We can Scuttle or We can Sail the Seas

by

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“Although we seem trapped in an age of anger and despair, the alternatives remain the same as in all other ages. We can scuttle – or we can sail the seas. Navigare necesse est. One must chart his course and sail.” – Allison Davis
“Our fellow citizens have always been the boat for us, and in turn we have always been their planks.” – Ralph Ellison, “Invisible Man”
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I, Too

I, too, sing America.

I am the darker brother.
They send me to eat in the kitchen
When company comes,
But I laugh,
And eat well,
And grow strong.

Tomorrow,
I’ll be at the table
When company comes.
Nobody’ll dare
Say to me,
“Eat in the kitchen,”
Then.

Besides,
They’ll see how beautiful I am
And be ashamed—

I, too, am America.

By Langston Hughes
This thesis is for people who deeply care about racial justice, and yet who are not completely convinced about the magnitude of the crisis faced by our moment. I am writing this thesis for friends, family, and fellow citizens who are struggling to articulate the familiar sensation of domination, and yet the oppressive forces now surreptitiously hide behind the language and instruments of colorblindness. I am writing it for the citizen who feels a sense of confusion about our locus in history. We feel sentiments that are supposed to be behind us, and yet are incessantly told to remember the dream. I am writing for those of us who are waiting in the kitchen, and have always known our beauty.
Notes on method

This thesis applies nonideal theory. Meaning I advance ideals for an imperfect and unjust society. Since this thesis is a response to historical and current injustices, it uses social science research and poetry as a means to discern the plight of African Americans. Poetry was especially used as a way of engaging us and reminding us what it means to be human. And the use of poetry, in this thesis, is an attempt to explore the rich, painful, and complex life of African Americans. This method of nonideal theory is unorthodox for political philosophy. And I could imagine skeptics asking, “shouldn’t the principles for an ideal society be determined first, so that we can work out how to get there from here?” This is a fair question to pose; however, this contention still does not negate the fact that we can also use our current knowledge of the situation to lead our critical reflection. We can improve the lives of many without knowing what the ideal democracy would be. Knowledge of a better society is not predicated on the knowledge of the best society. And so this thesis is merely attempting to figure out a better and more justice conception of society without contemplating the best and most ideal version of society.

2 Ibid., 3.
Introduction
Sacrifice

“Our top priority now is to get on with the building process. My personal peace has come through helping boys and girls reach beyond the ordinary and strive for the extraordinary. We must teach our children to weather the hurricanes of life, pick up the pieces, and rebuild. We must impress upon our children that even when troubles rise to seven-point-one on life’s Richter scale, they must be anchored so deeply that, though they sway, they will not topple.” – Mamie Till

As Mamie Till walked her way up to the pulpit, she looked over the lectern, and she could see but not recognize her only son – Emmett. His distorted face and watermarked body was ravished and thrown into the Tallahatchie River after he allegedly winked at a white girl. But on that Saturday without sweat on her forehead. Mamie Till looked out into the crowd of 100 000 fellow citizens, and said, “I don’t have a minute to hate. I will pursue justice for the rest
of my life."³ With that call to justice on September 3rd 1955, she exposed the egregious face of white supremacy by keeping Emmett’s casket open. She exposed the underbelly of American democracy when she invited the press to take pictures of her precious baby boy. She showed the African American community, America, and the world the chauvinistic, racist violence her son suffered. But Mamie Till also (consciously or unconsciously) unearthed the sacrificial element of democracy with her call to justice. Beneath the promise of consent and the illusion of sovereignty lies the burden of sacrifice.⁴ She raised her voice knowing the cost of singing. She demonstrated how to deal with imposed sacrifice. It is tragic that Mamie Till lost her son to a racist society. But her heroism to look at American racism in the face, and expose its monstrous reality by calling for justice -- and not carnage -- is inspiring.

Before I continue with my argument, I should provide some clarity on sacrifice. Mamie Till did not sacrifice her son to the demands of living with others, nor did Emmett Till give his life for democracy. The suffering was imposed by the reality of Jim Crow. We have dismantled the formal structures of Jim Crow, so this kind of oppression no longer characterizes our society, yet the burden of sacrifice remains. Within our society, the sacrifices involved in overcoming the legacy of Jim Crow and ameliorating its effects disproportionately fall on blacks. I stress that oppression is not a species of democratic sacrifice, but

a sign of democracy’s absence. And yet the scale of systemic racism that African Americans must still face and fight is a manifestation of oppression’s legacy, and the burden of overcoming it is a form of sacrifice. Sacrifice’s burden is an issue for us all to solve and not just African American to carry, but in reality African Americans have carried more than their fair share.

Sacrifice is a part of the democratic experience. Sacrifice is the act of voluntarily giving yourself to the demands and burdens of living with others, it is the impositions suffered by living with others. The chief principles of democracy, which include majority rule, consent, and the sovereignty of citizens, blind us to the burdensome and frustrating reality of living among others in a democracy. The greatest cartographer of democratic dreamscapes is Jean Jacques Rousseau. Rousseau in his Social Contract invokes the notion of the general will as a vehicle for legitimating authority. He argues that in order for the general will to be truly general, it must come from all and apply to all. The general will is, therefore, both a property of the collective and a result of its deliberations. Every citizen, under this Rousseauian framework, will at least ideally openly consent to every policy. No citizen will leave the political arena as a loser. No citizen will walk away burdened by a new policy, which they did not consent to. No citizens will be at odds with collective decisions. Citizens of Rousseau’s utopian democracy do not have to deal with, because they do not suffer or experience, political loss or sacrifice. But Rousseau’s idea is a dream far different from our democratic

realities. An honest look at democracy makes one aware that nobody escapes political loss.\textsuperscript{6} We must admit to ourselves that collective decisions do not improve every citizen’s life, but in fact some citizens are benefited at the expense of others, even when the community is advanced.\textsuperscript{7} Sacrifice is thus a part of the democratic life. It is the sacrifice of those who lose in the contest of democratic push and pull that is the lifeblood of the democratic project. It is their willingness and sacrifice that allows democratic collective action to be possible.\textsuperscript{8}

Danielle Allen in \textit{Talking to Strangers} eloquently says that “Democracy is not a static end state that achieves the common good by assuring the same benefits or the same level of benefits to everyone, but rather a political practice by which the diverse negative effects of collective political action and even of just decisions, can be distributed equally\textsuperscript{9}, and constantly redistributed overtime, on the basis of consensual interactions.”\textsuperscript{10} Unfortunately, this more realistic conception of political life still does not reflect the lugubrious reality of the American democratic project, which is that minority citizens like Samaria Rice\textsuperscript{11} are always giving up more than others. The burdens of sacrifice are not

\textsuperscript{7} Ibid., 29.
\textsuperscript{8} Ibid., 30.
\textsuperscript{9} Allen uses the term, “equally”, to describe how sacrifice should be distributed; however, I rather use the word fair, because fairness tends towards equality, but may not get there. This space for error reflects more of a reasonable demand for human politics. Equality demands an identical share of sacrifice, which I believe is too high a standard.
\textsuperscript{11} Samaria Rice is the mother of Tamir Rice, the black 12-year-old boy who was murdered by a police officer for holding a toy gun.
distributed fairly. Democratic pluralism’s assumption that “the minority” will be ever changing, and thus, political loss will be shared across the polity is just not true. African Americans and other minorities\(^\text{12}\) have incessantly carried unshared sacrifices that have helped perpetuate the democratic project.

This thesis uses the African American experience as a paradigmatic instrument to shed light on sacrifice and citizenship. For one way to undertake an inquiry into citizenship and sacrifice is to investigate what citizenship has meant to those people who have historically been denied its blessings, and who have ardently sacrificed to be recognized as citizens.\(^\text{13}\) Thus, with this project I am attempting to shake us awake from our democratic dreams, and to make us realize that nobody escapes political loss. Recognizing this reality obliges us to deal with the issues that come with sacrifice, namely disappointment and loss.

Immediate questions that can be raised about the preeminence of democratic sacrifice are what sorts of burdens qualify as legitimate sacrifice,\(^\text{14}\) how can we distinguish between illegitimate and legitimate sacrifice, and what form of citizenship is necessary to generate enough trust among citizens to manage the burden of sacrifice (these questions will be addressed later). As citizens struggle with political questions they realize that these questions are closely tied up to their lived experiences and that the burden of sacrifice is

\(^\text{12}\) When I use the word minority throughout this thesis I am referring to historically marginalized communities. This would include for example: African Americans and the LGBTQ community.


