Chapter 9: On Duty

Karl Widerquist
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State what, in your opinion, is the best way to enlist colored men for soldiers.
- General Sherman (through is agent)

I think, sir, that all compulsory operations should be put a stop to. The ministers would talk to them, and the young men would enlist.
- Garrison Frazier

This chapter considers the question of duty and how it relates to the arguments for freedom from forced interaction presented above. Beginning with the assumption that there are some situations in which individuals have an enforceable obligation to contribute to a joint project, this book considers what limits JPA theory implies for the enforcement of duties. This discussion is largely a response to the objection to basic income on grounds variously described as “exploitation,” “reciprocity,” or “parasitism.” Many political theorists have argued that policies allowing people to receive an unconditional basic income. It takes labor to generate the social product from which basic income is drawn. Therefore, basic income recipients, supposedly, act as parasites, exploiting workers who contribute to the social product without making a reciprocal contribution to it.²

I have voiced skepticism about this sort of argument above and elsewhere. However, I don’t think my arguments are decisive against any and all potential
arguments for a duty to contribute to some joint project in any and all circumstances. I do not think any such argument can be decisive without relying on some premise like there is no such thing as an active duty. But I would like to approach the issue from the opposite direction: assuming active duties exist, what are the limits on a ruling majority coalition’s power to enforcement them?

Recall from earlier chapters that I do not rely on active duty to justify taxation. People pay taxes to obtain resources and the things we make out of them. If they don’t want more than the minimum amount of recourses, they don’t have to pay taxes. Thus, taxpayers cannot assert that they have fulfilled a duty by paying a tax. For duty to be fulfilled by work, it must be by the act of work.

This chapter discusses the reasonable limits that a duty of active contribution should have. In the context of the theory outlined above, this chapter argues that maximal substantive and equal freedom for all implies substantial limits on the power of any one person or group (even a majority group) to force unwilling individuals to perform active duties. The chapter argues that there are (relatively) few situations in which an active duty is justified, that there are substantial limits on how a duty can be imposed, and that the group imposing a duty must take on substantial responsibilities in return for forcing people to do things.

Specifically, this chapter argues for four limits on the imposition of an active duty by force. First, the group imposing duties has the responsibility to make decisions democratically. This limit follows directly from the requirement to seek accord, and so I will not argue for it further. However, consistently with what I have argued above, I do not assume that democratic imposition means that the group imposes the duty on itself. Democracy ensures only that people have the opportunity to affect the decision. It does not assure that everyone succeeds in having a significant
impact on the decision or that everyone agrees that the majority should have the power to enforce its opinion on this issue. The majority imposes the duty by force onto everyone, including those who oppose the idea.

Second, duties must be equally onerous for everyone. One group cannot force others to perform more burdensome duties than they force on themselves. This requirement does not mean that everyone performs the exact same duties. The relative difficulty of one duty could be compensated by reducing the amount of time one is required to perform it relative to one who performs an easier duty.

Third, the imposition of a duty by force can only be justified by necessity. Maximal freedom requires the avoidance of force whenever possible. Therefore, a group must limit its enforcement to necessity. There must be compelling cases both that the duties exist and that enforcement is necessary. Essentially then, enforceable duties are limited to cases of emergency: unavoidable situations requiring action. It is not enough to say, we’re all better off if we all perform this duty. If there is a way to put people outside the circle of obligation, those imposing the duty have a responsibility to do so.

Fourth, by appealing to the urgency of the situation to justify a duty, the ruling coalition takes on the responsibility to get out of the emergency as soon as possible. It cannot simply choose to maintain a situation in which the enforcement of duties is necessary when it could bring about a situation when no enforcement would be necessary.

If the argument (below) for these limits holds, the enforcement of active duties is justifiable in fewer situations and under more restrictive conditions than might otherwise be supposed. That is, the conditions are more restrictive for the group imposing the duty. This chapter argues for those limits, and shows that under those
limits, the appeal to duty cannot do what basic income opponents would like it to do: it cannot justify a lifetime commitment to labor-market participation. Even if active duties exist, duty can at most justify a minimal service obligation imposed equally on all citizens (rich and poor alike).

