). These structures also constitute "a macro social space in which positions are related to one another" while they exist "only in actions", and they regularly involve "the unintended consequences of the combination of the actions of many people" (Young, 2011: 53). These four features of what structures are, and how they affect agents' actions, separate structural injustice from other moral wrongs as they provide a different framework for analyzing moral situations.

Young's account diverges from ideal theories such as Rawls's who also emphasizes structure as the subject but describes the notion of basic structure as "the way in which the major social institutions fit together into one system, and how they assign

fundamental rights and duties and shape the division of advantages that arises through social cooperation" (Rawls, 1978: 159). Although both differentiate between a structural-level analysis and an interpersonal approach, Young, in contrast to Rawls, does not emphasize assigning rights and distributing social goods as the primary terms of her theory of justice and gives a more expansive conception of structure. Her understanding of structure shifts the concept from a set of ways of structuring society and assigning social goods, to processes that constrain people's actions and a social space where they are positioned with each other in the pursuit of their lives, which ultimately cause unintended consequences for their actions within these socio-structural processes.

Young's account of structure, which she takes to be "properties of social systems or collectivities", is able to depict people's experiences of "social structures as constraining, objectified, thing-like" processes, and as people are situated socially with each other they are also brough to face the unjust structures created by "the accumulated outcomes of the actions of the masses of individuals enacting their own projects" which often produces "outcomes not intended by any of the participating agents" (Young, 2011: 56-63). In contrast to Rawls's structural justice model, Young can both discuss structure as objective facts limiting the choices individuals have and as social positions that they inhabit instead of viewing them through the actions and rules of institutions that distribute the advantages of social cooperation.

Young discusses systems and takes unjust structures to be something defining regarding the systems that they are properties of. This calls for an analysis of the relationship

between systems and structure, one that has been taken by Sally Haslanger, where she states that the relation is that "structures are networks of relations instantiated in different systems" and that "social structures are, in a sense, the form of social systems" like "the skeleton that connects different individuals and practices in a social body" (Haslanger, 2022: 7). She argues that systems are constructed according to the form that their structures give them, and systemic and structural injustices should be understood accordingly. Although she states that "In principle, there can be structural injustice without systemic injustice", her "reason for linking structural injustice to systemic injustice, however, is to highlight that systems are (dynamically) homeostatic and manage themselves without a central authority" (Haslanger, 2022: 22-23).

I will prefer to use Young's notion of structural injustice in the following sections because there are two issues with following Haslanger's characterization and employing systemic instead of structural injustice. Firstly, the discussion of systems creates further discussion regarding what and which sorts of systems there are, as their intersection raises the choice of injustice pluralism or monism. Haslanger argues for monism, considering any name given to an unjust system "is not an adequate label for that system, any more than … 'capitalism,' 'heteronormativity' or 'ableism' is" and instead suggest that "we could use the adjective" and say "we live in a capitalist white supremacist nationalist ableist ageist heteronormative ...etc.... patriarchal order" (Haslanger, 2020: 227). This argument follows the interaction of different structural injustices, such as racism and sexism, and infers from them being inseparable and intersected that there exists "only one unjust system" (Dembroff, 2023: 2). This injustice monism is argued against by Robin Dembroff as they claim that "in cases where a causal

structure is oriented to regulate people in accordance with multiple ideologies, it constitutes overlapping unjust systems" (Dembroff, 2023: 16). The disagreement regarding injustice pluralism and monism is founded upon different interpretations of intersectionality, both discussions of which are beyond the scope of this thesis.

Second, and a more substantive problem is that focusing on the aspect of self-reproduction of such systems can miss external coercive factors that can play an important role in the seeming perpetuity within the forms of such systems. Haslanger conceives of systems as homeostatic and functioning without a central authority, which is echoed by her claim that "societies are not planned and implemented by anyone. They are self-organizing systems" (Haslanger, 2022: 9). However, this fails to account for structural injustices that have causes that are external to the system. Many post-colonial societies were brought together despite wide range of differences in ethnicity, culture, and language, and factors such as low tariffs and agricultural quotas that kept their economies weak were implemented through transnational organizations' and other states' legislations. Notions emphasizing de-centralized injustices and self-organizing structures can result in a de-politicized understanding of the social phenomena of structural injustice.

1.2 Structural Injustice and COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic shook the very core of society and has had negative effects for almost each member of the global community, but the existence of structural injustice provided causes for different experiences of disastrous consequences for

individuals across the world. The first subsection of this section focuses on the injustices exacerbated by the existence of the pandemic and the measures taken against them. The second subsection emphasizes what is going unnoticed with such instances. The argument of the section is that without conceiving of the structural constraints and the social facts faced by ordinary citizens, understanding their responsibilities towards responding to the COVID-19 pandemic will be an unfruitful effort.

1.2.1 Structural Injustices made Worse by the Pandemic

People's experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic were not dissimilar to the examples that Young gives while introducing the notion of structural injustice. A wide variety of factors contributed to the disproportionate effect that the pandemic had on some groups of the global population, while other groups would benefit from such issues. Instances of sexism and racism are often viewed through the lens of structural injustice and such unjust circumstances intersected to leave groups disaffected by sexism and racism in more vulnerable positions, such as frontline workers and unpaid care laborers. Such structural injustices show that the moral phenomenology of the individual agents facing such problems cannot be conceived as being on a merely interpersonal level and needs structural analysis to be understood.

Socio-structural processes influenced the circumstances and the choices of individuals during the pandemic. Being subject to different housing, schooling, and health conditions, people affected by unjust structures were already at a disadvantage in many aspects of life that the pandemic changed detrimentally for the global population. They

faced more layoffs, had less opportunity to work from home, had less access to health care, were in a more precarious situation in terms of access to food, and these structural disadvantages, apparent at the outset of the pandemic, inevitably caused bigger problems as the disease raged on. The precautions taken worsened such conditions instead of eliminating or alleviating them. However, as is the case with Young's examples, these instances of structural injustice did not have clear morally culpable agents and was experienced as the worsening of some social facts and processes that were already having enormous structurally unjust consequences in people's lives.

Some of the most glaring and important instances of structural injustice are caused by the sexism and misogyny faced by women in society, where women are subjected to oppressive processes while men benefit from the same processes. It is no surprise that Young gives the example of a single mother when explaining the concept of structural injustice, as women often bear the brunt of the unpaid care work done in society while some are also the primary economic providers of their households. As the economies of most states ground to a halt because of the lockdowns initiated during the first three months of 2020, layoffs were a common result for women. They were "not only being laid off at higher rates than men", but they also quit their "jobs to meet the increased childcare obligations at a higher rate" because caring for children shifted "from the paid economy to the unpaid one" with daycares and schools shutting down (Fortier, 2020: 78). Rise in unpaid care work added to the structural injustices faced by women and with the implementation of lockdown measures, the conditions of women vulnerable to domestic abuse worsened.

The single mother example that Young gives can be set in the pandemic period causing her government to impose lockdowns, reducing the number of economic opportunities that were already limited for her. The example becomes grimmer because, with the advent of the pandemic, “single mothers are forced to choose between having an income and providing childcare”, which can be seen directly through the data of the first few months of the pandemic where “between February and May of 2020, unemployment of single mothers in the U.S. more than tripled, moving from 4.1% to 15.9%” (Fortier, 2020: 80). The example of the single mother facing homelessness now also faces the impossible decision of either quitting or providing care for their children, who require more attention as their schools are now on lockdown.

Race and gender are important factors for socio-structural processes and their intersection provides further instances of structural injustices that were visible as the pandemic emerged, and were made worse especially with the measures taken for the COVID-19 pandemic. An important measure used by some countries, when testing became more available, was requiring tests to allow access to the obstetrics unit. If the test of a patient “returns positive, implications may include prohibition of any visitors, mandatory masking throughout labor and delivery, and possible separation of newborn and mother upon birth” and it was observed that “Latinx individuals are disproportionately likely to test positive for SARS-CoV-2 and thus be forced to labor alone” (Gross, Norton, 2021: 102-103).