\(^\text{14}\) A more robust account of legitimate and illegitimate sacrifice will be developed in chapter two. These notions are critical in developing an argument for the necessity of equality in a democracy.
always felt in the economic, psychic, physical, social, and political arenas. The poem, “Sympathy,” by Paul Dunbar\(^{15}\) clearly demonstrates how political decisions that are framed in the public arena have bearings beyond its perimeters:

```
I know what the caged bird feels, alas!
When the sun is bright on the upland slopes;
When the wind stirs soft through the springing grass,
And the river flows like a stream of glass;
When the first bird sings and the first bud opens,
And the faint perfume from its chalice steals—
I know what the caged bird feels!

I know why the caged bird beats its wing
Till its blood is red on the cruel bars;
For he must fly back to his perch and cling
When he fain would be on the bough a-swing;
And a pain still throbs in the old, old scars
And they pulse again with a keener sting—
I know why he beats his wing!

I know why the caged bird sings, ah me,
When his wing is bruised and his bosom sore,—
When he beats his bars and he would be free;
It is not a carol of joy or glee,
But a prayer that he sends from his heart’s deep core,
But a plea, that upward to Heaven he flings—
I know why the caged bird sings!
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As an African American born in the post Civil War era, Dunbar recognized that political institutions have a direct impact on people’s social, economic, and mental life. In his poem he seeks to show the reader the plight of African Americans through the symbol of a caged bird. Furthermore, the poem demonstrates African Americans’ sense of mental and material entrapment in America. The overt subjugation, discrimination, and vulnerability Paul Dunbar experienced as a black person in the United States made him feel trapped like a

bird in a cage, and yet he still wished to be free of the yoke of racism, and that hope enable him to sing like a bird. African Americans raise their voices for freedom knowing the great cost for freedom. They sacrifice today, as they did yesterday. Calling for justice in Roberts Temple Church Of God In Christ in front of 100 000 fellow citizens. Marching in Selma and in Ferguson. Striking at Mizzou, Wesleyan, and Yale. Political questions have always had an effect on the individual’s social experience. Sacrifice does not have to be as nefarious as slavery or overt as police brutality but citizenship always carries the burden of public life, which entails disappointment and loss. For example, citizens who lose their jobs because of the Federal Reserve’s decision to raise interest rates find that they are unable to support their families, and so experience loss. Even though political decisions are reached in the public sphere their consequences are often experienced behind the walls of the private life.

W. E.B. Dubois in his majestic book, Souls of Black Folk, eloquently introduced us to the notion of double-consciousness. Double-consciousness refers to a multi-faceted conception of self, which causes psychological strife as blacks define themselves through a white normative gaze. Nevertheless, Dubois also insists that from this duality arises the gift of second-sight. Du Bois holds that due to their double consciousness, African-Americans and all groups of people who have been subjugated possess an epistemological perspective that is both inside the “white world” and outside of it. James Baldwin in his essay the Fire Next Time, demonstrates his epistemological gift when he writes to his nephew about accepting white Americans:
The really terrible thing, old buddy, is that you must accept them [white Americans]. And I mean that very seriously. You must accept them and accept them with love. For these innocent people have no other hope. They are, in effect, still trapped in a history, which they do not understand; and until they understand it, they cannot be released from it. They have had to believe from many years, and for innumerable reasons, that black men are inferior to white men. Many of them, indeed, know better, but, as you will discover, people find it very difficult to act on what they know.16

Baldwin and all Black Americans are able to comprehend the “white world,” while yet perceiving it from an outsider’s perspective. This heightened self-awareness and experience with systematic racism puts them in a place to see the blending of the social and political and ultimately, the sacrifices that comes with this union.

A case in point is the staggering impact of the war on drugs. In the last thirty years, the U.S. penal population increased from 300000 to more than 2 million, with drug convictions accounting for most of the sentences.17 The racial dimension of mass incarceration is its most alarming aspect. In Washington, D.C. alone, it is estimated that 3 out of 4 black youth will serve time in prison.18 Although African Americans have been disproportionately impacted by the criminal justice system, many moderately liberal Americans would not agree that the system perpetuates black disfranchisement. A majority of moderate Americans would agree that the criminal justice system is endemically plagued by racial bigotry (both conscious and unconscious), like all other major public

18 Ibid., 7.
institutions in our society including schools and government. Furthermore, blacks marginalization and the growth of their incarceration rates are in part a consequence of historical racial discrimination, poverty, unequal employment opportunities, and a decrepit public schooling system. And this indeed is all true. But still many white liberals fail to see that black Americans are dealing with a racist criminal justice system that furthers white hegemony. A study done by Darrick Hamilton and two colleagues Khaing Zaw and William Darity show that black kids from affluent families are still more likely to go prison than the poorest white children. 

21 Ibid.
This point shows that even if you control for the effects of poverty and inequality, racist attitudes still negatively impact African Americans. And so you cannot explain away the problem of the new Jim Crow (the prison industrial complex, which has resulted in the mass disproportional incarceration of blacks) by pointing solely to the inequality of wealth and income between blacks and whites. All aspects of the system — from policing to prosecutions to sentences to prisons to post-release restrictions — have not only a disparate impact on people of color, but it targets them and labels them as felons, and ultimately, legally discriminates against them. African Americans have known and experienced this reality of sacrifice always.

African Americans have always known the centrality of quotidian sacrifice. Their epistemological gift of the outsider perspective has made them aware of the sacrifices that come with being citizens; moreover, it has impelled them to cultivate habits for dealing with sacrifice. And so African American fathers and mothers feel obliged to teach their children about the legal realm, which promises to protect and serve, but at times is a threat to young black people. Ta-Nehisi Coates in his masterful book Between The World And Me, articulates such sentiments when he catches his son waking up from our democratic dream. And in such a profound moment Coates wishes not to comfort him, but rather informs his son about the horrors of our reality:

That was the week you learned that the killers of Michael Brown would go free. The men who had left his body in the street like some awesome declaration of their inviolable power would never be punished. It was not my expectation that anyone would ever be punished. But you were young and still believed. You stayed up till 11p.m. that night, waiting for the announcement of an indictment… and when instead it was announced that there was none you said, “I’ve got to go,” and you
went into your room, and I heard you crying. I came in five minutes after, and I
didn't hug you, and I didn't comfort you, because I thought it would be wrong to
comfort you. I did not tell you that it would be okay, because I have never believed it
would be okay. What I told you is what your grandparents tried to tell me: that this
is your country, that this is your world, that this is your body, and you must find
some way to live within the all of it.\(^\text{22}\)

Most officers are nothing like Officer Wilson.\(^\text{23}\) They would not shoot an
unarmed person running towards them let alone away from them. Nor, to
mention other recent cases, they would not choke a man to death for selling
cigarettes. They would not drive by and murder a 12-year-old girl. They would
not violently body-slam and then arrest a teenage girl for refusing to get up from
her seat in her schoolroom. And yet we have seen these uniformed perpetrators
pound Markene Pinnock's\(^\text{24}\) into the ground. We have seen them destroy black
bodies over misunderstandings and overreactions. If African Americans just
show an ounce of resentment for their entrapment, then their bodies' will be
vanquished without their offenders being held accountable. The fact is that the
criminal justice system has a disparate impact on black bodies. They are frisked,
searched, detained, arrested, beaten, hanged up for humiliation, and harshly
sentenced. It targets them and ultimately labels them as felons, and legally
discriminates against them. This is particularly clear in the case of drug law
violations. Africans Americans make up only 13 percent of the U.S. population,
and use drugs at similar rates as other races, and yet Black Americans make up
30 percent of those arrested for drug violations – and disturbingly nearly 40

\(^{22}\) Ta-Nehisi Coates, *Between the World and Me* (New York: Spiegel & Grau, 2015), 11.
\(^{23}\) Officer Wilson is the police officer that shot Michael Brown.
\(^{24}\) Marlene Pinnock is a 51-year-old woman who was brutally beaten by a California
Highway Patrol officer on the side of the freeway.
percent of those incarcerated in state and federal prison are imprisoned for drug law violations. African American parents have to prepare their boys for this reality. As soon as they step outside the home their children must understand the sacrifice that comes with living in our democracy, which so often disregards their humanity. And so when Tamir Rice left to play in the park his mother, Samaria Rice, warned him to take care because of his race. The burden of sacrifice has always been obvious to African Americans and equally invisible to the white majority. Citizenship entails a practice in sacrifice in which all citizens take part not just African Americans, even though African American sacrifice is more visible.

Mamie Till’s call to justice not only revealed the truth about our racist reality but it also inspired a new account of democratic agency. Mamie Till like most African American parents wished that racism did not exist. She was afraid. She was afraid before Emmett was born. She was afraid most acutely when he left her sight. She just wanted to keep him in her arms. But she knew he couldn’t stay there forever. She knew that he would grow and learn to walk. He would eventually venture off into the public world where penetrating stares would follow him to school, shops, and home. And when Emmett turned 14 and wished to visit his relatives in Mississippi, she let him go, even though she knew the dangers that could fall upon him. The tragedy of Emmett Till was that he was not given the opportunity to find some way to live within this racist world -- in a black body. And yet his mother in the face of American terrorism sought justice.

Ralph Ellison describes such action as the, "implicit heroism of people who must live within a society without recognition, real status, but who are involved in the ideals of that society and who are trying to make their way, trying to determine their true position and their rightful position within it." Mamie Till’s political action exposes the underbelly of American democracy and ultimately, attempts to save the democratic project from mendacity and moral decryption. Her call shows us that in order to deal with imposed sacrifice, we cannot hide behind our democratic dreams or melodramatic narratives about victimhood, but we must deal with the loss and disappointment that comes with living with others.

**Chapters Summary**

Chapter one aims to investigate the burdens of sacrifice and its implications on citizens. Chapter one continues the discussion established in the introduction by discussing the persistent legacy of oppression and the burden of overcoming it, which is a form of sacrifice. The chapter further shows that the burdens of sacrifice are unavoidable and unfairly distributed. And so sacrifices unfair distribution and inevitability requires us to develop mechanisms to deal with its consequences.

The second half of chapter one discusses distrust. I particularly argue that sacrifice needs to be acknowledged otherwise it will allow for the upsurge of distrust. The increase in distrust means that citizens will be unwilling to

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cooperate and work. I show that trust is salient because it allows for social coordination and collective problem solving, especially in cases were law and policy cannot be effective mechanisms for cooperation. The need to generate trust within our polity is based on the understanding that an effective democracy is dependent on citizens’ ability to acquiesce their concerns to others and democratic institutions.

The central aim of chapter one is to illustrate the reality of sacrifice and the issues that come with it, distrust. We reveal these issues in order to develop practices that will honor sacrifice and deal with the consequences of sacrifice.

Chapter two aims to investigate the practices necessary to honor sacrifice. The chapter analyses and sketches out the differences between legitimate and illegitimate sacrifice. It then contends that legitimate sacrifice demands a fair distribution of sacrifice. This argument then presses us to go back to the discussion of unfair African American suffering in chapter one. The argument continues by exploring the unfair distribution of sacrifice and proposes the practice of honoring sacrifice, which means that suffering (but particularly black suffering) needs to be compensated in order to limit sacrifice, insure against ruin, and ultimately provide fair life prospects. Hence, we address inequality and recognize sacrifice through the expansion of the welfare state.

The second part of chapter two explores the notions of civic friendship and honoring sacrifice. This chapter shows that expanding the welfare state is not enough to overcome racism and other forms of discriminatory treatment. I prove this byHighlighting Northern Europe’s problem with race despite their
expansive welfare system. I further discuss the issue of the perception gap, which is a notion that contends that white and poor black Americans conceptualize America differently because of their vastly different experiences with the criminal justice system, education, and economy. I introduce and analyze the notion of civic friendship as a mechanism that can overcome the perception gap and incessant prejudices, which are reinforced by inequality. Civic friendship works because it cultivates habits of resolution. Civic friendship teaches citizens how to moderate their interests for the sake of others. It asks us to exercise sympathy and empathy.