Section 1 discusses what can and cannot ground an active duty of participation. It shows that there are cases in which an active duty can be justified but that when one considers the possibility of passive contribution, the case for an active duty is much weaker and much more limited. Section 2 then discusses the limits on the possible imposition of a duty, and connects those limits with the question of whether basic income recipients have a duty to participate in the labor market.

1. What can and cannot justify a duty

This section discusses what can and cannot justify a duty. It first shows that there are situations in which duties are justified, but it then shows that they are fewer such situations than supposed by those who believe that basic income recipients have a lifetime obligation to contribute to the labor market.

In several places above, this book refers to one type of situation capable of grounding an enforceable active duty: Singer’s example of a drowning child or infant:

**Example 1, the drowning child:** An infant is drowning in a shallow pond. One passerby is capable of saving the infant with minimal effort. The child will die, if the passerby does not make the infant.

Although the passerby’s freedom is important, the child’s life outweighs it in this extreme situation. In this example, a moral duty to preserve life grounds a duty.
The follow example shows a different kind of situation capable of grounding an active duty.

**Example 2, lifeboat above the falls:** A rowboat is caught in a swift current above a high falls. Unless everyone on board rows with sufficient strength to pull their own weight, the boat will go over the falls and everyone on board will surely die.

This example shows that interdependence is capable of grounding an active duty to contribute to a joint project in at least some cases. The people in this example are urgently and physically interdependent. Everyone’s life depends on the success of the joint project. People cannot meet their own needs alone; all are dependent on joint cooperation for survival and thriving. It is difficult to argue against the contention that everyone has an enforceable duty to contribute to the cooperative project under these conditions. It doesn’t matter if one person owns the boat or even if one person is physically incapable of rowing. If it is true that everyone on board must pull their weight or all will die, very harsh conclusion follows. We could soften the example. If rowing required only x percent of the able bodied, there would still be a good case for an enforceable active duty, and there would be ways to enforce it without throwing non-participants over the falls.

There are two different possibilities about the level of free riding. In the original version of example 2: the likely level of free riding (or, in this case, *any* level of free riding) is larger than the group can sustain without the entire group going over the falls. If so, everyone’s life depends on the enforceability of the duty. But consider example 2b: the likely level of free riding is easily sustained without any danger of
the boat going over the falls. In this case, people’s physical survival does not depend on the enforceability of the duty; what depends on enforceability is fairness in the distribution of a burden that is essential to the preservation of lie. In example 2b, the argument for enforcement relies on an additional premise of fairness or reciprocity, which is not required in example 2, which requires only the belief that death for all is worse than a temporary loss of freedom. The level of force necessary to maintain everyone’s life might be much less than the level of force necessary to maintain both life and this premise of fairness, but I concede that both are allowable grounds for a duty.

Examples 1 and 2 establish two groundings for an active duty: moral responsibility and interdependence. It is possible to draw a connection between them by saying that there are two kinds of interdependence: moral and physical. One could argue that everyone is equally under a moral duty to care for an orphan child. Everyone’s life as a moral human being depends on that project. There is a closer connection between physical and moral interdependence than might first appear. All of us are physically dependent on others during part of our lives—at least during childhood and most probably also in cases such as illness, injury, accident, old age, and so on. Therefore, one could argue that we are interdependent on average throughout our lives: each of us depends on others to take care of us during the times in which we are unable to take care of ourselves.

I will not dwell on the difference or the connection between moral and physical interdependence. Most of what I want to say about one applies equally to the other. It is not necessary for me to establish that there are active duties. I am conceding that they exist and examining the extent to which they limit my arguments
for independence. My goal is to show that there are strong limits on the group enforcing duties, even if we presume that interdependence exists.

Although this discussion shows that other moral principles can override concern with status freedom and scalar freedom in some circumstances, maximal equal and substantive freedom is still important. If some other principle prevents us from respecting people’s independence throughout their lives, we can and should respect their independence for as much of their lives as possible. As earlier chapters argue, freedom cannot be rendered worthless, even if it can be overridden by other principles. Many principles prevent us from giving everyone complete scalar freedom, but we can and should give them maximal equal freedom. These concerns will place important limits on the enforcement of duty.