As some racial groups are more susceptible to being infected because of structural reasons, pandemic measures create further injustice for them, such as a pregnant person

being unable to communicate with the people around them during labor or having no one to support them emotionally. Through similar unjust structures and language barriers,“ women of color face greater skepticism from their providers and their reported symptoms are more likely to be overlooked”, which can be deadly for both the pregnant person and the fetus (Gross, Norton, 2021: 103). Through such examples and lived-body experiences, it can be seen that “while the virus may be colorblind, our institutional responses are not” (Gross, Norton, 2021: 104).

The experience of structural injustice serves to paint a different moral and political landscape for the disadvantaged groups and without a conception of the unjust structures that govern their lives, the moral phenomenology faced by individual agents, the actions available to them, and any corresponding obligations cannot be given comprehensively. Omitting the effects of structural injustice in analyzing how the pandemic will affect the global community, and the measures that should be taken against it, is bound to miss important sets of determinants for both questions. The situation of a pandemic brings such structural injustices to the forefront, and it needs to be seen that “questions of fair distribution don’t suddenly appear at the bedside as novel issues of allocating ventilators; they are baked into the social fabric” of our lives (Churchill, King, Henderson 2020: 54). Without an understanding of the social facts that have caused the pandemic to disproportionately affect groups struggling with structural injustice, bioethical accounts will be unable to understand and handle the pandemic, and instead focus on plans that can make circumstances worse for such groups.

1.2.2 Accountability Gaps and Resource Allocation in the Pandemic

As bioethics and philosophy of science serves an important role in understanding how health policies are to be constructed and how they are to be relayed to the authorities as advice, their incorporation of the structural injustice framework is essential for a structure-level analysis of the COVID-19 pandemic and the measures taken. In a 2021 article, Jonathan Birch focuses on the role that scientific advisors can play in such cases but fails to integrate the insight of social injustice accounts that deepen the analyses aimed at demonstrating how the pandemic disproportionately affected some groups. Although the article does not depend on this for its central thesis on the role of scientific advising in extreme circumstances, the article's lack of a structural analysis misses how these unjust processes are immensely influential in what are considered extreme circumstances and whether the advisors' suggestions will not worsen the existing unjust structures.

Birch uses the term 'extremis' for the extreme conditions that might cause norms for scientific advice to change and conceptualizes it as a situation where "the lives of a significant fraction of a country's citizens are in immediate peril and no pre-existing plan or procedure exists for managing the risk" (Birch, 2021: 11). He argues that in normal circumstances, scientific advisors are allowed to give normatively light advice, which does not prescribe a certain policy, while in extremis "the norms of scientific advising in normal times … can sometimes be permissibly overridden" and normatively heavy advice, such as constructing guidelines for emergency resource allocation, can be given (Birch, 2021: 11).

However, Birch acknowledges that “a structure in which advisers make a single, normatively heavy recommendation, to be followed or rejected by decision-makers, leads to a problem of accountability” because the advisors “claim for themselves the ability to make momentous mixed judgements that include a substantial evaluative component, such as the judgement that healthcare system collapse is normatively worse than prolonged school closures”, and this judgment-based decision of the expert creates an accountability gap, where “no one is properly democratically accountable for value judgements that shape people’s lives in dramatic and long-lasting ways” (Birch, 2021: 12).

When the pandemic is perceived without a structural perspective, this accountability gap becomes much more permissible yet disastrous, because the gap is wider for structurally disadvantaged groups who already struggle to find democratic accountability for public health policies. Birch’s thesis that “the norm against accountability gaps, although reasonable in normal times, can sometimes be appropriately suspended in extremis” and “some accountability gaps may be tolerated” can be seen as carrying no unjust implications for some sections of society, while it may make the same gaps intolerable for some groups (Birch, 2021: 14). This problem of accountability ever accompanies structural injustice and seeing that these unjust structures become worse for the disaffected populations in extremis further entrenches the unaccounted-for unjust circumstances of people.

Furthermore, conditions for declaring extremis are also subject to the effects of unjust structures that exist within the state and society, with gaps in democracy and accountability having direct effect on the designation of extremis. A recent example is the AIDS epidemic where the response to the disease was largely affected by existing structural injustices. People of non-conforming sexual orientations were, and are still, dominated and oppressed by socio-structural processes and the extremis status of a disease that disproportionately harms them was constantly questioned, with societal and state responses ranging from viewing it as a joke, to the disease being explained as divine retribution for people's 'sinful lifestyles'.

Rather than being seen as threatening the human species with worldwide infection, the disease was called the 'gay plague', or gay-related immune deficiency (GRID), even after studies showed people affected by HIV were not only homosexuals but also heterosexuals. Unjust circumstances and stigmatization led to a structurally insufficient understanding of and response to the epidemic and, as was the case in both Turkey and the US, a worsening of the conditions of the group affected by said structural injustices. Therefore, what is acknowledged as constituting extremis is subject to structural factors and a lack of democratic accountability can result in missing or misconstruing some extreme situations that require responding.

The problem with omitting structural or societal problems is echoed by the claim of the article, *The Future of Bioethics: It Shouldn't Take a Pandemic* that "lifeboat ethics has again become the predominant focus of U.S. bioethicists" where "essays on fair allocation and rationing of medical resources are proliferating" and that this approach is

"driving ethical resources away from persistent and systemic problems" (Churchill, King, Henderson 2020: 54). The discussion on medical resource rationing and allocation was an essential part of planning COVID-19 measures and several frameworks were developed by bioethicists to delineate how to best respond to the anticipated rise of cases and overcapacity in hospitals. However, this aspect of planning runs into the problem of accountability gaps because "one dominant philosophy of rationing scarce medical … merely amplifies the problem", as it emphasizes metrics affected by structural injustice, such as chronic disease history, that directly affects the "likelihood of surviving until hospital discharge", which is often declared as a morally optimal outcome (Elbaum, 2020: 59).

The problem is further illustrated by the fact that "the average life expectancy for men in Houston ranges from eighty-eight years in the most affluent ZIP codes to seventy-four years in the historically black Third Ward, where George Floyd grew up", whose murder by police officers sparked the wide-ranging Black Lives Matter protests during the pandemic (Elbaum, 2020: 59). Structural injustices, such as weaker access to healthcare and exposition to police brutality, result in chronic conditions and a lower life expectancy for some groups, which are then used as metrics for distributing emergency medical resources. Without a structural point of view and focus, the normatively heavy advice can keep essential medical resources from such groups while at the same time being the result of a "colorblind rationing scheme", where "black lives", or the lives of groups affected by similar structural injustices, "are sacrificed to preserve the lives of the more privileged" (Elbaum, 2020: 59).

Both the HIV case and the case of emergency medical resource distribution, given by Elbaum, show that racial, sexual, and economic structures cause unjust advantages to some people, at the expense of others, in their accessibility to emergency medical resources. Not minding the accountability gap in extreme circumstances, such as a pandemic that causes the world to go intermittently into lockdown, and allowing scientific advice to be given without the legitimacy of sufficient democratic input in health policies exacerbates the structural injustices that disproportionately harm some groups.

Paying "scant attention to societal-level macro-issues such as the social determinants of illness and health, the structural racism that magnifies the burden of disease for people of color, and the effects of dismantling the infrastructure for public health" that once helped structurally disadvantaged groups, runs a giant risk in extremis circumstances because of the bigger accountability gap created (Churchill, King, Henderson 2020: 54). As people subjected to unjust structures do not have the same input democratically compared to the people who benefit from such structures, the gap between both such groups and the policymakers and the structurally disadvantaged widens during extremis. As the pandemic was something people were unprepared for, the responses were mostly made through structural and group action, and not prioritizing the structural disaffected disproportionately harmed them, causing them to seek political action through protests such as the Black Lives Matter movement.