Chapter two highlights the benefits and limits of the welfare state and posits the salience of civic friendship. This chapter hopes to convey the necessity of recognition and honor by encouraging the expansion of the welfare state and the establishment of civic friendship, which both work towards equal distribution of sacrifice and benefits.

A question that is not completely addressed in chapter two and one is, how is political friendship and trust cultivated? An answer to this question is the public space. Chapter three explores and sketches out the idea of the public space as a mechanism to cultivate other-regardingness. The public space is not a policy recommendation but an idea that gives us a tool to solving democratic sacrifice. The public space is a voluntary space that invites citizens to participate in constructive conversations that press citizens to recognize the “other.” It is a vehicle that generates social capital, which instills in citizen trust and other-regardingness. This other-regardingness impels citizens to recognize the
legitimate claims of minorities; moreover, it helps encourage us to support policies that will make up for historic and ongoing injustices.

The second half of chapter three discusses the limits of the public space. It acknowledges the limits of interpersonal contact. Empathetic identification is imperfect because it is informed by our own subjective conception of the world. This section of the chapter helps to explain the limits and also the benefits of the public space.

The objective of the public space is to generate civic friendship and trust, which is necessary for collective action and in overcoming the unfair distribution of sacrifice. And so the public space is a remedy for the lack of other-regardingness and trust.

The conclusion revisits the points that we established in the previous chapters, and reiterates the argument about the unfair burden of sacrifice, which is disproportionally carried by African Americans. The conclusion also explores the significance of this study and the unjust moments that persist in our society.
Chapter I
Sacrifice and citizenship

Institutionalized rejection of difference is an absolute necessity in a profit economy which needs outsiders as surplus people. As members of such an economy, we have all been programmed to respond to the human differences between us with fear and loathing and to handle that difference in one of three ways: ignore it, and if that is not possible, copy it if we think it is dominant, or destroy it if we think it is subordinate. But we have no patterns for relating across our human differences as equals. As result, those differences have been misnamed and misused in the service of separation and confusion. – Audre Lorde, “Sister Outsider”

Although democracy inherently involves loss and sacrifices, American democracy, because of the legacy of slavery and Jim Crow, generates further unjust patterns of sacrifice, which must be addressed. Our aim is not to achieve some democratic utopia, but to manage the democratic sacrifice in ways that are fair. My aim is to shake us up from our democratic dreams and wake us up to the demands of living with others, which entails the realization that nobody entirely escapes political loss, though some of us may experience it more frequently and intensely than others. Recognizing this reality obliges us to deal with the issues that come with sacrifice: disappointment, distrust and loss.

Before I continue, I should also take a moment to address the apprehensions of the well-informed skeptics who have read this far. This discussion of sacrifice to them is not new. In fact, they would remind me that sacrifice has always been acknowledged within democratic discourse. Political philosophers, for example, have long noted the salience of military sacrifice and the impact it has had on democratic citizenship. Kant in his essay Perpetual
Peace argues that in constitutional republics people will not likely vote to go to war because the individual sacrifice is far too costly,

Now the republican constitution apart from soundness of its origin, since it arose from the pure source of the concept of right, has also the prospect of attaining the desired result, namely, perpetual peace. And the reason is this. If, as must be so under this constitution, the consent of the subjects is required to determine whether there shall be war or not, nothing is more natural than that they should weigh the matter well, before undertaking such a bad business. For in decreeing war, they would of necessity be resolving to bring down the miseries of war upon their country. This implies: they must fight themselves; they must hand over the costs of the war out of their own property; they must do their poor best to make good the devastation which it leaves behind; and finally, as a crowning ill, they have to accept a burden of debt which will embitter even peace itself, and which they can never pay off on account of the new wars which are always impending.27

Judith Shklar, in her illuminating book American Citizenship, explores the military sacrifice that African American men made during the Civil War, and its impact on civil rights.28 I recognize and accept this point about military sacrifice. Nonetheless, military sacrifice is the most dramatic form of sacrifice and an irregular incident in democratic life. This project is not too concerned with the sporadic, but rather seeks to uncover and expand our conception of quotidian sacrifice for it is the ordinary habits of everyday life that define the experience of citizenship.

Citizens must learn to deal with the paradoxes of democracy. Polities often make decisions to which many citizens do object, which then requires sacrifice from them to benefit the whole. Our fellow citizens have always been the boat for us, and in turn we have always been their planks.29 This system requires

27 Immanuel Kant, Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Essay 3, no. 3 (New York: The Liberal Arts Press, 1948), 121.
perpetual sacrifices from citizens. This reality of sacrifice is contrary to our
democratic dreams, and so it causes a form of cognitive dissonance. For citizens’
belief in their autonomy is unremittingly undermined by their experiences of
sacrifice. The most difficult truth, which citizens must come to realize, is that
they are empowered sometimes only to be disempowered at other times. Thus,
democracies require structures that can help citizens deal with this paradox
between their politically inspired notions of sovereignty, and the frustrating
reality of their lived experiences in democracy. This issue of sacrifice is one in
which our democracy has not dealt with well.

And now to elaborate on sacrifice, in the present moment we are
experiencing low levels of unemployment at 5.1 percent. This is spectacular
considering that it was up to 10 percent just 6 years ago when the world was
dealing with a financial and economic crash, which was the greatest regulatory
failure in modern history – a catastrophe that extended from problems with
bank supervision to U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission disclosures. With
unemployment so low, and moreover, with decent growth anticipated for this
year, the Federal Reserve is preparing to increase interest rates. By law and for
the good of the country, the Federal Reserve raises interest rates in order to
prevent inflation from rising; but doing so slows down the economy, and more

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importantly for this paper, imposes unemployment by design and justifies it as a necessary for the common good. This example illustrates legitimate sacrifice\(^{33}\), and how Federal Reserves actions can inflict sacrifice.

The decision to increase interest rates is made by the Federal Reserve, and is predicated on the notion of “Non-accelerating inflation rate of unemployment” or the “natural rate of unemployment.” This theory specifies the level of unemployment necessary for the economy to remain stable, with non-increasing inflation.\(^{34}\) Milton Friedman who created this theory of “natural rate of unemployment” argued that there is a negative correlation between inflation and unemployment.\(^{35}\) \(^{36}\) He stated that there is “always a temporary trade-off between inflation and unemployment.”\(^{37}\) Thus, attempts to reduce unemployment below the natural rate would seem “successful in the short run, but would soon generate accelerating inflation, whose intolerability would force a retreat to the natural rate.”\(^{38}\) And so simply put: there is some amount of

\(^{33}\) Federal Reserve actions are legitimate sacrifice because such actions are fairly distributed over the citizenry. This answer nonetheless is still incomplete. It does deal with the issues of consent. And the accounts of legitimacy and illegitimacy will be fully explored in chapter two.


\(^{35}\) Ibid.

\(^{36}\) In 1958 the New Zealand–born economist A.W. Phillips pointed out that there was a historical correlation between unemployment and inflation, with high inflation associated with low unemployment and vice versa. For a time, economists treated this correlation as if it were a reliable and stable relationship. This led to serious discussion about which point on the “Phillips curve” the government should choose.


\(^{38}\) Ibid.
joblessness (or in other words – imposed sacrifice) that is “good” for the economy.

If we take this notion of natural rate of unemployment to be valid, then we must face the issue of imposed unemployment. When the Federal Reserve raises interest rates and so the level of unemployment, it in effect increases the time it takes the average worker to find a job. In general, jobs turn over in the economy at a rate of about 2% a month, and so a 5% rate of unemployment means that the average person will have to wait about 2.5 months before they could secure employment. If we move from 5% unemployment to 6% as a result of the policy, the sacrifice is an increase in job search time from 2.5 months to 3 months, or about two weeks, which may not seem to be much of a sacrifice to impose on unemployed workers in order to slow inflation from rising. Unfortunately, the “average” wait time between jobs obscures the fact that various features of the labor market keep some citizens out of work for extended periods of time or even permanently, while others are able to secure a job fairly quickly. This burden of extended joblessness is disproportionately borne by African Americans and other minorities.

African Americans experience an unemployment rate of 9.2 percent while the national average stands at about 5.1 percent, which speaks to the systemic disparities in opportunities by race. African Americans have greater hurdles to

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jump when it comes to securing and retaining employment. For example, there are deplorable disparities in graduation rates between races. The high school graduation rate for blacks is 16 percentage points below the rate of white students.\textsuperscript{40} Young black men are also less likely to complete college degrees. Only about 21 percent of black men have college degrees by their late 20s, but nearly 40 percent of white men have degrees.\textsuperscript{41} This barrier to employment is further augmented by other social factors such as poverty and unequal treatment in the juvenile and criminal justice system. These inequalities mean that African Americans have much longer wait times between jobs because they are less likely to have the educational attainment and labor market skills to succeed in today’s economy. As a result, African Africans have a tendency to participate less in the labor force; therefore, experience higher rates of unemployment. The increases in wait time due to Federal Reserves actions are a form of legitimate sacrifice\textsuperscript{42}, but not those labor market practices and social forces that are effectively unfair and discriminatory. Minorities’ unfair share of these imposed sacrifice’ is a problem, and reflects the ways in which minorities carry the burden of overcoming the legacy of the racist past.

Employment is fundamental to citizenship. Citizenship in the American context has never been only a matter of agency and empowerment, but also a

\textsuperscript{40} “Economic Cost of youth disadvantage and high-return opportunities for change” \textit{Executive office of the President of the United of America}, 20 July 2015, \url{https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/mbkreport_final.pdf} (accessed 12 March 2016)

\textsuperscript{41}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{42} This point raises concerns about legitimate sacrifice. Look at footnote 33 for a further explanation.
matter of social standing, which is predicated on income, occupation, and education. And so when citizens find themselves unemployed for extended periods of time as a result of social hurdles, and yet they still acquiesce to policies that don't advance their concerns, they are in fact jeopardizing their standing as citizens within the polity. And people who are no longer employed carry the burden of dishonor and not just because of their poverty, but also because of the scorn they face from their fellow citizens. This psychological stress generates distrust among citizens. These sentiments of distrust are exacerbated by the experience of historic marginalization, the sense that the majority has never recognized their losses.

As citizens we are divided along many lines of socioeconomic, political, and geographical difference, but we walk, talk, and work alongside one another despite our differences. With our many divisions we are still tied together in mutual entanglements, even when we choose to ignore and disdain each other. These dispositions and loose ties are what citizenship is made of, as we paddle the boat of democracy through the murky waters of time, history, and space. We are bound together in the project, and so we need to acknowledge and honor sacrifice in order to maintain the boat. This thesis thus far particularly points out that our continuance is the result of sacrifices. Therefore, we need to develop frameworks in which we can determine the significance of each act of sacrifice. We need to develop a language and a conceptual space to identify the different

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44 Ibid., 68.
levels of sacrifice and their causes.⁴⁵ Such a task is obviously practically and
philosophically daunting. Nonetheless, criteria for differentiating legitimate from
illegitimate sacrifice are crucial, to the effort of converting negative sentiments
like resentment, disappointment, and distrust into less pernicious emotions.⁴⁶

Trust, Sacrifice, and Democracy

The sense of vulnerability within the polity is an important source of distrust.
The sentiments of distrust that follow legitimate sacrifice arise not merely on the