I now turn to arguments that cannot justify an active duty. One is simply that active cooperation makes us better off. Saying that we would all be better off is not a legitimate reason to force somebody to participate.

**Example 3, legitimate nonparticipant:** Initially everyone lives minimally but adequately as subsistence farmers or hunter-gatherers. Someone figures out that we could all earn pay that will give us a higher standard of living if we all contributed our land and our labor to a joint project called the modern post-industrial economy. The majority of citizens want this project; but Gilligan asks to be left out.

This example shows to the extent that what we get from working together is reflected in our pay, there is no need nor legitimacy in forcing people to seek that pay. If Gilligan doesn’t like the pay relative to what he was doing before, it’s very hard to
say that he has a duty to contribute to a project designed to get everyone higher private rewards than they were able to generate outside the project. Also, it would be legitimate of Gilligan to say, you can have my land but not my labor. I don’t like the pay but I’ll take basic income for accepting less access to land than other people. This response seems especially appropriate if the decision to devote most of the world’s land to the project is imposed on Gilligan without his consent.

The grounds for a duty has to be something more then mutual benefit, something like interdependence. But even interdependence on labor is not enough. I want to demonstrate that the following argument does not always work: The social product requires labor. Therefore, everyone who would consume something from the social product is under a duty to contribute their labor to the social project. I believe this argument is at the heart of most reciprocity- and exploitation-based objections to basic income. The central problem with this argument is that work is not all that is required to create the social product.

I have responded to this argument in several articles, arguing that at least some level of basic income must be unconditional to be consistent with reciprocity and to protect individuals from exploitation. A property right is the legal right to interfere with people who might want to use some external asset. Typically governments enforce private and public property rights in natural resources without the consent of the people they force to obey those duties. Therefore, unequally held property rights can only be reciprocal if the people who benefit from the imposition of those duties compensate the people on whom those property rights authorize interference. Otherwise, property rights are enforced as a one-way obligation from the have-nots to the haves. Earlier chapters of this book extend that argument, claiming that such compensation must be sufficient to maintain personal independence. I have also
argued that the claim of exploitation is misplaced. Basic income is to be paid by the group that dominates resources to potential workers to free them from forced labor and potential exploitation by the group that dominates resources.\textsuperscript{6}

I want to extend those arguments further here to show that the poor and the propertyless already contribute to the social project, although they contribute passively. Reciprocity arguments against basic income must be based on some duty to contribute \textit{actively}. But if such arguments take the existence of passive contribution seriously and consider the question of when passive contribution can and cannot be enough, the case for a duty to participate in the labor market is weaker. Consider the following example:|\textsuperscript{7}

**Example 4, the well:** Everyone will die of thirst unless one of the seven stranded castaways on Gilligan’s Island digs a well. Mr. Howell is glad to do so in exchange for a relatively larger share of land, natural resources, and external assets left by previous generations.

Individuals in this example are interdependent. Everyone needs the well and the well requires human effort. Only Mr. Howell actively contributes to digging the well, but every one else passively contributes to the well by assigning him ownership of more resources than they receive. Everyone consumes part of the social product, which embodies both labor and resources. Only one person contributes labor to that product, but yet, the simple version of the reciprocity argument doesn’t work. Everyone else passively contributes to the digging of the well by being assigned access to a smaller amount of resources than Mr. Howell. The other castaways are not under a duty to contribute their labor simply because the social product embodies
labor. Basic income opponents need an argument to explain why passive contribution, which seems adequate in this example, is insufficient in the situations in which they wish to impose an active duty.

This example readily translates into the receipt of an unconditional basic income in JPA theory. All wealth is a claim on resources and on the things that we make out of them. The government enforces property rights in resources, giving people incentives to make them into more valuable forms, increasing individual and national wealth. All individuals pay taxes to justify their ownership of resources they hold, and all individuals receive basic income in compensation for the resources they do not hold. If the system works perfectly, those who contribute a lot, get a lot of resources, but of course, there is a great deal of luck and unfairness in the political system. Those who contribute less get less than anyone else, but they get something to compensate for all the resources that have been assigned to others. They get to consume products that embody the labor of others. If they got no compensation, there would be no justification for the assignment of resources to others, for the unfairness of the system, for the many controversial rules that they are forced to live under against their will.