CHAPTER 2

OBLIGATIONS FOR STRUCTURAL INJUSTICE

Young's understanding of individuals as being constrained by objective social facts, created by the social-structural processes they are subjected to, needs to be complemented with a theory of obligations that inquires whether unorganized agents can be responsible for remedying structural injustice. Thus, the moral phenomenology can be expanded with structural analysis and people's conflicting obligations will be made visible. This chapter introduces and analyzes one such model that emphasizes how people hold joint moral obligations regarding moral problems, and its exposition of structural injustice as a moral wrong that gives rise to collective obligations. However, the second section argues that the case of structural injustice entails responsibilities that are phenomenologically difficult to weigh against each other and that understanding and prescribing individuals' responsibilities regarding structural injustice requires obligations of a non-moral sort.

2.1 A Jointly Held Moral Obligations Model

Anne Schwenkenbecher's model of jointly held collective moral obligations, which she develops in her book *Getting Our Act Together: A Theory of Collective Moral Obligations* emphasizes the moral phenomenology of unorganized individuals. Schwenkenbecher's theory of obligations states that "collective obligations are not a novel type of obligation but moral obligations held in a collective *mode*" meaning that they are held jointly and agents are not required to be organized into a group with agency for them to be attributed responsibilities (Schwenkenbecher, 2022: 10). Her theory focuses on instances of joint necessity, which are cases that require "a class of actions (and outcomes) that cannot be performed (or produced) by one person on their own" and "they require at least two people in order to be realised, and no one individual agent can guarantee the success of the collective endeavour" (Schwenkenbecher, 2022: 8). These cases, such as singing a duet or stopping climate change, can only be accomplished by joint action, so they give rise to its necessity.

For obligations to arise in cases of joint necessity, the joint ability condition needs to be fulfilled as well. Schwenkenbecher details joint ability as: "two agents *a* and *b* have joint ability to do *x* if *a* has individual ability to do *xa* and *b* has individual ability to do *xb* where *xa* and *xb* produce *x*, both actions are compossible, and *a* and *b* are in principle capable of intentionally combining them" (Schwenkenbecher, 2022: 54). Therefore, the joint ability condition aims to ensure both that the agents can derive and accomplish their parts in the collective option and that their separate actions are made with the intention, and are capable, of producing the collective endeavor. The joint necessity and

ability clauses define the phenomena by them being cases that requires collective action for their accomplishment or amelioration and by the agents involved having the ability to both derive their own actions for the fulfillment of the collective option and accomplish the action in question with the intention of bringing about the collective goal or option.

An example that Schwenkenbecher introduces early in the book is the example of a person falling to the train tracks in a train station and the people witnessing and acting in accordance with each other, without any prior organizing between them, to rescue the person from the train tracks. This example illustrates an instance of joint necessity as there is a problem that can only be solved by joint participation in the rescue effort and joint ability because the combination of the efforts of people makes it possible to remedy the problem at hand, with each agent being able to conceive of their part in the collective solution. The example fulfills the preliminary conditions of the author's model mentioned, which require the moral situation at hand to be an instance of joint necessity and joint ability.

Schwenkenbecher claims that instances of structural injustice conform, to a certain extent, to the joint necessity and joint ability conditions, albeit with some difficulties regarding the strength of the latter condition, which is "highly context-dependent" (Schwenkenbecher, 2022: 54). Young frames structural injustice as a distinct type of moral wrong that does not have a clear culpable agent and exists in socio-structural processes that have not been instituted by a particular individual or group agent. It happens through the everyday actions of people against the backdrop of such structures.

Therefore, it does not have a clear culprit and it happens through the joint efforts of unorganized agents participating in society, giving primacy to the collective aspect of the obligation and illustrating necessity for joint action.

Schwenkenbecher makes a claim in the last chapter, which deals with large-scale moral problems, that states: “the important thing to note is that many instances of structural injustice will require a variety of agents and groups of agents to take various forms of remedial action” (Schwenkenbecher, 2022: 145). The instances that happened throughout the pandemic and the response against it show that people could not have resolved such problems individually as they are complex problems that require a structural approach to be understood, giving normative primacy to the collective obligation, and remedied. However, that it can only be solved jointly does not mean unorganized agents are jointly able to solve structural injustice and Schwenkenbecher’s model’s joint ability condition will depend upon the context to be seen if it is fulfilled and obligations can be prescribed.

If the joint ability condition is not fulfilled people cannot be prescribed jointly held moral obligations. This condition requires people to be able to bring about the desired collective outcome without sacrificing something of moral significance. However, instances of structural injustice cause ordinary citizens to participate in processes that further entrench unjust structures and their participation is required to keep such processes going. The measures taken against the pandemic demonstrate this problem as people are made to participate in measures that make structural injustices worse and the existing accountability gaps make it difficult for them to make their voices heard or their

actions effective. Weighing structural and role-related reasons, illustrated by Young's framing, against moral reasons in contexts of structural injustice is difficult and complicates whether ordinary citizens possess the ability, and the obligation, to remedy the unjust structures that serve as the backdrop for their actions.

The second condition for Schwenkenbecher's jointly held moral obligations argues that if people are to be held jointly obliged to solve a certain moral problem, they need to have reasons for believing that a collective option is the optimal option for alleviating the problem. This happens when agents we-reason, which "is not a type of preference transformation … but it constitutes a kind of agency transformation" (Schwenkenbecher, 2022: 80). We-reasoning causes the agent to consider the options that are available to the collective they conceive themselves as in being required and able to solve a problem. It is given in contrast to I-reasoning, in which the agent reasons in response to the choices made by other agents.

The train station example has people we-reasoning, solely by being faced with a moral problem that can only be solved collectively. As agents conceive of themselves as a collective that needs to and can solve the problem, we-reasoning presents people with collective options that they can see are the best options for saving the person from the train tracks. Schwenkenbecher's final condition requires the individuals in question to be able to derive their personal contributions for the fulfillment of the morally optimal collective option that they believe will solve the problem they face. Each agent understands that they need to push the train to save the person trapped underneath and

each contribute personally to the plan of bringing about the morally optimal collective outcome.

This example is a small-scale moral problem, analyzed on an interpersonal level, where people do not face the complexity of factors acting together to bring about large-scale, and structural, problems. Schwenkenbecher admits that there are four complications for moving from small-scale situations to large-scale moral events in a theory of obligations, all being related to the small-scale and large-scale cases displaying phenomenological differences. First, as small-scale situations are simpler epistemically, cooperatively, and, usually, morally, it is much more intuitive for them to be interpreted as giving direct responsibilities to unorganized agents that need, and are able, to solve the problem. Second, there exists the problem of epistemic conditions varying greatly between both scales of problems, causing collective abilities to be very different in both scenarios, as people will have less knowledge of a viable plan in large-scale situations. The last two problems with moving from small-scale to large-scale instances, according to Schwenkenbecher, are that the moral phenomenology of the two contrasted situations varies immensely for individual agents and that the collective of unorganized agents do not have access to the collective options that might bring about a solution for the problems they are jointly necessitated to solve.

The problems mentioned can be remedied by the insight given by Young's framing of structural injustice. The context provided by Young's model conceptualizes structural injustice through socio-structural processes that connect agents, and this gives a simpler picture epistemically and morally. This simplicity enables the collective abilities of

ordinary citizens to be employed more efficiently and aimed at eliminating structural injustice, which eliminates Schwenkenbecher's second concern with moving from the small-scale to large-scale moral problems because agents get better at cooperating with structural knowledge. Young's structural-level analysis also situates people with each other socio-structurally, giving reason for individuals to prioritize we-reasoning over I-reasoning because they can better conceive of themselves as being parts of groups and inhabiting social and structural positions.

This priority of we-reasoning over I-reasoning happens thanks to the grouping effect of the unjust structures in question because they coalesce people together. Such socio-structural processes marginalize and group people together in structures of oppression and domination. The inclusivity of the feminist movement or people who live in the same low-income neighborhood and form social and political alliances against unjust structures are such examples. This helps individuals to make the agency transformation of we-reasoning. The agency transformation gives insight into the structural moral phenomenology of the processes that govern people's lives and their experiences become clearer. The we-reasoning agent facing a structural problem may not possess a clear collective action that will remedy their problem, but their experiences of unjust structures provide them with an understanding of the collective options that can provide a solution for the problems that group them together.