basis of particular policy decisions, like Fed increases in interest rates, but also
are judgments about a citizen’s hope for immediate and future security.⁴⁷ For
distrust does not simply stem from the experiences of sacrifice, but it
mushrooms when others do not recognize one’s sacrifice, and it festers
perniciously when the polity does not honor that sacrifice. And so these points
are salient to our argument because democratic citizenship must not only
involve assessing whether a given experience is legitimate or illegitimate
sacrifice, but also it must respond to the distrust that is felt even when the
sacrifice in question is legitimate. Such practices would address citizens’
trepidations and fears about their own security within the polity.⁴⁸

Sacrifice needs to be reciprocated. By that I mean that citizens must
recognize the sacrifices of others and create institutions to honor that sacrifice

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⁴⁵ This conversation will be picked up again in Chapter two.
⁴⁶ Danielle Allen, Talking to Strangers: Anxieties of Citizenship since Brown v. Board of
⁴⁷ Ibid., 47.
⁴⁸ Ibid., 47.
by alleviating its burden, as I have pointed out before.\textsuperscript{49} The absence of such actions will lead to the perpetuation of distrust. The suppuration resulting from interpersonal distrust means that citizens will feel vulnerable because of the ambitions of others, and thus, citizens will be unwilling to work, cooperate, and be with others. Institutional distrust will result in citizens no longer wishing to engage with institutions because the institutions appear to be unfair and unpredictable.\textsuperscript{50} Expunging distrust through new habits of citizenship is necessary to the maintenance of relationships that make it worthwhile to disagree, engage, work, cooperate and be with others in this democratic project.

One of the principal ways of sustaining the democratic legitimacy of sacrifice is to ensure that sacrifice is limited so that it will not seriously erode one’s life prospects or endanger one’s status as an equal citizen. To meet this condition, it is essential that a democratic society institute a vigorous and effective welfare state.\textsuperscript{51} And so honoring sacrifice does not mean that every policy battle that citizens lose results in immediate compensation measures. Such a suggestion doesn’t seem reasonable. Instead, I argue, for a vigorous welfare state, which launches schemes to ensure against ruin and reduces the stakes of political life.

The need to generate trust within a democracy is predicated on the understanding that democracies are dependent on citizens’ capacity to openly

\textsuperscript{49} This recognition and honoring sacrifice means addressing inequality through the expansion of the welfare system.

\textsuperscript{50} Institutional distrust is belief that democratic institutions like voting will not operate fairly and consistently.

\textsuperscript{51} The term welfare state is used throughout this thesis to mean state activities in four general areas: health care, education, housing, and food. But we are particularly concerned with its capacity to establish equity.
submit their concerns and fates to the hands of democratic strangers and
governmental institutions.\textsuperscript{52} Citizens must trust not only those who represent
them but also those who disagree with them. For democracy is filled with
uncertainty, and trust is necessary to generate faith in citizens to deal with that
uncertainty. Citizens must not only realize and experience the harsh realities of
sacrifice, but they must also see the positive effects of being a democratic citizen.
Citizens will only trust democratic institutions when they recognize that on most
occasions, institutions are working for them; moreover, democratic practices
and institutions ultimately, do not always disadvantage them.\textsuperscript{53} Citizens can
extend their trust only when institutions have developed a good record for
fulfilling their promises, telling the truth, and staying fair.\textsuperscript{54} Citizens need to take
turns with sacrificing and benefiting. Collective decision-making certainly does
not always benefit every citizen, and thus, we will be doing well, if we are able to
honor and develop systems that acknowledge and alleviate the burdens of
sacrifice, and also deal with its emotional consequences.

The skeptics who question the need for trust will point to the fact that trust is
a sentiment that can only be extended to those with whom we have shared
experiences. For them, trust has a cognitive component, as it is dependent on

\textsuperscript{52} Danielle Allen, \textit{Talking to Strangers: Anxieties of Citizenship since Brown v. Board of

\textsuperscript{53} Russell Hardin, \textit{Do we want trust in government?} (Cambridge: University Press, 1999),
23.

\textsuperscript{54} Fairness can be defined as the tendency towards equality; however, its march towards
equality is never complete. This space for error reflects our flawed condition, but it also
presses us to incessantly pursue equality.
knowledge and belief.\textsuperscript{55} Hence, democratic strangers do not have any reason to trust or be trusted; they, are mutually ignorant, and thus, they encounter each other with a feeling of caution and distrust.\textsuperscript{56} I acknowledge this concern; however, it is only one particular account of trust. I make a distinction between particularized and generalized trust. Throughout this paper I have been talking about generalized trust. I believe we need to generate generalized trust and not particularized trust. Particularized trust can only be extended to individuals with whom we are in frequent contact with. But in a society of democratic strangers where social cooperation is needed, this kind of trust is not enough. Generalized trust, which is extended to large numbers of unknown citizens, is what is necessary for democracy.\textsuperscript{57} Generalized trust assists in building large-scale, complex, interdependent social networks and institutions. Generalized trust is appropriate to major problems of social coordination, which are unavoidably institutional, because such issues arise among citizens who are unknown to one another.\textsuperscript{58}

I should also take another moment to address an apprehension by the well-informed skeptics who have read this far. They may (by now) have accepted the notion of democratic sacrifice but still reject trust as necessary in democracy. And so let me clarify the connection between democracy and trust. The

\textsuperscript{56} Claus Offe, \textit{How can we trust our fellow citizens?} (Cambridge: University Press, 1999), 50.
\textsuperscript{57} In chapter 3, I will expensively discuss how generate generalized trust can be generated.
connection at first does not seem obvious. But when one recognizes that politics is distinguished from other forms of social relations by conflicts of interests and identities, and the mere fact that social relationships are political (to say the least) raises the question of the conditions of trust.\textsuperscript{59} Trust involves accepting the potential risk of harm, but in exchange for the benefits of cooperation.\textsuperscript{60} Hence, trust is unavoidably precarious. It involves the risk that other citizens will not come through or even worse exploit you. Nevertheless, trust is paramount because it allows us to form relationships and depend on others for advice, help, and cooperation, especially when there is no law or compelling force coercing us to cooperate.\textsuperscript{61} Annette Baier in her book \textit{Moral Prejudices} expresses this point eloquently, “where one depends on another’s good will, one is necessarily vulnerable to the limits of that good will. One leaves others an opportunity to harm one when one trusts, and also shows one’s confidence that they will not take it.”\textsuperscript{62} So if I extend trust in this democratic life, I am also judging and believing that my trust will not be abused but will be a vehicle for my (or our collective) benefit, and so this implies that there is no deep conflict of interests between me and the persons to whom I extend trust.

The potential for solidarity within democracy is often thought to be limited because political decisions do not and cannot benefit all citizens. Democratic

\begin{footnotes}
\textsuperscript{60} Russell Hardin, \textit{Do we want trust in government?} (Cambridge: University Press, 1999), 24.
\textsuperscript{61} Claus Offe, \textit{How can we trust our fellow citizens?} (Cambridge: University Press, 1999), 43.
\end{footnotes}
collective action always results from and leads to conflicts of interests, from which these critics conclude that trust cannot exist. Trust, in this view, exists only in the absence of incompatible interests. And so one could logically decide not to extend one’s trust on the presupposition that others do not and cannot always share their interests, and thus, vulnerability and with it distrust are persistent experiences in democracy. Nonetheless, I argue that democracy cannot survive without trust. For trust produces desirable means of social coordination when other instruments like laws are limited in their capacities to achieve wanted outcomes. As Mark Warren argues, “a society that fosters robust relations of trust is probably also a society that can afford fewer regulations and greater freedoms, deal with more contingencies, tap the energy and ingenuity of its citizens, limit the inefficiencies of rule-based means of coordination, and provide a greater sense of existential security and satisfaction.”

Hence, the extension of trust, especially to democratic strangers enables social cooperation, which allows for the benefits of more complex, differentiated, and diverse societies.

We have thus far discussed the salience of trust, and yet we have not considered how it emerges. Offe rightly points out that “it is not clear how civic trust emerges among the members of mass publics within a democracy, given the condition of anonymity, diversity, and pluralism.” Hence, I propose three sources for the production of generalized trust. The first answer is that

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64 Claus Offe, How can we trust our fellow citizens? (Cambridge: University Press, 1999), 43.
65 Ibid., 57.
generalized trust does not have to be grounded on familiarity and frequent interaction with concrete citizens, but can be based on symbolic representation of communities.\textsuperscript{66} Therefore, invoking a sense of shared belonging to some community whether it is a location, a particular group, nationality, and city etc. – and its presumably distinctive history, culture, and problems -- may also help to cultivate obligation, recollection, and the production of generalized trust.\textsuperscript{67}

Traditions, values, and culture of a group can be generalized to almost everybody in that group, the exception being those individuals who do not self identify with the group.\textsuperscript{68} \textsuperscript{69} The second source is to ensure that institutions maintain a consistent record of fulfilling their obligations, including following the norms of truthfulness and fairness.\textsuperscript{70} Citizens will only trust institutions when their interactions with institutions are consistent and fair, and ultimately, they also recognize that on most occasions they are benefiting from these institutions. If institutions do not consistently abide by these norms, generalized trust will erode completely. Thirdly, producing generalized trust is predicated on a “civic communitarian” strategy, in which the development of trust is

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\textsuperscript{66} Claus Offe, \textit{How can we trust our fellow citizens?} (Cambridge: University Press, 1999), 58.
\textsuperscript{67} Ibid., 59.
\textsuperscript{68} Claus Offe, \textit{How can we trust our fellow citizens?} (Cambridge: University Press, 1999), 59.
\textsuperscript{69} Individuals who choose not to identify with the group, essentially choose not extend trust to others. This incessant distrust of the “other” clearly allows for the perpetual exclusion and distrust of historical marginalized people. And yet this acknowledgment of the limits of generalized trust is not giving into indifference. But in chapter three, I propose the notion of the public space as a mechanism to overcome distrust and apathy.
\textsuperscript{70} Claus Offe, \textit{How can we trust our fellow citizens?} (Cambridge: University Press, 1999), 59.
\end{flushright}
generated from increasing citizen involvement in associational life.\textsuperscript{71,72} This echoes Putnanian argument where he contends that the recent erosion of social capital, that is the features of social organization such as networks norms, and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit,\textsuperscript{73} was predicated on the weakening in the vibrancy of American civil society. He particularly focused on the decrease in participation rates in homogeneous groups, like bowling leagues and fraternities. Thus, an increase in participation rates will result in a greater amount of social capital, which encourages generalized trust.

It should be obvious by now that the generation of trust is not the concern only of politicians but also a duty of citizens.\textsuperscript{74} For not only politicians deal with the consequences of a sacrificing citizenry, but also citizens themselves must deal with this reality. As I have said before, the entire citizenry is tied together by a network of gains and losses, which means that all members have an incentive to work at developing trust.\textsuperscript{75} Being able to extend trust allows citizens to expand their horizon of action, and emphatically generates a greater sense of security by allowing citizens to take the relationships that they are dependent on

\textsuperscript{71} Claus Offe, \textit{How can we trust our fellow citizens?} (Cambridge: University Press, 1999), 59.
\textsuperscript{72} This statement raises questions about how we would increase citizens’ participation in associational life. This question will be further dealt with throughout chapter three.
\textsuperscript{74} We can conceptualize trust as a public good, which means that it is prone to free riding. And so the following question is how do we get citizens to engage in trust generating activities? These questions will be given extensive attention in chapter three.
for granted. Imagine if I am unwilling to trust other citizens I share a walk with on a promenade because I am afraid that they will assault me, then surely I will not be able to leave my house, and ultimately, live a human life. So the absence of trust among citizens surely leads to an impoverished existence in which humans would live an insular life that does not allow them to enjoy sunsets and other people. And so generalized trust is vital in allowing us to live confidently with others. And so politicians cannot produce trust alone, because it grows among citizens. Let me defend this claim by referring to traffic policy problems. Diego Gambetta uses the following example in his wonderful book Can we trust trust:

The ubiquitous problem of traffic jams in cities is often taken as a sign of the predominance of poisonous preferences for travelling by car over travelling by other means... [But] there are strong grounds for believing that the motives for cooperation - that is, using bicycles and public transport - are not absent. What is lacking is the belief that everybody else is going to cooperate.

The surveys, which Gambetta refers to indicate that a majority of the “population favors the closure of the city center to private and non-residential traffic.” But the widespread perception that citizens have of the non-cooperative proclivities of other citizens impedes the chances of policy being changed and implemented to conform to the will of the citizens. Ultimately, and ironically, the belief that others are not cooperative hinders the chances of citizens ever learning otherwise, and so being able to realize their desired policy. And so trust is vital between citizens, especially when it comes to solving collective problems.

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78 Claus Offe, How can we trust our fellow citizens? (Cambridge: University Press, 1999), 59.
79 Ibid., 59.
Trusting democratic institutions only goes so far. Furthermore, it is not solely up to politicians to help produce trust, but citizens also have to question their assumptions and change their attitudes towards each other. The interconnected demands of our lives are a reality we must come to accept, and ultimately should maintain and improve through the cultivation of trust.

It might be objected that trust is not equivocally good, that to some extent citizens ought to cultivate a skeptical or even distrusting attitude. As John Hart Ely argues in *Democracy and Distrust*, the cultivation of critical skepticism about governmental power among citizens sustains the life of a democracy. This argument is fairly convincing. Citizens should be critical about the activities of the government. The continual cultivation of distrust ensures that we keep a skeptical eye on the actions of officials. The unnecessary expansion of the state can lead to the truncation of individual rights, as Robert Nozick reminds us in *Anarchy State and Utopia*. Citizens’ skepticism about trusting the government is indeed reasonable. And, in fact, it is their skepticism that holds institutions and politicians accountable for their promises, which they happily and naturally announce during their campaigns. Nevertheless, intellectual skepticism about policy, I argue, is compatible with efforts to generate generalized trust. Trusting one’s fellow citizens is registered cognitively, and it means one feels safe and confident to leave one’s home, and ultimately, interact with democratic strangers. One can speak one’s truths and be vulnerable without the fear of shame, anxiety, and violence. And thus, citizens can be vigilant about the actions of politicians and institutions. But they can also cast their votes knowing that it is
reasonable for them to participate in political institutions.\textsuperscript{80} For their voice in the sea of other voices matters, and they have enough trust in other citizens that they can vote knowing that the majority vote will not always lead to their political and economic ruin. Henceforth, the vigilance against governmental abuses of power only supports citizens’ belief in the efficacy of voting, and in general democratic institutions. But when distrust, as Danielle Allen eloquently puts it, “pervades democratic relations, it paralyzes democracy; it means that citizens no longer think it sensible, or feel secure enough, to place their fates in the hands of democratic strangers. Citizens’ distrust not of government but of each other leads the way to democratic disintegration.”\textsuperscript{81}

Democratic distrust can only be overcome when mutual benefits can be realized despite differences of race, gender, class, and perspective. The development of such processes that can help achieve collective benefits is the central project of democracy. Majority rule is evidently a problematic principle of fairness unless there is no permanent majority, no group that always gets its way. The major tension is between what the majority of citizens decide together in their sovereign capacities, and alternative opinions, which have not been realized. The challenge is to find ways to make majority decisions, with all their subjectivity, while also ensuring that minority interests are still protected and advanced. Thus, the defining marker of democratic politics is not the principle of majority rule, but its commitment to realizing unanimous consent at least as an


\textsuperscript{81} Ibid., 87.
ideal and cultivating the allegiance of all citizens, including minorities who do not completely share majority opinions.

In the introduction and first chapter it came to our attention that sacrifice is a political burden that citizens must carry. We have demolished the formal structures of Jim Crow and yet the sacrifices involved in overcoming our legacy of systemic oppression remain, and disproportionately fall on African Americans. Our democracy must deal with the issues of sacrifice. Acknowledging sacrifice and the aspects of political loss that derive from democratic decision-making drives us to consider how we interact with democratic strangers. If we were to imagine a sacrificing accepting democracy, we would need to develop a new form of citizenship, which addresses the issues that stem from sacrifice, namely disappointment and distrust. And so new habits of interaction are needed between citizens in order to constantly redistribute the burdens of sacrifice, and subsequently expunge the issue of distrust. We would also be doing well if we are able to engender a welfare system that limits the experience of sacrifice and reduces the stakes of political life. This reality would ensure citizens security within the polity; moreover, reduces the sense of vulnerability. This honoring of sacrifice and response to distrust ultimately creates the space for generalized trust. The generation of generalized trust among citizens adds to the effort of maintaining and cultivating trust in democratic institutions. Neither the generation of trust in other citizens nor the promotion of institutional trust

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82 This discussion of the Welfare state will be further explored in Chapter two.
means the negation of intellectual skepticism.\textsuperscript{83} Citizens’ critical scrutiny of particular political decisions made by representatives ensures accountability. And so the aim is to acknowledge and honor sacrifice so we may deal with distrust, in order, to develop practices that promote and cultivate vigorous discourse about political disagreement by sustaining relationships that make it worthwhile to argue with other democratic strangers.

Chapter II
Honoring Sacrifice

“Was it that we all, we, most of all, had to affirm the principle, the plan in whose name we had been brutalized and sacrificed – not because we would always be weak nor because we were afraid or opportunist, but because we were older than they in the sense of what it took to live in the world with others and because they had exhausted in us, some – not much, but some – of the human greed and smallness, yes, and the fear and superstition that had kept them running?” – Ralph Ellison, “Invisible Man”

A free bird leaps
on the back of the wind
and floats downstream
till the current ends
and dips his wing
in the orange sun rays
and dares to claim the sky.

But a bird that stalks
down his narrow cage
can seldom see through
his bars of rage
his wings are clipped and
his feet are tied
so he opens his throat to sing.

The caged bird sings
with a fearful trill
of things unknown
but longed for still
and his tune is heard
on the distant hill
for the caged bird
sings of freedom.

The free bird thinks of another breeze
and the trade winds soft through the sighing trees
and the fat worms waiting on a dawn bright lawn
and he names the sky his own

But a caged bird stands on the grave of dreams
his shadow shouts on a nightmare scream
his wings are clipped and his feet are tied
so he opens his throat to sing.

The caged bird sings
with a fearful trill
of things unknown
but longed for still
and his tune is heard
on the distant hill
for the caged bird
sings of freedom.

Maya Angelou’s poem *Caged birds* mirrors a poem that I
presented earlier called *Sympathy* by Paul Dunbar. Like
Dunbar, Angelou uses the symbol of the caged bird to
encapsulate the sense of entrapment African Americans feel.

She invokes in us the yearning for freedom of captured, clipped, but nonetheless
singing African Americans. To illustrate their struggle and cry for freedom, she
contrasts the caged bird, which attempts to rise above its material limitations,
with the bird in flight. And so she pushes us to ruminate about the nature of
freedom and the structural realities that lead to one bird flying freely while
another suffers bitterly in confinement. It is evident that Angelou is using her
second-sight (Duboisian epistemological hypothesis), and showing us the black
agony that is sharply juxtaposed to white liberty. Ultimately she is pressing us to
recognize the systemic oppression that perpetuates the subordination of African
Americans. That subordination is out of sight to the flying birds -- yet very real
for African Americans.

The very first questions I ask in this thesis are: what criteria are
necessary to distinguish between legitimate and illegitimate sacrifice, and what
practices are essential in dealing with consequences of suffering? This chapter
answers these questions; in particular, I will set out the fundamental criteria for legitimate and illegitimate sacrifice, and tease out the practices and resources that are required to deal with sacrifice and its consequences.

Although often overlooked, any liberal view from Adam Smith to John Rawls attempts to secure material means for citizens in order to safeguard their liberties by enabling them to participate in civic life. Such measures have ranged greatly from free-market distributive mechanisms to the provision of public goods. And it is these egalitarian ideals of distributive justice that inform my assertion that honoring sacrifice is a necessary means to maintain and advance trust. In echoing chapter one, this means expanding the welfare system in order to limit the experiences of sacrifice and; moreover, bolster citizens security within the polity. And so I propose to examine the practice of honoring sacrifice, which means figuring out how to recognize it and to develop mechanisms to deal with it, in order, to further democratic equality. I will mainly look at egalitarian theories that help solve the issues of sacrifice. For egalitarian theorists have long sought to overcome socioeconomic and political injustice. These include Amartya Sen who asserts that justice requires ensuring that people have equal capabilities to function and John Rawls, whose account of justice calls for fairness in the distribution of primary goods. In this chapter I will not focus on any particular theory, but will work with a general conception of egalitarianism.
Invoking the word *sacrifice* in political discourse raises two problems of agency: “the word can mean either the giving or the taking of sacrifice.”\(^85\) The taking of sacrifice, that is to say, imposed sacrifice is illegitimate, so only sacrifice that can be chosen is acceptable. Any particular sacrifice, though, will normally be imposed when living in democracy where losing political struggles is not avoidable. But if the polity is organized accordingly, these losses will be, and be seen to be fairly distributed, so citizens may be seen as consenting to the sacrifices they make when they lose a struggle and must accept a policy that they oppose. Such imposed sacrifices are legitimate only when such losses are fairly distributed over the citizenry, but that has not been the case for blacks in America, who form a permanent minority. The incessant sacrifice of one group ultimately undermines their democratic equality as citizens, and effectively denies them access to the social conditions of their freedom.\(^86\) Democracies must create conditions in which everybody’s freedom is secure, and so equality of sacrifice is necessary in democracy because it means that the weak have been incorporated into the democratic polity, and so are in a position to request sacrifice from others.\(^87\)

As we have seen, sacrifice must be distributed fairly; however, to be legitimate it must also meet two other conditions: first, it is made voluntarily and knowingly, and second, citizens must recognize that it as a responsibility of

\(^{86}\) Ibid., 111.
\(^{87}\) Ibid., 111.
democracy to honor voluntary sacrifice. The first condition is rooted in the fact that each citizen is located uniquely in time and space, they are born into a particular culture, class, race, gender, and family, and the contingences of these circumstances, together with the individual’s interests, dreams, and voice gives rise to their individuality, setting them apart from their peers, co-workers, family and ultimately other citizens. The point is that we, as pluralistic citizens, need to find mutual grounds for cooperation, and mutual gain. In the absence of mutual gain, and in the struggle of competing interests -- the burden of sacrifice is born. Thus, when citizens voluntary give up their interests and suffer a fate, which they understand, it is legitimate sacrifice because it is this knowledge and consent that makes the distinction between sacrifice and domination. It should also be made clear that knowledge is necessary for consent, and that consent is necessary for legitimacy of sacrifice. For too long in this country, we have maintained the status quo, which only furthers the ambitions of plutocrats. Our history is crowded with episodes of exclusion, in which racism, sexism, classism, xenophobia, and Islamophobia have all played this nefarious role. The objective of a democracy should always be to preserve the dignity and freedom of all, or at the least to reduce the number of scapegoats and victims of domination. Unfortunately, in this country we have always had a knack for bird trapping.

When sacrifice is properly undertaken, which means it is done knowingly and consensually, then democratic sacrifice generates a covenant between the

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sacrificer and the beneficiaries. Those who have benefitted from others’ sacrifice must see themselves as beneficiaries, and thus, they must honor and reciprocate those sacrifices. This demand for reciprocity is not new. It is imbedded in our culture and sometimes enforced by our laws. Veterans are due this reciprocity when they return from deployment. The G.I bill is an exemplar of such reciprocity in the case of veterans. Wesleyan’s collaboration with the Posse Foundation, which helps talented veterans attend Wesleyan and other peer institutions, is also a form of reciprocity. Such honor and reciprocity is due not only to people of exceptional valor and for moments of extraordinary sacrifice but also for the most prosaic sacrifices of quotidian life. This means recognizing and incorporating the weak into the democratic polity by addressing inequality through the expansion of the welfare state as the way to honor quotidian sacrifice. For ultimately our entangling lives and sacrifices draw us into a network of mutual obligation.