Basic income opponents need to show either why it is always wrong for the castaways to consume water without contributing labor in the well example or why the well example is not representative of basic income recipients in a modern economy. If the outcome in the well example is morally acceptable, then the mere existence of interdependence is not enough to justify a duty.

The justification for an active duty must be based on interdependence and something else, such as the inability to internalize rewards. In the example of the boat on the falls, there is presumably no way to internalize the reward. If a sufficient
number volunteer to row, all survive whether they row or not. Those who row have a claim of unfairness against those who literally ride for free. But in the well example, no one rides for free. No one rides without sacrifice. The castaways pay Mr. Howell for what they consume by consuming less than he does. Most of the things people plausibly have duties to do are things that people are paid to do: firefighters, doctors, paramedics, paid care workers, and so forth. As long as the rewards are adequate, the mere existence of labor on which all people depend does not itself justify forcing everyone to labor.

Hopefully, this discussion shows that basic income has the potential to be a legitimate starting point for individuals entering potential cooperation. Recipients are being compensated for not being able to have all the access to resources they might be able to use (alone or in a group of their choosing), for living under rules not entirely of their choosing, for rules that give greater advantages to others. And they contribute passively to the fulfillment of duties by consuming fewer resources than those who are paid for fulfilling active duties or for doing anything else.

Perhaps reluctance to accept the potential legitimacy of basic income comes from a contractarian desire to substitute imagined agreement for what I believe should be literal agreement. Return to the four steps I considered in Chapter 4. The difference between a voluntary- and a mandatory-participation economy is in step 3. I put the two sets of steps together. Step 3a represents the mandatory-participation move. Step 3b represents the voluntary-participation move:

**STEP 1:** Population begins low and resources are not dominated.

**STEP 2:** Some group comes to dominate resources.
STEP 3a: Without compensation for lost access to resources, destitution forces the propertyless into the labor market.

STEP 3b: The propertyless receive compensation sufficient to preserve independence. They enter the labor market if jobs are sufficiently attractive.

STEP 4: The propertyless (might) take jobs that (hopefully) make them better off than they were in step 1.

Contractarians seem to want to frame this situation in such a way that the only legitimate choice is between step 1 and step 4. If people were living as subsistence farmers and or hunter-gatherers, it would be legitimate of some coalition to make an offer to create a joint project called post-industrial capitalism and to say that only people who devote both their land and their labor to it can share in its benefits, and people might have said yes. But a long and complex history brought us from step 1 to step 4. It’s not possible for us to offer that choice. Step 2 has passed and we are unlikely to reverse it. We have to deal with where we are now.

The contractarian solution is to use our imagination to pretend that we actually offered a choice between step 1 and 4. If we take the Hobbesian strategy, we imagine that step 1 was a horrible “state of nature,” and so, we conclude step 4 is always better than the alternative. Most contractarians no longer rely on the alternative being utterly horrible, and I’ve argued that we should include not limit the alternative to the “state of nature” but to all other possible social arrangements. If so, the possibility of legitimate nonparticipation grows. However a contractarian might claim, individuals only have a legitimate objection (and therefore a legitimate claim to compensation) if they are real dissenters who actually prefer step 1 to step 4. Everyone else is free riding or gaming the system.
This argument doesn’t work because the ruling coalition can’t claim credit for making the offer it wishes it could make. Two can play at that game. When the coalition offered to create modern (welfare) capitalism or any other system, individuals could have responded, you can have my land, but you cannot have my labor. Give me unconditional basic income in exchange for land, and then I’ll decide whether I want to contribute my labor. The ruling coalition might have said yes to this offer, just as the individual might have said yes to the bundled offer.