The responses that can be generated through Young's structural framing to the problems of moving from the small-scale moral problems to large-scale problems in Schwenkenbecher's jointly held obligations theory gives insight into how the two

models have differing results for how people can be attributed massively shared obligations, and how these responsibilities can be discharged. Schwenkenbecher concludes that such "massively shared obligations will usually be *weakly collective* only" (Schwenkenbecher, 2022: 137). She explains in her article titled *Structural Injustice and Massively Shared Obligations* that "our obligations to perform the kind of distributive actions" to remedy structural injustice "would be weakly collective in that the collective level has normative primacy", where "the collective ability of a set of agents to produce an outcome or perform an action … is seen as grounding such obligations" as the individual agents' obligations against structural injustice (Schwenkenbecher, 2020: 11).

Schwenkenbecher also provides a distinction between different sorts of collective actions to illustrate what sorts of actions can discharge the obligations given by her jointly held obligations model. The main distinction she makes is between cooperative actions, for which Schwenkenbecher gives the examples of "Dancing tango, playing a duet and lifting a table together", and distributive actions, such as "people donating one million dollars to a charity … or neighbours keeping a local beach clean by taking turns in collecting rubbish" (Schwenkenbecher, 2022: 144). The distinction focuses on how cooperative action is "highly interdependent collaboration between individuals", while distributive action "results from the individual actions of two or more agents that are intended as contributions towards a joint endeavour" (Schwenkenbecher, 2022: 144). She argues that it is difficult for genuine cooperative action to be conceived of in large-scale situations, causing obligations in such situations to depend on distributive actions.

Schwenkenbecher analyzes the example of global poverty as an instance of structural injustice and states that “far from being a distributive action problem, it is better interpreted as a *combination* of multiple distributive action problems and multiple genuine cooperative action problems” which “requires genuine cooperative action at a global level, ideally by institutional agents” (Schwenkenbecher, 2022: 146). However, framing large-scale moral problems and their moral phenomenology without a structural perspective omits information that would clarify the responsibilities people have and the actions they can take in instances of structural injustice because the combination of problems includes a unique element, that agents inadvertently harm others and benefit by unjust structures through everyday actions. These social facts link agents normatively to each other, as explained by Young’s social connection model, and can help us derive “strongly collective obligations, where agents have some responsibility for the success of the group action and for others ’actions” (Schwenkenbecher 2020: 13).

2.2 Phenomenology of Political Obligation

Suggesting mainly distributive solutions for individual agents misses the insight given by the problem of political obligation, which questions if agents are obliged to support unjust institutions and is a main normative departing point for Young. Accounts emphasizing distributive actions, such as donating to charity or reducing one’s carbon emissions, need to be complemented by discussions of how unorganized agents are expected to be participants in socio-structural processes that cause injustice. This insight provided by the problem of political obligation calls for a shift from a moral and interpersonal framework for viewing structural injustice to a political and structural

framework because there exist normative links that an interactional framework focusing on the moral domain, such as Schwenkenbecher's, misses.

Schwenkenbecher mentions that Young argues: "we ought to fight structural injustice by 'joining together with others in collective action'", but that this "statement needs qualifying" (Schwenkenbecher, 2022: 143). In contrast with Schwenkenbecher's suggestion of actions available to unorganized individuals for discharging massively shared obligations, Young argues that people need to work together publicly with each other in collective action to fulfill such obligations for remedying structural injustice and she claims that such responsibilities are ultimately political. Through the domain of actions prescribed, both authors differ in their view of the joint ability condition regarding structural injustice. Schwenkenbecher's suggestions of distributive actions can be argued against by Young's claim that the distributive paradigms glosses over the structural and political aspects of people's actions in instances of structural injustice, giving an incomplete moral and political phenomenology. This change in the phenomenology results in different interpretations of the joint ability clause regarding structural injustice.

An example where the notion of structural injustice complicates the moral phenomenology is the case of a hospital administrator that must make a choice regarding emergency resource allocation between someone who comes from an affluent neighborhood and has less chronic conditions and a person from a structurally disaffected area that has chronic conditions. The administrator has the means to save one person, and must morally do so, but is aware that this is a complicated decision because

the former person has a higher likelihood of survival but sacrificing the latter will cause further structural injustice. However, they are also expected by their institution to follow a moral guideline which emphasizes years saved in a patient's life, or possibility of surviving treatment, in allocating emergency medical resources in extremis.

The phenomenology provides a variety of conflicting obligations and reasons for such obligations. The moral guideline that they need to follow has an effective moral principle as it prefers the person with the most chance of survival and can easily coincide with the administrator's own moral reasons. Given such reasons, it is sensible morally for the person to designate their optimal moral action as saving the former, privileged, patient. However, their knowledge of structural aspects of their position and decision makes the reasons for knowingly, but reluctantly, causing further injustices unappealing. They see that the reasons given by the guideline is making unjust conditions worse and cannot be followed on a moral basis without making a choice between the priority of structural injustice or saving a life. They also see moral grounds to act according to their role obligations, the omission of which could risk a system breakdown or the global spread of disease.

Analyzing the structural moral phenomenology shows that the obligations to combat the disease, save lives, uphold one's institutions, and struggle against structural injustice cannot be weighed against each other fruitfully and would be better understood if categorized differently. An essential reason for this is that moral obligations involve blameworthiness as a reactive attitude for unfulfilled obligations, which can be attributed to an individual or a collective. However, the incommensurability faced by the

hospital administrator makes it difficult and counterintuitive to blame them for not combatting structural injustice as the conditions that constrict them can go as far as voiding their joint ability depending on the context. The required sacrifice is immense in such instances of structural injustice and the blameworthiness that moral wrongs incur is inapplicable for agents facing them.

The inability to weigh different reasons motivating the response of the hospital administrator and to conceive of the appropriate reactive attitude to their actions can point towards such obligations not being grounded in the same sort of norms or principles. A structural and political approach, and a similar conception of the reasons for people's actions, can help understand ordinary citizens' experiences of structural injustice and corresponding obligations because blame is an essential feature of moral wrongdoings that cannot be applied to such instances. Weighing the moral obligation for saving lives, and upholding unjust structures, against the moral obligation for structural injustice calls for substantive moral argumentation. Young's claim that such obligations are ultimately political, on the other hand, has the benefit of shifting the reactive attitude from blame to coalitional solidarity, which also avoids arguing over contentious moral principles.

Her claim gives some of the same kinds of reasons for the obligation of the hospital administrator to support the institutions that provide them with the guidelines for saving patients. As the example relates to the possibility of people being morally obliged to support their unjust institutions, analyzing Young's claim of political obligations regarding structural injustice would provide a better understanding of ordinary citizens'

phenomenology in such instances because it can account for the problem of political obligation without shifting the model to a blameworthiness account. For this purpose, obligations for structural injustice need to be de-moralized and re-politicized.

CHAPTER 3

DE-MORALIZING POLITICAL OBLIGATIONS

As mentioned in the first chapter, the background for people's actions and daily lives are some socio-structural processes, which Young calls structures for brevity, that connect them to each other. The first section discusses Young's social connection model as a model that depicts these relations, emphasizing that Young aims to separate it from a liability account that focuses on culpability. The model illustrates the wide variety of relations and social facts that can exist in, and constitute, people's lives, highlighting the involuntariness with which structural injustice is often perpetrated and reproduced. She concludes that the responsibilities for structural injustice as shown by the model are ultimately political obligations. This chapter focuses on what this claim entails and, in the second section, argues that Young does not provide a distinctively political normativity for political obligations for structural injustice.