A question that has not been answered directly after the discussions of chapter one is: if sacrifice is inevitable and necessary what might it mean to ameliorate this issue of sacrifice? And the answer is an expansive welfare state. The welfare state puts a floor under one’s life prospects, ensuring that sacrifice will be limited. The objectives of a welfare system are efficiency, equity, and administrative feasibility. In this thesis in particular; however, we are

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concerned with the second strategic aim, equity. Poor black citizens are social victims who are denied opportunities for decent work, education, and access to public resources. The issue of black penury is due to distribution of wealth, income, and power – a distribution that is influenced by a racial caste system, which ended only five decades ago; moreover, is perpetuated by current inequalities. And because blacks have suffered discrimination and are incessantly dealing with contemporary inequalities, they need to be compensated in the form of access to opportunities that institutionalized inequality has unjustly denied them. The sacrifices they endure need to be reciprocated, in order, to limit the degrees of sacrifice, advance liberty, and to ensure the maintenance of trust. And so to argue for an expansive welfare system is to promote redistributive measures that enhance the quality of life and standards for those who have sacrificed.

One might assume that all citizens recognize the goal of democracy is to ensure freedom for all, and indeed, that assumption is widely accepted. But many would reject the strong link between equality and freedom. Libertarians and others who do not see a close connection between freedom and equality conceptualize freedom in a negative sense, maintaining that liberty is merely the absence of interference. In this conception one is free when no obstacles are deliberately created to prevent citizens from pursuing their interests. There are obvious limits to this freedom. Libertarians do accept the need for civil liberties and so permit laws to prevent individuals from interfering with others' freedoms. Nevertheless, this negative conception of freedom neglects the
material conditions and resources that are necessary if one is to have real choices. The position presupposes that the internal motivation and the absence of obstacles guarantee freedom, which is necessary to pursue personal goals. Hence, its negative conception of freedom ignores the need for equity to experience the freedom that it cherishes. The fundamental crisis we face now is inequality. The urgent problem is pervasive poverty, especially in communities of color, which is primarily due to the ways in which the distribution of wealth, power, and income has been shaped by current policy and heavily influenced by a racial caste system that denied opportunities to black people until recently.\(^91\) This inequality is unconscionable and ultimately undermines democratic equality and produces a permanent underclass, which will remain penurious unless we attend to this dilemma.

One can see the connection between freedom and equality when one considers the oppressive relationships that democratic equality rejects. Political equals are not subject to unrestrained violence and silencing by others. Agency unimpeded by coercion is one of the fundamental conditions of freedom. Equals are not marginalized or exploited by others, which means that they are free to sell their labor and should expect a fair living wage that provides for their material needs. Equals are not discriminated against on the basis of their race, gender, culture, and class. To live in a free and equal society means that citizens are free from institutional oppression, and therefore are free to actively participate in politics and engage with the major institutions in their society. And

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this can be made possible only if we honor sacrifice. Honoring the sacrifice of the weak means pursuing democratic equality. Democratic equality aims to abolish socially engendered systems of oppressions, which implies that democratic equality is sensitive to the need to integrate the demands of equal recognition with those of equal distribution. Goods must be distributed according to principles and procedures that express respect for all citizens. And the premise for a citizen’s claims to goods is that they are equal, not welfare queens, not inferiors. The absence of such processes will lead to the perpetuation of inequality, but more terrifyingly also to the growth of distrust.

Surely there are limits to the resources, which citizens are entitled to? In the name of democratic equality and honor, does it mean that the state should provide all necessary resources that will ensure the equal freedom of citizens? To answer the first question, indeed there are limits to what resources are required for democratic equality and so the state should provide only those resources or conditions that are necessary to realize basic rights and democratic equality. There are no obvious answers to what the state should and should not provide; however, the greatest emblem of democratic equality is the right to vote. This point seems evident when one considers America’s exclusionary history. But the ability to function as equal citizens doesn’t only mean the exercise of political rights but it also means participating in civil society, and more specifically the economy. And the key aim of democratic equality is to enabling equal participation as citizens in civic society, the common life. And

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93 Ibid., 316.
being able to function in these capacities presupposes that in order to live a human life, one requires access to particular goods. And so first, one needs access to resources that will sustain one’s biological existence such as food, shelter, clothing, and medical care. Secondly, one must acquire the basic conditions of human agency – self-awareness, critical understanding of one’s circumstances, the ability to reflect on means and ends, the psychological conditions of autonomy, and freedom of thought and movement. Meeting these conditions requires a combination of social and familial means, which enable one to become a sovereign and capable human being. Thirdly, to be a capable human who can function as an equal participant in democracy necessitates access to education in order to develop individual capacities, to cultivate freedom of thought, critical reflection, and lastly the ability to attain the recognition that is needed to receive the appropriate wages for one’s skills and productive capacities. To be free among others means one requires not only the right to vote, but also the right to have access to particular resources to sustain her freedom.

The state should provide all resources necessary for equal freedom, but that does not mean everyone must have the same share. The state does not need to support comprehensive equality in the provision of resources. And so for example, not going to Bali on vacation does not make one oppressed. More precisely and less facetiously, the social order should be arranged in a way that one’s ability to go on vacation does not determine one’s status in civil society.94

The central objectives of the state have both negative and positive components. The negative role of the state should be to ensure that discriminatory practices against queers, blacks, women, and for that matter all citizens are abated. The “positive” role of the state should to institutionalize distributive policies that eliminate poverty and ensure access to necessary resources. Without such policies minorities and women’s access to America’s prosperity will be drastically reduced and their ability to pursue their own happiness will be stunted. This position is not an indictment of white male America; it is merely the lesson of American history and its incapacity to achieve racial and gender justice.

How much will it cost us to ensure the equality of all? Honoring sacrifice and advancing equality and liberty has to do with the distribution of divisible resources. The recognition of sacrifice requires that every citizen have access to enough resources to escape oppression. There is no definitive answer to the question above. How much is enough can only be determined in specific circumstances. Circumstances influence how many projects and goods are essential to safeguarding the equality of all. For example, disabled citizens who no longer can use their legs would require wheel chairs, spacious lavatories, adapted staircases, and adapted motor vehicles to ensure their mobility so they can function as equals in society. Secondly, the equality of citizens may require, in certain instances, an inequality in the distribution of resources in order to accommodate differences among people. For instance, we can say that two people get an equal amount of food when each is served the amount necessary to
meet their biological needs, but since their needs may differ, one may have more food than the other. What we owe to each other is the social conditions of freedom and equality.\(^95\) Because of the differences in citizen's circumstances and internal capacities, they are not equally able to transform resources into capacities for equal functioning.\(^96\)

What if sacrifice is disconnected from reciprocity, and essentially the same weak citizens incessantly carry the burden of sacrifice? Simply put: If a democracy does not address the consequences of sacrifice, then people will see no reason to engage further with a polity that chooses to ignore them, especially when they have been screaming and crying for freedom from their cages incessantly. The way democracy handles sacrifices determines the level of trust among its citizens.\(^97\) The poem *As I Grew Older* by Langston Hughes, articulates the ramifications of systemic racism, and how it cripples dreams under its oppressive weight:

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It was a long time ago.\(^98\)
I have almost forgotten my dream.
    But it was there then,
        In front of me,
    Bright like a sun—
        My dream.
    And then the wall rose,
        Rose slowly,
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\(^{96}\) Ibid., 320.
Slowly,  
Between me and my dream.  
Rose until it touched the sky—  
The wall.  
Shadow.  
I am black.  
I lie down in the shadow.  
No longer the light of my dream before me,  
Above me.  
Only the thick wall.  
Only the shadow.  
My hands!  
My dark hands!  
Break through the wall!  
Find my dream!  
Help me to shatter this darkness,  
To smash this night,  
To break this shadow  
Into a thousand lights of sun,  
Into a thousand whirling dreams  
Of sun!

The poem is a commentary on how systemic oppression murders dreams, but also how racial oppression allows for anger to fester bitterly. Hughes like Dunbar and Angelou wishes to be free of the yoke of racism. Yet for him -- singing is not enough. And picking up his fists seems reasonable against the wall of white supremacy. Thus, with the lack of honoring sacrifice, the wretched of the earth will either disengage from mainstream society, or they will abandon the democratic project and consequently choose violence in order to relieve their frustrations. This formula usually holds. However, in the case of African Americans who are a small minority and without great power, I believe it will not stand. Instead of revolutionary violence, we will get the first alternative: disengagement, apathy, and various forms of social pathologies – all nihilistic reactions to conditions of hopelessness. The democratic experiment is a fragile
project, and if we do not attend to the consequences of sacrifice, democracy will split at its seams.

This ominous prognostication about our fate is surely not melodramatic, but it is a sober look into our bloody past, a reflection on our callous present, and a lucid projection about our costly future. I am not the first to make such predictions. Malcolm spoke about what we would reap, Martin prayed for our sins, and Ta-Nehisi persistently asks the Dreamers to pay what they owe. Should the Dreamers reap what they have sown, we all would reap it with them.99 We all – rich, poor, male, female, black, and white – will pay for the complacency of not honoring sacrifice. The unshared sacrifices that the vulnerable have endured have been mechanized in the production of ghettos, the murder of black boys, and the habitual jailing of youth. And unsurprisingly the engineers of subordination have also chosen to forget what they have systemically created -- or more cynically they have chosen to ignore the screams of the people, whom they have now condemned to poverty and tried to water-board into muteness. And this looming dark cloud, which threatens the existence of our democracy, is not a sterile prophecy, but an expression of the cheap seductiveness of white supremacy, patriarchy, islamaphobia, xenophobia, trumpism and cheap gasoline.


100 Ibid., 150.
Friendship and Honoring Sacrifice

Why does America fall short of its democratic ideals? How do we responsibly honor the sacrifice of citizens, especially the most vulnerable? These questions define the central problem of this thesis. They focus our attention on the utopianism of the Rousseauian ideal of democracy, and awaken us to the reality of political loss and the need for political friendship (discussed below). In the previous section I show that there is a gap between our democratic ideals and our concrete practices. The ideals of democracy, life, liberty, and equality are integral to the American creed and bind us together in this democratic experiment. Yet, at the same time, marginalization and exclusion on the bases of race, class, sexual orientation and gender persist. This contrast between our abstract ideals and concrete practices is the “principles-practices” gap. Acknowledging sacrifice and initiating plans to honor it can help close this gap. As I argued in the previous section, honoring sacrifice entails initiating collective efforts to expand the welfare state in order to limit the extent of sacrifice that citizens are asked to make and endure.

Unfortunately, an expanded welfare state is not sufficient to overcome discriminatory treatment and marginalization on the basis of race and other descriptive characteristics. Coates’ article in the Atlantic, “Why Precisely Is Bernie Sanders Against Reparations”, speaks to this point by highlighting Europe’s failed attempt to achieve justice through welfare policy alone:

Across Europe, the kind of robust welfare states Sanders supports — higher minimum wage, single payer health care, low-cost higher education — has been
embraced. Have these polices vanquished racism? Or has race become another rubric for asserting who should benefit from the state’s largesse and who should not? And if class-based policy alone is insufficient to banish racism in Europe, why would it prove to be sufficient in a country founded on white supremacy?\textsuperscript{101}