But what actually happened was that some group (a complex mix of private owners and government) came to dominate resources. Propertyless individuals have not been given the choice of whether to do things differently. We find ourselves at step 3, and we have to decide whether people are entitled to unconditional compensation for resource domination or not. The independantarian solution is that we have to obtain literal, individual agreement from wherever we start (unless some compelling duty overrides it). The subjunctive question of what people would have done were we to make them such-and-such an offer at some early point is irrelevant. What is relevant is that some group has come to dominate resources without the consent of the propertyless. The direction of obligation runs from all those who have to all those who have not, and this compensation must be unconditional both to preserve independence and to function as reciprocal compensation for the liberties that were taken away without consent.

What if this compensation makes some people far better off than they were in step 1? That’s fine. That’s how trade works, and that’s how compensation for forced trade works. We all give up one thing to get another thing in hopes of becoming as much better off as possible. I might like my job better than my coworker, but I get the same pay as long as I do the job just as well. There is something suspicious about a
system that applies the trade model to so much of our interaction, but would not allow
the propertyless to apply it to the passive contribution that more advantaged people
have forced them to make. If we see basic income in this way, it is a legitimate
starting point for all people regardless of their preferences.

If basic income is a legitimate starting point, gaming the system or free riding
does not exist. To game the system, one must take more than is legitimate. To free
ride, one needs to benefit without sacrifice. Basic income recipients benefit without
working, but certainly not without sacrifice. When you think of the enormity of social
rules that put people with little property at a disadvantage relative to people with
property, it is clear that a propertyless person without a basic income has sacrificed a
great deal to make the economy work.

If basic income is a potentially legitimate starting point, are their any
conditions that would make it illegitimate? Are there some ways that the modern
society is more like the lifeboat example than the well example? To make the case
that it is more like the lifeboat example, I think one would have to claim that there is a
population emergency: there just aren’t enough resources available for everyone to
create sufficient internalized rewards for people who perform duties relative to
receiving a livable basic income. Insufficiently internalized rewards could mean one
of two things: it could mean that the basic income is unsustainable because too few
people will take the jobs doing the duties, or it could mean that basic income is
sustainable only because some people make the sacrifice by taking the under-
rewarded jobs, when they would really rather live on basic income. Although it is
difficult to accept a higher reward than someone else and claim that one does so
purely for selfless reasons, either of these situations creates potential moral problems
that might justify a duty to contribute. The next section looks at limits on the imposition of a duty in the presence of these possibilities.

2. Limits on the imposition of a duty

The introduction mentioned four limits on the enforcement of active duties:

(1) Duties must be enacted democratically. (2) Duties must be equally onerous for all. (3) Duties must be justified by necessity or emergency. (4) Those imposing the duty have a responsibility to try to get out of the situation in which force is necessary; that is, they have to try to get out of the emergency. I’m not going to argue for democracy any more in this chapter. So, I’ll begin with equally onerous duties.

Force involves a sacrifice of freedom. If maximal and equally substantive freedom is a goal, any duties we force on people have to be equally onerous for everyone. If not, we make some less free than others. As earlier chapters argue, differential work and differential reward must be justified by choice.

Example 5, lifeboat with rowers and a navigator: Several castaways find themselves on a lifeboat in the ocean. They need people to row and at least one person to navigate to survive. Everyone agrees that rowing is ten times more difficult and time consuming than navigation. Not all members are able to navigate.

If the group holds one individual to the duty to navigate while it holds others to the duty to row, the rowers have a legitimate complaint that they are not equally as free as the navigator. Even though both contributions are necessary, a rower behaves
reasonably if she refuses to row unless the navigator does enough rowing to equalize the burden.

Section 1 argued that force must be justified by necessity to be consistent with equal freedom for all. This limit has many implications. For one thing, we can’t give people credit toward fulfilling duties for doing things that aren’t duties.

**Example 6, lifeboat with rowers and a bookie:** As in example 5, rowers are in a lifeboat on the ocean, but instead of the navigator, the rowers like to gamble, make use of the services of a bookie. Although gambling is not essential to the lifeboat’s mission, a majority of the rowers allow the bookie to get out of the duty to row to concentrate fulltime on bookmaking.

In this example, it seems reasonable for any of the rowers to say, “If the bookie doesn’t have to row, I don’t have to row.” The reasonableness of this argument doesn’t seem to depend on whether that rower makes use of the bookie’s services or not. If book making is a contribution to rowing, it is indirect and passive, and it undercuts the argument that people have an active duty to participate in rowing.