3.1 The Social Connection Model

Structural injustice results in immense problems with moral implications, such as large-scale racism, sexism, and poverty which "are now referred to as instances of structural injustice" by some philosophers following Young's model, and the concept generates

many important discussions (Mckeown, 2021: 1). Young's account of structural injustice gives insight into the large-scale problems that people face through socio-structural processes and the obligations that ordinary unorganized agents can derive from such complex global problems. These problems are entrenched in the moral and political phenomenology and understanding the variety of obligations that can arise in the face of these experiences requires inquiry into the relation between the two domains.

The notion of structural injustice gives insight into the moral and political phenomenology of complex global problems through a similar inquiry, and it differs from ideal approaches of theorizing about justice by prioritizing the act of "heeding a call" of injustice "rather than … asserting and mastering a state of affairs, however ideal" (Young, 1990: 5). Through her non-ideal account based on political and social reality, Young aims to bring to the forefront the political nature of structural injustice and actions required to remedy it. She does not advocate the implementation of certain moral principles but pays attention to injustices in the world to theorize about justice and obligations for justice. Her emphasis on the purpose of the justice theorist as departing from social reality rather than ideal moral principles parallels the critique of political realist authors about the prevalence of moralism in political theory, which locates the source of normativity for political obligation in the moral domain.

Although Young's account succeeds in shifting the discussion from a guilt-attributing liability account to a social connection model that generates forward-looking responsibilities for agents, I argue that she is unable to give a non-moral source of

normativity that would situate such obligations firmly in the political domain, without raising the criticism of conceiving of political theory as the sphere of enacting pre-political moral considerations. This section of the chapter will analyze Young's claim that structural injustice results in a kind of responsibility that is "ultimately *political* responsibility" and critique its attempt at de-moralizing the obligations for remedying structural injustice (Young, 2006: 123).

I consider the political obligations resulting from structural injustice in Young's account to be a subgroup of moral responsibilities that are discharged through political action, while their source of normativity is moral. An internal critique of Young's account based on its source of normativity will give answers for this problem. This will further Young's project of charting the obligations people possess when faced with structural injustice and especially her project of arguing for the non-moral nature of such obligations. Differentiating the political from the moral through the case of structural injustice gives a better understanding of what the unorganized global collective of agents faces in such situations of immense moral and political importance, giving insight into its phenomenology, and what kind of genuine obligations can be derived.

Young's theory employs and analyzes the political reality of the situation, where non-ideal circumstances, and the role individuals play in reproducing such injustices, serve as the backdrop for people making their decisions and pursuing their goals within these processes that benefit some groups while disadvantaging others. The social connection model illustrates this phenomenon and emphasizes the importance of the connection of individuals to rules, rituals, norms, and structures. This model, in contrast to the liability

model's emphasis on blameworthiness, focuses on this inadvertent reproduction of structural injustice by individual agents as carrying normative force.

Turning away from discussing the blameworthiness of the agents has its roots in Hannah Arendt's account of collective responsibilities and Young employs some of the distinctions that Arendt makes between the moral and legal and the political, or between the private and the public. Arendt argues that "guilt, unlike responsibility, always singles out" and that "it is strictly personal", placing it in the spheres of the moral and the legal, rather than the political (Arendt, 1987: 43). This distinction between responsibility and guilt parallels the distinction that she makes between the moral and legal and the political. As the domains of the moral and legal are concerned with models based on guilt and blame and that collectives cannot be ascribed guilt, liability models can only point towards personal, and moral or legal responsibilities and not collective political responsibilities, which is the sort of responsibilities Young aims to derive from the case of structural injustice.

Therefore, obligations for structural injustice, according to Young, would have to be differentiated from their moral and legal counterparts as they do not derive their normative force from the concepts of guilt and blameworthiness. Building upon Arendt's goal of providing "a sharper dividing line between political (collective) responsibility, on one side, and moral and/or legal (personal) guilt, on the other", Young conceives of the social connection model with this distinction in hand (Arendt, 1987: 46). The moral and the legal domains are distinctly distinguished from the political domain in the foundations of Young's account while a discussion of the source of

normativity of the obligations is lacking. This results in the obligations introduced by Young as political to derive their normative power from pre-political moral considerations while they are said to be distinct from moral responsibilities because of the domain of the prescribed actions that will remedy the problem.

Young gives her account of political responsibility, founded upon Arendt's account of collective responsibility, to be "a duty for individuals to take public stands about actions and events that affect broad masses of people, and to try to organize collective action to prevent massive harm or foster institutional change for the better" (Young, 2011: 76). Before progressing to the discussion of Young's account of political responsibility, it is important to note that Arendt's account stems from the Holocaust and the question of how the evils committed by ordinary citizens ought to be understood. The de-moralizing in question is not aimed to be as thorough as it would de-moralize discussions of the Holocaust.

In Young's account two important conditions of political responsibility are given. First, it is a *duty* regarding situations that have morally problematic consequences affecting collectives. The obligation is said to be political while the normative source of the duty is not given. It emphasizes preventing harm and causing a change for the better, which I argue locates the obligation's source of normativity in the moral realm because the duty arises when there is a harm to be remedied or a potential to change a harmful institution, referring to values held prior and external to the political.

Second, it is public action aimed at generating collective action, which makes it political by relating to the domain that the action happens in and the goal of the action. The private and public distinction also has its roots in Arendt's political theory and although Young criticizes the distinction of private and public in the third chapter of her work *Justice and the Politics of Difference*, her critique is focused on how our understanding and acceptance of the principle of impartiality has affected our conception of the distinction. She does not reject the private and political distinction altogether and her account makes use of it in construing political obligations as responsibilities that are discharged through public action.

Working through Arendt's conception of collective political obligations, Young refines Arendt's account to reject her claim that "people bear responsibility simply because they are members of a political community, and not because of anything at all that they have done or not done", as she believes that "it derives from something more specific and active than mere membership" (Young, 2011: 79-86). This divergence regarding normative force from Arendt's political obligations serves as the basis for Young's social connection model and locates the source and reason for the existence of political responsibilities in the case of structural injustice in the fact that people "dwell within the social system that enables the crimes and supply that system with at least passive support" (Young, 2011: 86).

Arendt defines political obligation through existential connection with a political community, which she argues cannot be dissolved unilaterally, while Young refines this aspect, arguing that responsibilities arise because individuals, through action or inaction,

are reproducing the unjust background conditions (McKeown 2018). Young's understanding of political responsibilities results in political obligations regarding structural injustice, which she defines as public action aimed at creating collective action, but they derive their normative force from moral principles. I suggest eliminating the perspective of guilt and the distinction between moral and legal and political as they do not give an accurate picture of those spheres and the obligations that are generated in those spheres, especially in illuminating the variety of responsibilities people face.

Young's account makes political obligations forward-looking and free from guilt and blame, but achieving the latter part depends on her employment of Arendt's distinction between the moral and the political. This does not provide an approach for deriving nonmoral sources of normativity for Young's political responsibilities and does not give the correct insight into the phenomenology of instances of structural injustice. It gives a confusing picture of collective obligations and makes it more difficult to make a distinction between the moral and the political, especially in the case of obligations, which makes it harder to understand the domain that structural injustice, and the required ameliorative actions, belong to.

For the approach to be expanded to account for the complex sources of normativity and reasons that the obligations of agents in the face of structural injustices possess, it needs to have a better conception of obligations that are not based on moral requirements or principles. To not arrive at political obligations that are solely a subset of moral requirements, the problem of the source of normativity of Young's account's political responsibilities needs to be solved. Such a solution can be achieved after thorough

analysis of the problem of political obligation itself and whether a distinctive source of political normativity can be separated from moral normativity.