Being white means you have the privilege not to know about the lives of “others.” And so simply put: it means that white Americans are experiencing America in a vastly different way. The way poor African Americans engage with the criminal justice system, education, and economy is so vastly different from the experience of whites that they perceive it differently, by and large, due to police brutality, generational poverty, and the pervasiveness of racist attitudes and encounters. This perception gap is the central problem, and pressing white America to live up to egalitarian ideals is not enough to overcome it. Secondly, according to symbolic racism theory, white Americans invoke “justice for all” while simultaneously conceptualizing African Americans and other minorities as the “others.”\textsuperscript{102} “They oppose policies that are designed to eliminate discrimination because they see Blacks, Latinos, and Asians as “threats” to their social, economic, and political prosperity. And so white Americans selectively apply the notions of justice to rationalize their exclusionary behavior and privileges to particular economic resources while implicitly denying equal rights and access to opportunities to “others.” These critiques of white America should


not be misunderstood as indictments. Ordinary white Americans are not nefarious, apathetic, and callous individuals who wish to further the subordination of African Americans. Attempting to close the practice-principle gap is a single step in the right direction. The aim of this section is to expand the conception of “us” in order to ensure the inclusion of minority concerns. And the Aristotelian notion of political friendship is an instrument, which I believe will help give us insights on how to achieve this goal.

But before I elaborate on the Aristotelian notion of political friendship, I must discuss segregation and how it gives rise to implicit biases, so that whites who do not bear animus towards minorities nonetheless, still participate in the reproduction of the racial caste system by supporting polices that perpetuate minority disenfranchisement.

The conditions of African Americans are substantially worse than white Americans. Black children in 2013 were four times more likely to live in poverty than white children.103 And black men are 7 times more likely to be incarcerated than white men.104 These steep racial inequalities are often explained through contemptuous stereotypes, which characterize blacks as lazy and violent. And if this claim were true, then the case for equality would be fallacious, because black disadvantage would be the result of their cultural and biological dispositions, and not injustice. These stereotypes only further the psychological mechanisms

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at work under conditions of inequality. Poor blacks are socially stigmatized for their penury. But I reject these racist assumptions, and I assert that these inequalities can be better explained through the relational theory of inequality, which contends that inequality is based on systemic exclusion. Poor blacks in America have been isolated and ultimately, denied access to major institutions and goods. This condition of segregation has reinforced black Americans’ subordinate social caste by inequitable distribution of goods.

Race-based spatial effects are pronounced, especially in the job market. The post war suburbanization boom led to numerous white Americans moving out of cities, which relocated job growth into suburban neighborhoods. Hence, African Americans were left in squalor in declining inner city neighborhoods with fewer job prospects. This observation is explained through the mismatch hypothesis, which asserts that African Americans suffer higher levels of unemployment and lower wages than whites due to the difficulties of obtaining suburban jobs. Urban employers confirm this argument by reporting far more minority applications per job openings than suburban employers. This surplus of urban labor leads to lower wage rates relative to suburban employers. Racial inequality in terms of access to areas of job growth helps to explain the higher levels of unemployment in black communities.

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106 Ibid., 27.
107 Ibid., 27.
108 Ibid., 28.
109 Ibid., 28.
If living in such urban communities impedes job prospects why don’t they just move? The reality is that most cannot. Financial barriers for most remain. Housing discrimination including exclusionary zoning remains. But the problems are not even that obvious. People who live far from areas of high employment usually do not have cars; therefore, their access to jobs is predicated on the efficiency and availability of public transportation. The lack of transportation between urban communities and suburbs exacerbates the issues of segregation. This point highlights the ways transport policies (and public policy in general) fail to consider or even hear the voices of the most vulnerable. This ignoring of voices only furthers black subordination.

The social isolation that poor blacks face in segregated areas is extreme, and it not only impacts their job prospects but also their access to cultural capital. Cultural habits inform individuals how to engage and succeed within social environments. Segregation results in social groups forming different codes of conduct and communication. In particular, certain habits that help blacks to communicate and socialize in underprivileged neighborhoods impede their ability to succeed in communities that are privileged. For instance, the Black English language, ebonics, is different from standard American English. This language, which is spoken in the community and yet rejected in the classroom and workplace, puts poor blacks at a tremendous disadvantage. Elijah Anderson, urban ethnographer, further stresses this dilemma by noting that if poor blacks

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111 Ibid., 28.
aspired to assimilate into mainstream society, and to espouse majority values, they would be harassed by their fellow community members who are committed to “street” culture.\textsuperscript{112} Political friendship I believe is an instrument that can cut across lives of difference and deal with these biases under conditions of profound inequality.

Aristotle in *Nicomachean ethics* argues that, “If men are friends, there is no need of justice between them whereas merely to be just is not enough – it is also necessary to be friends.”\textsuperscript{113} This may sound preposterous at first read -- for we associate friendship with sentiment. Yet this remark means that the rule of law and other democratic institutions within the polity are not enough to maintain the American project. The cultivation of political friendship is an essential instrument to the practice of recognition and the attainment of justice. John Cooper in his intriguing article “Aristotle on the Forms of Friendship” argues that “the sense of justice, understood as respect for fairness and legality, is compatible with a suspicious, narrow, hard, and unsympathetic character … The sentiment of political friendship in short, transforms what might otherwise be hard and narrow forms of all the virtues.”\textsuperscript{114} But John Cooper misunderstands Aristotle’s point, which is that the core practices of friendship that are crucial for democracy can be cultivated by the practice of political friendship, even though our usual understanding of friendship is entangled with notions of sentiment.

If we are to understand the link between justice and friendship (Philia), it is vital for us to explore Aristotle’s understanding of justice. Aristotle, firstly, makes a distinction between universal and particular justice. Justice in its universal conception is the ability to act in accordance with all the virtues: courage, temperament, magnanimity, and fairness. Justice as fairness in Aristotle’s conception is similar to Rawls’ difference principle.\textsuperscript{115} Both diverge from strict equality by arguing for allocating of resources proportionally. Aristotle argues that the aristocracy should contribute more wealth to the public store than the poor and in doing so the rich will receive more esteem in return.\textsuperscript{116} Although the one gave more money to the public store, each is treated fairly because each case matches the capacities of the person. For esteem is the good that the poor can give the most. Rawls, however, justifies the inequality of sacrifice not by appealing to the gift of esteem but permits diverging from strict equality, so long as inequality makes the least privileged in society materially better off. The point they both reach, nonetheless, is that redistributive justice is an attempt to make all citizens relationally equal to each other. And so honoring

\textsuperscript{115}I realize this reading of Aristotle is highly unusual. It is a rereading of Danielle Allen’s conception of Aristotle’s political theory. She combines the Rhetoric with the Nicomachean Ethics and the Politics in order to argue that Aristotle’s conception of justice, in Nicomachean Ethics, aligns with his utopian notions in Rhetoric and Politics. Furthermore, Allen in fact concentrates on Aristotle’s conception of just and unjust states to discern the different analytical tools Aristotle brings to bear on the conundrum of justice. And so she focuses on his utopian descriptions and definitions of justice. This is important to note because most Aristotelian scholars concentrate on Aristotle’s arguments around ideal states and neglect the fact that Aristotle was also deeply invested in real-state politics. And so this view illustrates Aristotle’s pragmatic leanings and concrete application to democracy.

sacrifice by extending necessary resources to all citizens, but especially to the most vulnerable in society, is necessary for justice.

Particular justice is concerned with retributive justice. It attempts to straighten out the transgressions that have transpired between parties. These transgressions might have been forcibly imposed on an individual like theft or they could have been experienced due to voluntary actions like making business deals and contracts. The task of particular justice is to punish perpetrators and reflects the notion that wrongdoers deserve punishment in direct proportion to the injury inflicted on the victim.\(^\text{117}\) Whereas distributive justice is concerned with advancing relational equality among citizens, particular justice aims at strict equivalence, whereby everybody gets their just deserts. Nonetheless, particular justice goes beyond “straightening-out” transgression and also enters the realm of enforcing equality. For instance, in contemporary democracy, every citizen whether base or erudite has the right to free speech. Citizens can say whatever they want within reasonable limits. This act is not without consequences; however, the government may not vary the consequences based on social class, race and gender. Aristotle explains:

> It makes no difference whether an estimable man has defrauded an insignificant man or whether an insignificant man an estimable man, nor whether it is an estimable or insignificant man that committed adultery; the law looks only at the nature of the damage, treating the parties as equal, and merely asking whether one has done and the other suffered injustice, whether one inflicted and the other has sustained damage. Hence the unjust being here the unequal, the judge endeavors to equalize it.\(^\text{118}\)


Particular justice is responsible for maintaining the equality and freedom of all citizens. By applying it, we avoid arbitrariness and commit ourselves to fairness.

What is the difference between a just and unjust society? This goes back to our earlier discussion of the chief principles of democracy. And so the obvious answer is that just societies are ruled in the interest of the people and not the elite—for just regimes govern according to governing principles, which attempt to advance relational equality and autonomy. Allen asks us to think about the different outcomes that could potentially result from either an unjust or just society. She answers her own question by arguing that “the legitimate ruler rules willing and therefore free citizens/subjects; the tyrant rules unwilling, enslaved subjects.”

Under a just regime, people are ruled willingly; therefore, citizens consent to the form of rule. This practice avoids the towering human loss and institutional muscle necessary to enslave people. Justice is not only meant to ensure equality and freedom, but also it is intended to cultivate the consent of the citizenry and establish political stability.

The central problem within democracy arises from the fact of conflicting interests, which is perpetuated by the perception gap, which is the vastly different ways whites and blacks experience American society. This is an issue I have already highlighted; however, I believe Aristotle’s utopian visions offer insights about how to deal with this dilemma. In the *Nicomachean Ethics* Aristotle discusses how perfect citizens’ come to agreement:

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120 Ibid, , 124.
Concord is not merely agreement of opinion, for this might exist even between strangers. Nor yet is agreement in reasoned judgments about any subject whatever, for instance, astronomy, termed concord; ... Concord is said to prevail in a city when the citizens agree concerning their interests, choose the same things, and act on their common resolves. Concord then refers to practical ends, and practical ends of importance, and able to be realized by all or both parties... Men are not of one mind merely when each thinks the same thing, but when each thinks the same thing in relation to the same person... for thus all parties get what they desire... Concord appears therefore to mean friendship between citizens... for it refers to the interests and concerns of life. (9.6.1-2)

And so for Aristotle, it is not so much about coming to agreement as the universal satisfaction of interests. The problem with imperfect societies is not only conflicting interests, but also it is the fact that the diversity of opinions in society necessitates in the uneven satisfaction of citizens’ interests. Disappointment, frustration, and loss then become the central issue. And so the objective of justice is to manage the consequences of loss that result from competing interests.

Friendship, like citizenship, is plagued with conflicting interest, which cannot be completely resolved. Society like friends must deal with the inevitability of conflicting desires. As we have seen, the expansion of the welfare state (which is a way of honoring sacrifice) is a way to place a safety net under one’s life prospects and so ensuring limits to sacrifice. But more saliently, it is also a way of restraining the consequences of competing interests. And similarly with friendship, it is also a restraining mechanism on conflicting interests. Honoring sacrifice and friendship are analogous because they both offer solutions to the problem of managing conflicting interest. Both cultivate habits of