The requirement that force be minimized to necessity also implies that we can’t force people to do more than is strictly necessary to do.

**Example 7, work ethic Utopia:** Everyone works 16 hours a day, seven days a week doing difficult physical labor producing pure public goods (i.e. all share equally in the benefits of those goods whether or not they contribute to production). One member of the society objects to this work pace.
The majority has at least one claim based on exploitation and one claim based on equal freedom to hold the dissenter to an enforceable duty. Because all production is devoted to public goods, the dissenter will benefit from the others’ labor even if she does not contribute. In the example, everyone does the same work for the same reward, and everyone is in that sense equally free, or more accurately, equally unfree. No one has much freedom at all. Although in the majority opinion, holding everyone to this obligation makes everyone better off, it is not necessary to force someone with differing preferences to participate. To reach the maximal equal freedom they have to pare down the duty to the minimum that is genuinely necessary, even if those who refuse to do more than the minimum will benefit from public goods produced by others. The case for a general work obligation is even weaker if the economy produces private goods for private rewards, because if the rewards for work are internalized, the exploitation charge goes away.

Finally, if the ruling coalition appeals to necessity to justify duty, the coalition takes on the responsibility to get out of that emergency as soon as possible to free people from force.

**Example 8, lifeboat past the point of safety**: Return to the lifeboat above the falls. The lifeboat reaches the point at which it is safely beyond the dangerous current. Although they could row immediately to shore, the majority decides to row farther upstream because they believe they will have a more enjoyable time at that location.

It seems as soon as the boat passes the point of safety, the argument for forcing everyone to row is lost. The same would hold true for a lifeboat on the ocean, if the
majority decided not to row in the direction of the nearest island but to row to a much more distant island that they preferred for some reason. It seems that as soon as this decision is made, the argument for the necessity of forcing people to row is lost.

I will connect these limits to the possibility of a duty of contribution to the modern economy by considering one final example, which puts most of these issues together.

**Example 9, the floating casino:** The castaways are aboard a giant ship powered like a Roman galleon with rows of oars below decks and a casino above. The floating casino has a complex economy including, not only many different gambling tables, but fine restaurants, downscale restaurants, massage parlors, electronics stores, sports and so on. Only a small fraction of the floating casino’s economy is devoted to the one essential task of rowing. The rewards for most jobs are internalized with differentiated pay. Significant unfairness and inequality exists in the economic system, but the majority decides that the system is as fair and mutually beneficial as possible, and it enforces a fulltime obligation to contribute to the economy in general. The floating casino is not rowing toward the nearest island, or to any island. It rows for the purpose of trade. It is expected that citizens enter the floating casino only by birth and exit only by death.

Except democracy, the floating casino violates every limit on forced obligations. People are forced to do things that aren’t necessary. All people are forced to do more hours of work per day than can be justified by necessity. The ruling coalition is making no effort to get out of the situation in which the enforcement of
duties is necessary. And the enforced duties are more onerous for some than others, violating equal freedom. Some people are forced into difficult, unpleasant, poorly paid, low status jobs, while others satisfy their work obligation with easier, pleasant, well paid, or high status jobs. Even if the difference principle (maximizing the advantages of the least advantaged individuals) is applied to wages and working conditions, as long as society forces the least advantaged to participate, the relative burden of their jobs makes them significantly less free than those who are able to get the better jobs.

To rectify this situation while preserving the mandatory obligation, the ruling coalition would have to separate duties from non-duties, limit the use of force to genuine duties, and enforce them equally. In this simplified example, the only necessary duty is rowing. Everyone—rich and poor—would make an equal contribution to rowing. Their basic needs would be satisfied, and the rest of the economy would be based on voluntary participation. But the ruling coalition would still have the responsibility to get out of the emergency that justifies force as soon as possible. If they wanted to get out of that responsibility, they could stop forcing individuals to participate. They can internalize the rewards for rowing, paying people enough to make them want to do it when they can do otherwise, and base the entire economy on voluntary participation.