3.2 The Source of Normativity Problem

Young's social connection model and her notion of structural injustice describe the political realities that agents face and emphasizes the notions of domination and oppression in contrast to accounts working with distribution as the primary term for theories of justice. However, the non-ideal foundations and the distinct primary terms that she uses do not necessarily place her account of justice fully in the political domain. As the debate between political realism and political moralism shows that such accounts of justice can still "share the (moralistic) aspiration to guide political action on the basis of moral ideals … that are external and prior to politics" (Rossi, 2012: 151). This debate is mainly on the question of political normativity where "moralists contend that political normativity is essentially a kind of moral normativity" and "realists contend that political normativity is not a kind of moral normativity, but rather its own distinctive kind of normativity" (Leader Maynard, Worsnip, 2018: 759).

Understanding Young's claim that obligations for structural injustice are ultimately political can benefit from this debate and the points made in political realist literature. As the second chapter argues, the incommensurability in understanding the reasons that give people obligations for structural injustice, the problem this raises for joint ability conditions, and the appropriate reactive attitude towards such wrongs support Young's claim that such obligations are of the political domain. In analyzing her claim, I am not

arguing that political moralism cannot produce realistic theory or misunderstands the practical problem of structural injustice, but I aim to show what different sort of obligations there are and explore their sources of normativity while taking political realist arguments into account on the matter.

Young's account is aimed at giving political responsibilities for structural injustice and its problem in providing a distinctively political source of normativity is the focus of this section. For Young's project to give responsibilities that are ultimately political and heed the calls of injustice that exist in our societies, a benefit of the social connection model, her primary terms of oppression and domination must not be the expressions of pre-political moral commitments. The normative force for such obligations can be derived through the idea that political circumstances constrain the scope and conception of justice. As Young's theory does not provide such explanations for her primary terms, this section criticizes this missing aspect and aims to provide a nonmoral normative source for obligations regarding structural injustice.

In conceiving of injustice, Young argues that it occurs "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" (Young, 2011: 52). The conception of injustice here, even when it makes use of the non-ideal political circumstances, rests on a principle of moral autonomy of the agents, or equality between them. These principles pre-politically make it good or right that one group of people is not dominated by another. Conceiving of a

notion of justice that entails moral autonomy inadvertently moralizes the source of normativity.

A similar problem is faced by Bernard Williams's politically realist Critical Theory Principle, which argues that agents have to voluntarily decide on the legitimacy of their institutions, and this principle derives "some of its appeal from the moral ideal of autonomy, especially in cases where 'being in the power of another' is not a matter of physical captivity but rather a limitation of the (mental, social etc.) development of the persons in question" (Prinz, Rossi 2017: 339). This problem, analogous to Young's usage of the notions of autonomy, gives rise to the question of "whether the contentious normative connotations used by" both authors in their "decontestation of the concept of politics do not themselves originate in pre-political moral commitments" (Prinz, Rossi 2017: 340). This is a further problem for Young because it requires substantive arguments on highly contentious notions of morality, such as justice, to even be able to diagnose instances of structural injustice.

Without providing a conception of justice and source of normativity that does not make use of moralistic political theorizing, Young's account remains incomplete and can neither explain the phenomenon of structural injustice nor how to remedy it. If the goal of political theory is specifying "how to implement some pre-political moral commitments", then its main goal will be "that of specifying a set of rules to bring about that implementation" (Rossi, 2012: 152). However, this method works neither for illuminating nor critiquing structural injustice because doing so requires a conception of justice that prioritizes analysis of structural circumstances. As the notion of structural

injustice is founded upon the calls for injustice that people make based upon their experiences of unjust socio-structural processes, the political reality is an essential part of a theory of responsibilities for structural injustices and is needed to complement the social connection model.

Andrea Sangiovanni works on this issue in his article *Justice and the Priority of Politics to Morality*, where he examines the idea of practice-dependence which entails that "institutions put people in a special relationship" and that "it is the nature of this special relationship that gives rise to first principles of justice that would not have existed otherwise" (Sangiovanni, 2008: 140). This practice-dependence in conceiving of justice and concepts of political philosophy parallels Young's project of providing an account of the social reality in instances of structural injustice. deriving a notion of injustice from such circumstances, and the corresponding responsibilities of agents for instances of structural injustice.

However, Sangiovanni's practice-dependence goes further than Young's project, as the normative force derived from his notion of practice-dependence differs from hybrid practice-dependent approaches that make use of pre-political moral commitments, such as autonomy or equality of agents. He first discusses conventionalism, a practice-dependent approach which states that "we are bound by local social meanings because they are the product of a mutual commitment that stops just short of 'actual' contract, but with the same normative consequences" (Sangiovanni, 2008: 145). However, Giovanni argues that this approach runs into a similar problem with Williams's and Young's theories as the normative force is derived from "moral reasons to comply with

the scheme of values intrinsic to actually existing political and social practices" that are conveyed through the local social meanings (Sangiovanni, 2008: 146-147).

The other view of practice-dependence that Sangiovanni discusses is institutionalism and this view analyzes institutions and institutional rules that are not "*reducible* to cultural beliefs and practices" and the normative power of its "principles of justice derives directly from the first-order arguments supporting these principles, rather than indirectly via claims about value pluralism, mutual commitment, toleration, or identity", which he argues are effective in conventionalism (Sangiovanni, 2008: 146). Institutionalism, according to Sangiovanni, provides a nonmoral source for social obligations that does not give moral reasons to follow institutional rules. Young's model needs to be complemented with a practice-dependent conception of justice which gives a distinctive nonmoral source of normativity that can serve to ground her political obligations without raising substantive moral disagreement on the first principles of justice.

CHAPTER 4

A POLITICAL SOURCE OF NORMATIVITY

Construing of people as agents connected by socio-structural processes that serve as the backdrop for their inadvertent contributions to structural injustice serves to de-moralize the discourse by shifting the discussion away from moral principles to a different source of normativity that can be found in a practice-dependent accounts. In contrast to the normative force of principles based on agents' moral autonomy and equality that Young employs, Margaret Gilbert derives her notion of normativity through the joint commitments people partake in. This chapter analyzes her model to complement the shortcomings of Young's project. I argue that Gilbert's notion of joint commitments provides a nonmoral source of normativity that can ground political obligations for structural injustice.

4.1 Margaret Gilbert's Theory of Obligations

Gilbert's account of joint commitments starts with simple social phenomena to discover "the nature of social groups in general by investigating such small-scale temporary phenomena," and these phenomena range from being the members of a transnational political organization, such as the European Union, to simple phenomena such as "going

for a walk together" (Gilbert, 1990: 2). In contrast to Young's approach towards obligations, which emphasizes instances of injustice, Gilbert's approach has the task of understanding and explaining in essential terms the social phenomena it aims to theorize. She starts from small-scale social phenomena to extract the main aspects and provide an understanding of how shared action is generated and whether its phenomenology can yield a theory of obligations that can eliminate the confusion resulting from obligations being taken as a topic mainly of moral and political importance.

The goals of de-moralizing the obligations people can possess and finding out whether a source of normativity could exist besides the moral require following a similar path in understanding collective obligations, as this approach brings to the forefront the various, and sometimes conflicting, reasons for action that people face when they inhabit unjust structures. Unlike the theories mentioned, Gilbert's approach aims to explicate the variety of normative influences upon action without conceiving such events as carrying moral importance. Gilbert's theory understands social groups, and obligations arising from being part of social groups, through the concepts of joint commitments and plural subjects. These notions center the social agent's relations with other social subjects and suggest a view that can explain social phenomena ranging from small-scale cases, such as walking together, to the more complex, such as living in society and participating in local and global structures, which can be unjust.

In approaching social groups and social facts, Gilbert uses the framework of commitments that people make with each other and themselves. Through these commitments, people commit their wills, either coming together with others or

committing themselves to a particular action, to something that gives them a sufficient reason to act in a certain way. Gilbert makes a distinction between personal and joint commitments, where the personal commitment is made by a person deciding, for example, to pay their bills tomorrow. In contrast, joint commitments are made with other people towards sharing an action, goal, or principle with them and acting in ways that will help fulfill such actions or goals. Her theory aims to analyze shared activities, and her concept of joint commitments is fundamental in emphasizing how people relate to each other and what reasons they possess for their actions.

Gilbert argues against singularism, which understands the "social phenomenon in question in terms of the personal preferences, expectations, and so on of the relevant individuals", and moralism, which holds that "the obligations most closely associated with the social phenomena in question are a matter of moral requirement", by marking the distinction between personal and joint commitments and pointing out the different sources of normativity that obligations of joint commitment can have (Gilbert, 2015: 3-5). Singularist terms have long been used to understand social phenomena and facts. However, Gilbert's treatment of social facts does not accommodate singularist methods of reasoning about them because her understanding of the social world cannot be given solely in terms of the preferences and goals of involved individuals.

Moralism does not work with her social theory also because there can be various reasons for acting according to one's joint commitments besides moral requirements, and they may not all devolve into moral requirements. Thus, Gilbert can conceive of an account of social facts that goes beyond certain paradigms and results in a theory of the social

world that avoids the problems of characterizations of social phenomena faced by singularism and moralism, the latter of which is a problem that Young's account is unable to avoid.

Eliminating moralism in theorizing about genuine obligations is essential in de-moralizing political responsibilities, and Gilbert's theory serves as a good account for understanding the notion of non-moral obligations. Recognizing the extent to which such an approach can explain the social world requires a better understanding of the concept of joint commitments and what sorts of obligations can result from people being in joint commitments. In contrast to personal commitments that a person makes with themselves, such as deciding to act more truthfully in the future, joint commitments are not conceived of in singularist terms but require the joint commitment of two or more people rather than the personal commitments of each. Therefore, joint commitments are irreducible to the personal commitments of the parties of the commitment, and this irreducibility applies to the case of obligations for joint commitments.

Gilbert states that "in the process of joint commitment, two or more people jointly commit the same two or more people", showing that they are ready to participate in and contribute to that joint commitment (Gilbert, 2015: 7). When the process is finalized, "the parties are jointly committed" while "the product of the process described—is a normative matter" (Gilbert, 2015: 7). As each agent makes it known that they are committed jointly with the other agents in question, the process of jointly committing wills comes to an end, and the normative product that Gilbert describes as the endpoint of this process of joint commitment grounds the obligations of joint commitments.

Gilbert argues that “any joint commitment obligates the parties one to the other to act in accordance with the commitment”, resulting in obligations not rooted in moral principles or requirements, but the commitment itself (Gilbert, 2015: 8).

An example that perfectly encapsulates how joint commitments function in the social world is given by Gilbert in her article *Walking Together: A Paradigmatic Social Phenomenon*. In the article, Gilbert describes a situation where two people go on a walk together and how both being present there, following a specific path next to each other, and sticking to a route while not abandoning one another will assure them that they are fulfilling their joint commitment, a commitment they make when they agree to go on a walk together. The joint commitment of walking together results in obligations and rights for both parties of the commitment. Acting in the manner required by the commitment and upholding the joint commitment is an obligation of each party, and both parties hold the right to rebuke or reprimand the other party if they fail to fulfill the obligations of their joint commitment.

An important aspect of joint commitments is that there are internal standards for the joint activity. The example of walking together in the woods could have implications for people to employ a specific walking tempo, prefer a particular route, or even synchronize their steps with each other if they are marching. The parties to the joint commitment could agree regarding such norms, and one may fail in carrying them out, causing the other to expect obligations of joint commitment to be fulfilled better. However, in cases where the norms and goals are not as clearly stated, there may be a narrower base for agreement on what is to be done. Therefore, responsibilities for joint

commitments are shaped according to both the terms of the commitment and people's understanding of the concepts and actions involved in the commitment.

These commitment conditions can be understood as the internal standards for what the commitment or concepts relating to the commitment entails. It also results in the parties of the joint commitment holding certain rights, such as "the standing to demand conforming action and rebuke for non-conformity" (Gilbert, 2015: 8). Through these rights and obligations for conformity, Gilbert's conception of joint commitments prepares the foundations for a novel understanding of political obligations. Conceiving of agents in the social connection model as people that possess obligations of joint commitments, and internal standards regarding what these commitments entail, can ground political obligations' normative force in a non-moral source.

Gilbert states that joint commitments form agents into plural subjects and that establishing joint commitments is essential to our social world. Many of the shared actions we take, social groups we inhabit, or social facts regarding our world employ the notion of joint commitment; thus, social phenomenology relies heavily on joint commitments. Gilbert proposes that "human beings routinely if inexplicitly understand themselves together to be creating joint commitments throughout their lives" and that "the conditions for such creation are relatively simple to state and easily satisfiable—really not much less so than the making of a personal decision or forming of a personal intention" (Gilbert, 2015: 9). The concept of joint commitments is foundational to the social world and essential for describing, and prescribing, ordinary citizens' responsibilities in the face of structural injustice.

The social phenomenology Gilbert provides as the basis of her theory of obligations complements the moral and political phenomenology this project aims to illustrate. As she further de-moralizes the problem of political obligation, the notion of joint commitments becomes a helpful instrument to understand the obligations that ordinary citizens hold for remedying structural injustice and Young's claim regarding the political nature of such responsibilities. Gilbert's approach can work to explicate the phenomenology of unorganized agents and de-moralize political obligations as it stays "fairly far from the usual terrain of contemporary political philosophy, which is largely geared to justifying particular evaluative, moral judgments on the conduct of life within and between political societies" (Gilbert, 2015: 17).

The implications of Gilbert's theory of obligations are productive for discussions on the sources of normativity for obligations that people hold in cases of structural injustice because her conception of obligations resulting from joint commitments gives a source of normativity besides the moral. Gilbert distinguishes obligation as moral requirement from obligation as owing, where the former have its source of normativity in morality, while the latter obligations have a non-moral source of normativity. An essential difference between them is that when someone has an obligation as a moral requirement, their "being morally required to do something is a fact" about them alone and not a fact about them "and some other person or persons", while "owing … is a matter of relationship" that is imparted on people through joint commitments (Gilbert, 2015: 393). The two sorts are different in that obligation as owing does not require the agent to hold

morally permissible obligations, and people can be owing other people actions or things that they must be avoiding morally.

Gilbert states that “joint commitment is a source of owing” as people are obliged to act accordingly with the joint commitment, and both parties have the right to rebuke and reprimand the other party if they are non-conforming to the commitment (Gilbert, 2015: 400). The obligations in question are raised solely by the joint commitment between parties and are not related to the content of statements that would give rise to such obligations. On the other hand, moral obligations are defined by the content of their corresponding statement or principle and do not possess the strong content-independence that Gilbert’s obligations of a non-moral source can possess. Her theory of obligations enables the theorizing of political obligations that have their normative force rooted solely in the fact that there are joint commitments between people and not founded upon moral principles or requirements.

4.2 From Joint Commitment to Political Obligation

Gilbert designates joint commitments as a central component of the social world and the social facts relating to people’s activities with each other. This section inquires the possibility of charting political obligations against structural injustice through her understanding of social phenomenology and notion of joint commitments. Gilbert’s social phenomenology makes it possible to conceive of participation in society as a joint activity that involves obligations of joint commitment. Each agent is born into social circumstances with various available experiences; some are determined according to

their conditions, while others are according to their choices. The backdrops upon which they make their decisions and form their goals inform and constrain their choices. A similar understanding is developed by Young in her social connection model and her claim that obligations against structural injustice is political in nature is better understood through Gilbert's notion of joint commitments.

Young's sweatshop example has the laborer participate in a society where there are challenging conditions for them, but they participate in such joint commitments as other workers need the actions of them to get paid. They usually also have families that rely on them for livelihood, and have to pay taxes, which serve to connect other citizens in a joint commitment as well. These local normative links ground their obligations of joint commitments, given rise by participating in societal and economic processes. Similarly, the sweatshop owner participates in transnational economic activities that connect them to other sweatshop owners and more prominent brands, which in turn reach markets with consumers that can afford sweatshop products. These joint activities do not need explicit agreements or contracts to be considered as involving joint commitments, for they give reasons to act in distinct manners and to rebuke or reprimand one another when such conditions are failed.