Applying the same principles I applied in these simplified examples to the modern economy shows that it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to make a generalized work obligation consistent with equal freedom for all. It would force duties on the poor that are far more onerous than the duties forced on people with more advantages in the labor market. It would force people to do many things that clearly aren’t duties. It would force people to work many more hours than is
necessary to complete the tasks that people might actually have a duty to do. As argued in earlier chapters, differential rewards must be justified by force.

For an enforced contributive duty to be consistent with maximal equal freedom, it would have to be very different than a generalized obligation. The government would have to figure out exactly which economic activities are things that we have a duty to do and which aren’t. It would then have to figure out how to share those duties in a way that is as equally burdensome for all, rich and poor alike. It would have to figure out what the minimum amount is that we all have to do, force us all to do that and no more. We would then be free to resume our normal economic activities in a voluntary-participation economy. Setting this up would be a major undertaking, and in the end it would be more like a national service than a duty to work as currently envisioned. Perhaps citizens would work a few hours a month throughout their lives, or perhaps they would perform one, two, or several years of fulltime service at the beginning of their working lives.

This strategy of dealing with duty changes the four-step process discussed above into a five-step process:

STEP 1: Population begins low and resources are not dominated.

STEP 2: Some group comes to dominate resources.

STEP 3: Everyone performs their active duties, which are equally onerous for all. (Benefits and burdens of these jobs must be equalized as much as possible.)

STEP 4: The propertyless receive compensation sufficient to maintain independence for the remainder of their lives. They enter the labor market if jobs are sufficiently attractive.
STEP 5: The propertyless (might) take jobs that (hopefully) make them better off than they were in step 1. (Benefits and burdens of these jobs need not be equalized as long as the differences are chosen.)

Even if the government equalized the burden of the active duties by introducing national service, it would have to appeal to the population-emergency argument to justify forced service. Therefore, the government would have to take on the responsibility of getting out of the population emergency as soon as possible. They would have to find a freedom-respecting method to reduce the birth rate until we reach a point at which sufficient resources are available so that it would not be necessary to force anyone to work for anyone else.

People do not have a necessary obligation to reduce the size of the population as long as the current level is sustainable. But if we choose to maintain the current population, we can no longer claim the size of the population as a justification for force. If we realize the maintaining the current population is a choice, we cannot say that an unavoidable shortage of resources forces everyone to contribute to a joint project.

The ruling coalition can get out of all of these responsibilities if it simply refrains from directly or indirectly forcing people to work for others. If it introduces a basic income sufficient to maintain everyone’s independence and to compensate them for all the rules that disadvantage them relative to others, it makes the economy voluntary, and it doesn’t take on all the special responsibilities that come with the enforcement of an active duty.

If we want to force the poor, the disadvantaged, and dissenters to do things for us, we should force ourselves to spend as much time doing things that are just as
onerous for the same rewards. If we won’t force ourselves to do the same things we force others to do for us, we privilege ourselves at the expense of the freedom of others.


3 As in the flood example from Chapter 4.

Anderson (1999); Bergmann (2004); Elster (1986); Van Donselaar (1997); Van Donselaar (2003); Van Donselaar (2009). White (1997); White (2003); White (2003).

Karl Widerquist, "Reciprocity and the Guaranteed Income," *Politics and Society* 33(1999); Karl Widerquist, "Does She Exploit or Doesn’t She?," in *The Ethics and Economics of the Basic Income Guarantee*, ed. Karl Widerquist, Michael A. Lewis, and Steven Pressman (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2005); Karl Widerquist, "Who Exploits Who?," *Political Studies* 54, no. 3 (2006); Karl Widerquist, *Property and the Power to Say No: A Freedom-Based Argument for Basic Income* (Oxford University: Department of Politics and International Relations, 2006). The fourth of these references lays out some the property theory eluded to in this work. I hope to lay it out in greater detail in a future work.

Originally mentioned in Chapter 4.

As long as offering this choice doesn’t ask them to permanently sacrifice their status as free individuals. See Chapter 3 for arguments that people need to retain the power to refuse throughout their lives to remain free.

Perhaps we can assume flying fish land on everyone’s plate every evening. The complexity of need is not the point of the example.