Even if they are disaffected by the socio-structural processes that Young describes as creating causal links between people that cannot easily be severed and are unjust, "people act within institutions where they know the rules" and "understand that others have certain expectations of how things are done" (Young, 2011: 61). Although Young's model argues that "certain patterns of speech and behavior have certain meanings, and

that individuals will react with sanction or in other, less predictable ways if the implicitly formulated or formal rules are violated", she emphasizes that the reason for political obligations against structural injustice is grounded in agents reproducing said injustices inadvertently, violating a moral commitment to autonomy (Young, 2011: 61).

Gilbert's social phenomenology gives insight into how people can have obligations through the joint activities they participate in by living in social contexts. Her understanding parallels Young in describing how "one's being born into situation where there is an established joint commitment of the kind in question does not prevent one from, in effect, signing on to it one when reaches the age to understand what one is doing" as, similar to the inadvertent harm caused by each agent in the social connection model, "the fact that one has little choice in the matter does not mean that one cannot be ready to sign on: on the contrary, it makes it more likely" (Gilbert, 2015: 400). Therefore, in both Young and Gilbert's view, participation in society gives people reasons to act in certain ways, akin to reasons generated through joint commitment, while Gilbert's model provides a nonmoral source of normativity.

Gilbert's understanding of social activity as joint activity can be the basis for a notion of political obligation that has a nonmoral source of normativity. The reason for seeking a nonmoral source of normativity is given in the second chapter's argument that it is important to distinguish these domains as they give rise to different reactive attitudes and a blame-based account is not appropriate for ordinary citizens' implication in structural injustice. Thinking through why they are distinct obligations gives us reasons

for thinking that the political could be a better domain as it gives better suited collective attitudes compared to the moral domain.

One disadvantage of moral obligations that political obligations alleviate is that it attributes blame when agents have no choice to act otherwise without considerable sacrifices. Adopting a moral framework in approaching such contexts can obscure the structural links that people are bound by and lead to an attitude of resentment through the emphasis on blame. Conceiving unjust structures as the moral failings of people, when their options are constrained, gives way to further resentment. A recent example in the topic of the thesis is the blue lives matter and all lives matter movements that emerged in response to the Black Lives Matter movement. The reactive attitude to moral failing results in groups that structurally benefit but cannot find a way to stop injustices to resent the structurally disadvantaged, while the political domain can illustrate reasons to act in coalitional solidarity among groups that are often antagonized.

As living in a society is a joint activity with joint commitments, justifying things to one another, both in terms of the commitment and its internal standards, is necessary to be able to engage in political activity. Bernard Williams argues that this is an essential, and even the first, question of politics and characterizes it as the Basic Legitimation Demand, which “implies a sense in which the state”, or the parties to the joint commitment, “has to offer a justification of its power to each subject” (Williams, 2008: 4). The demand for justification exists for the joint activity to attain its political character, and political obligations arise to fulfill such political norms, or in the case of their absence. Williams gives the example of helots, who served as serfs in ancient

Spartan society, and argues that construing them as citizens "is an attempt to incorporate the radically disadvantaged group as subjects", and he suggests "that in these circumstances the BLD … has not been met" and politics is not instituted (Williams, 2008: 5).

Such obligations of joint commitment and this particular internal standard of joint activity help ground political obligation regarding structural injustice. As the joint activities of living together need a justification from the parties of the commitment to be political, unjustified obligations for upholding unjust institutions or rules gives rise to political obligations. This is the primary problem with structural injustice as it entails cases where one group is dominated and oppressed without justification while another group benefits. Bernard Williams similarly points out that "the situation of one lot of people terrorizing another lot of people is not per se a political situation: it is, rather, the situation which the existence of the political is in the first place supposed to alleviate" (Williams, 2008: 5). This understanding of political obligations for remedying structural injustice can both account for the complicated moral and political phenomenology of unorganized agents and give them nonmoral sources of normativity for struggling against unjust structures.

Living in society gives such obligations of joint commitment, while leaving room for a broader interpretation of the related internal standards. The instances of structural injustice worsened through the COVID-19 pandemic, and the measures taken to prevent its harm exposed the problem of a democratic accountability gap, which requires such cases to satisfy the BLD to be political instances. An accountability gap results in the

parties to the commitment not being on the same page regarding what the commitment, or the standards internal to it, entails. As public health is an essential dimension of action and planning in states and societies, many people take roles in it, most fundamentally as voters that decide who will make the decisions regarding such institutions' rules. Bypassing this would raise political obligations that are rooted in obligations of joint commitments.

As authors on worsening unjust structures during the pandemic and Jonathan Birch noted, extreme circumstances of the pandemic caused people with differing roles, such as bioethicists, medical advisors, or hospital administrators, to widen the accountability gap, which prevents deriving input from the democratic base regarding the enacted policies and the corresponding socio-structural processes. A critical internal standard to be fulfilled, the omission of democratic input in health policies caused structural injustice to become a bigger problem through the pandemic, which gave rise to obligations of a nonmoral normative source. It can be said that in the case of the pandemic, the failure to fulfill the obligations of joint commitment inherited from being members of society that share internal standards in being jointly committed to keeping a public health regime in effect caused political obligations.

The political responsibility to combat structural injustice in the case of the pandemic was discharged, to an extremely limited extent, by the Black Lives Matter protests through public action aimed at generating collective response, satisfying Young's conditions of political obligations. The obligations in question were complemented by the normative force of obligations of joint commitment, where their commitment to keeping a justified

public health regime in effect gave rise to obligations of a nonmoral, and distinctively political, source. These protests brought structurally advantaged and disaffected people together in joint activity and helped them discharge obligations of joint commitment that they shared through the normative and causal links given them by a public health system that includes all. Thus, both the victims and beneficiaries of unjust structures had political obligations defined by a distinctively political normativity to fulfill the internal standards of engaging each other politically in society and combat structural injustice.

CONCLUSION

Moralism in political theory affects the prescribed obligations and changes how political situations are experienced and how these experiences are to be understood. Framing structural injustice as a problem that one stumbles into, like many saving someone from a pond examples, can be a related mistake, and conceiving of highly social and political agents as purely moral agents will inevitably miss what is happening on the ground. This echoes one implicit goal of the thesis: not to see unorganized agents as genuinely unorganized. In cases of structural injustice, agents exist and take part in processes of organized evil, an evil that is not blameworthy to be considered radically evil from a moral point of view. Framing structural injustice as a distinct moral wrong without a directly punishable culprit and as consisting in socio-structural processes that significant numbers of people participate in has the benefit of de-radicalizing the evil committed.

Still, a problem that affects billions requires a solution as strong and quick as possible. However, it is not hard to see that such a solution does not exist for ordinary citizens today. Therefore, it is an essential first step to argue that agents are not committing gross moral wrongdoings but are implicated in reproducing unjust circumstances. Acknowledging that they participate in the causal chains need not translate into blaming such agents. As Young claims, “the structural processes can be altered only if many actors in diverse social positions work together to intervene in these processes to produce different outcomes,” and holding people accountable for processes they have no

control over creates resentment instead of bringing people of diverse positions and communities together (Young 2006: 123).

Schwenkenbecher's model pronounces an intuition in clear analytical terms by constructing a jointly held obligations model against joint necessity and joint ability cases. Through the insight of Young's social connection model and her claim that obligations for structural injustice are political, the jointly held moral obligations model is problematized on the basis of incommensurability of such obligations and the appropriate reactive attitudes. The moral phenomenology Schwenkenbecher uses in analyzing structural injustice lacks the required political and structural aspects that clarify varying obligations in instances of structural injustice. This leads to an analysis of the political obligations claim of Young, which runs into a source of normativity problem. However, this is alleviated by the nonmoral source of normativity theorized by Gilbert, and her obligations of joint commitment serve as the foundation for the ultimately political obligations given rise to remedy the structural injustices plaguing global society.

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