122 Ibid., 124.
resolution. Honoring sacrifice contends for the expansion of the welfare state; however, the friendship hypothesis introduces a new resource for managing conflicting desires – the incentive to be other-regarding. Friends know for instance, that if they only act on self-centered interests and do not recognize and act on their concerns their friendship will not last long. Friendship teaches us when and how we should moderate our interest for the sake of the friendship and each other. And so friendship solves the problem of conflicting interests by converting it into equitable-self-interest or in other words -- sharing the benefits and consequences of sacrifice, where each friend curbs her interests for the sake of the union. And so our society can learn to do the same. For it too negotiates opposing interests and manages disappointment and frustration.

At the center of Aristotle’s exploration of philia, lies his theory of three types of friendship. The ends of friendship are of three types: the good, utility, and pleasure. The differences between the types of friendships are predicated on what draws and binds the friends together. The good friendship is a relation that is based on mutual esteem and virtue. The friends have achieved all the virtues. And their goodwill towards each other allows for love to blossom between them. It is the most perfect and enduring (teleia) relationship while the utility friendship aimed at utility is merely driven by profits and the individual payoffs that can be gained from their interaction. The pleasure friendship is established on the basis of the gratification to be gained from the union. Utility and pleasure

124 Ibid., 127.
friendships have no virtue; however, they are still forms of friendship that curb conflicting interests.¹²⁵ Pleasure and utility friendships are reciprocal even in their imperfect state. For friendship cannot exist without recognition and reciprocity. And thus, friendship does not require frequent contact (particularized trust) and emotional bonds, and ultimately can be distilled into a practice. And so even in the presence of democratic strangers with staggering greed and cloying pleasures -- moderating friendship can arise. The key to solving the perception gap and the conflicting interests that stem from it lies in cultivating friendship among democratic strangers.

Friends have always been able to resolve conflicts without the use of domination or the recourse of acquiescent conduct.¹²⁶ Aristotle discusses domination and acquiescence. And he contends that people who acquiesce are people who “think it a duty to avoid giving pain to those with whom they come in contact.”¹²⁷ Furthermore, he asserts that authoritative people “object to everything and do not care in the least what pain they cause.”¹²⁸ Hence, the practice of emotionless, moderating friendships is the midway-point mode between acquiescence and domination. Therefore, friends are neither tough nor soft negotiators, but they wish to avoid conflict and principally desire to continue their friendship as autonomous equals. Friends at the core are equals. They recognize this equality and look past their interests to offer concessions in

¹²⁶ Ibid., 128.
¹²⁷ Ibid., 121.
¹²⁸ Ibid., 121.
order to reach agreement. Friendship will last when friends feel that their relationship is predicated on equality.129 And so each friend must believe that the burdens of sacrifice and benefits of the relationship are fairly distributed.130 In *Rhetoric*, Aristotle shows us that friends must practice recognition through reciprocity, “wishing for him what you believe to be good things, not for your own sake but for his, and being inclined, so far as you can, to bring these things about.”131 And Hannah Arendt does similar intellectual work in her magnum opus, *The Human condition*, where she points to respect (or in my words mutual recognition) as the core practice necessary for political friendship, “What love is in its own, narrowly circumscribed sphere, respect is in the larger domain of human affairs. Respect... is a kind of friendship without intimacy and without closeness.”132 And so the act of mutual recognition and reciprocal wishing of each other well is a practice of friendship of equals.

In accordance with the assertion that citizens are equal, democracies are supposed to engender the conditions in which equality and freedom are realized. Negotiations over how to distribute sacrifice and honor is a province assigned to principles of distributive justice in society, but among friends, it is done through the habits of reciprocity. The point here is that friendship’s basic habit of reciprocity for securing autonomy and equality of benefits, sacrifice, and honor

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130 Ibid., 129.
is exactly the same work of distributive justice. Friendship might result from emotional inclinations and desire for companionship; however, it functions to maintain equality and autonomy within a relationship are practices transferable to politics. Democratic strangers ideally are also political friends. Therefore, if a group of citizens are regularly giving up proportionally more than another group of citizens, then like friends, the other group of citizens needs to recognize and honor that sacrifice by compensating them for their additional sacrifice. Both groups of citizens should have an equal degree of autonomy, and the honoring of that sacrifice is a way to ensure that freedom.

The struggle of friendship and citizenship is not solely about equality of benefits and sacrifice, but it is ultimately about the maintenance of autonomy and equality over time. Political friends have conflicting interests, if one favors policy reform; another will conceptualize it as a threat to their security. A policy decision is made, and a fraction of the political friends think they did not get what they deserved and wanted, and so they believe their equality and freedom to be truncated. Yet volition realized through political friendship does not mean that citizens have consistent control and autonomy over all the happenings of their political life, but it simply means that they have a say and influence on most cases. The limit of their agency does not diminish their liberty, in fact, in a way it’s compatible with their liberty.133 This may at first seem counter-intuitive since the mainstream of political thought conceptualizes liberty as the prospect to exercise agency without impediment, so that any obstacle infringing upon that

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opportunity is a restraint on liberty. However, I would also assert that agency is realized through active participation in the collective procedures that determine the laws and citizen’s well-being. Political friends are free because their energies are not only invested in their own interests but also are fundamentally invested in the collective project and liberation of others.

Reciprocity is not only about equality in distribution but also about both parties feeling secure about the preservation of their agency. To make the last point on agency and autonomy clear, I am revisiting the notion of reciprocity. Reciprocity is the practice of maintaining equivalence between political friends by distributing sacrifice and benefits fairly. But reciprocity is also the act of ensuring that equality of agency is preserved overtime.134 Political friends’ engaging in democratic institutions is an expression of agency and maintenance of autonomy, even when the political process compromises your group’s interests. This is true if trust remains. It is paramount for political friends to feel secure about their agency. And trust means believing that others will not exploit your vulnerability. Political friends trust that their vulnerability and the relinquishing of their interests will not lead to their exploitation, and effectively to the diminishing of their agency. Friendship, like citizenship, limits agency and yet it generates consent and the experience of autonomy within its framework.

For no regime can guarantee that every policy decision will be unanimously well received. Sacrifice is a part of our democratic reality. Yet friendship makes such sacrifice bearable because loss is not exacerbated by fear and is accompanied by

an equitable social context, which promises to honor sacrifice, but also ensures that loss doesn’t mean ruin. For friends wish to protect each other and the friendship.

Questions can still be raised about how can political friendships be encouraged; furthermore, how do political friends truly overcome the perceptual gap to recognize and act on the interests of “others?” As we have mentioned before, most friendships are a manifestation of emotional attachment and desires for companionship; however, we are seeking friendship that is not predicated on emotional bonds. Friendship’s basic habits of reciprocity maintain equality and autonomy and so are salient to our project in establishing a fair and non-dominating society. I assert that political friendships can be developed on the basis of agreement. We as a collection of unique individuals living in one polity are negotiating on conflicting opinions, but essentially are also engaging in conversations about the continuance of our relationship. And so if we wish to remain a polity, we must inevitably seek to refurbish our relationship, and sometimes curb our interests for the sake of the union and each other. It is not a mistake that we live with others in communities. We wish to be with others and share our lives with others. This urge is catalyzed by our ubuntu135 and more

135 Ubuntu – It is a Zulu notion that can be roughly translated into personhood. It is an African humanist conception, which attempts to capture the worldview of the Nguni people. It states that our humanity is predicated on the humanity of others. It affirms and confirms one’s humanity through the recognition of others uniqueness in time and space. And thus, it pushes us to realize our entanglement and also to cherish our own uniqueness. But to see our individuality we must see our selves through the eyes of others. It is others who are the mirrors to our person. Our individuality is influenced by the collective individuality of others. This notion shows us that our personhood and human capacities cannot be fully realized alone. However, my humanity and my
obviously by our need for others. This need is not purely about our collective capacities to efficiently produce goods and technology for our biological survival. It is also about our desire to talk, think, and smile. We want to exercise the totality our humanity, which can be only fully realized through a shared human life. And so the preservation of our union is in our individual and collective interest.

Political friends can promote fairness and overcome their perceptual gap by exercising sympathy. Sympathy can be defined as a sentiment we share with other individuals. By emphasizing our shared experiences, sympathy can elicit and inspire compassion, thoughtfulness and, most saliently, identification with political friends, which could motivate individuals to support policies that are in the interest of “others.” For example, if a dissimilar and distant democratic stranger’s child was a victim of a school shooting, sympathy may inspire in us identification with them because we also lost a loved one to gun violence. And so we support gun restriction policy in order to end the proliferation of high-capacity guns. Similarly, those who suffer from systemic racism may sympathize with political friends who suffer from sexual and gender discrimination because they realize what it means to be otherized. Yet sympathy may be a tool to expand the conception of “us” to include other victims of discrimination, tragedy, and ultimately appease the battle of competing interests because we choose to curb
our desires for others. Nevertheless, the bond of sympathy is not expansive enough. It is not always shared and useful because it requires overlapping experiences.

What if we do not have similar experiences, which allow for sympathy to be generated between us? Can a wealthy white man from *New York City* sympathize with a poor black transgender woman from *Ferriday, Louisiana*? In this case I believe sympathy cannot be extended. However, *empathy* can work. Empathy is the imaginative capacity to understand the perspective and needs of others. It is to realize that your situation could be different, and thus, you attempt to understand the inner-state and lives of others by placing yourself in their perspective. And so empathy unlike sympathy does not require shared experiences. But it is galvanized by our moral courage to displace ourselves as the center of our universes, and to look past our privilege, which blinds us to the life of others, to ultimately recognize the equal value of other human lives, and to essentially see the world through “others” eyes.

Empathy, like sympathy, can also be a vehicle for fairness, which citizens can exercise for the preservation of the polity and justice. Empathy is other-regarding. Exercised by political friends it traverses the boundaries between democratic strangers. It does not require individuals to experience similar injustices such as racism, classism, and xenophobia to recognize and identify with the suffering of others. Empathetic identification can inspire a wealthy white man to care about the safety of a poor transgender woman. It can elicit moral action from a middle class Asian woman to support a policy, which
ensures that working poor families have access to adequate housing and schooling. The civic bonds of empathy do not only invite us to understand the lives of political friends, but it also pushes us to recognize the reciprocal obligations we have to each other, and thus, encourages us to take concrete actions to improve the lives of others by compromising our own interests for the sake of “others” and this union. Empathy is not simply a compelling morally inclined feeling. It is also a deep mediation and consideration of the other.

Political friends are people to whom we are willing to incur a debt, but also citizens whom we owe for the sacrifices they have made for us. Good citizenship ultimately is about the recognition of “others” and practicing reciprocity with real habits of power sharing. The absence of such habits will only sow distrust among citizens and it could also lead to the end of the polity. And so if we wish to cultivate trust in this nation, we must not let the weak pay for our present and past debts. James Baldwin in his essay *The Fire Next Time* warns about the precarious condition of the American project and the grave debt that it carries, and that will extinguish the project if it is not paid:

> For the sake of one’s children, in order to minimize the bill they must pay, one must be careful not to take refuge in any delusion – and the value placed on the color of the skin is always and everywhere and forever a delusion. I know that what I am asking is impossible. But in our time, the impossible is the least that one can demand – and one is, after all, emboldened by the spectacle of human history in general, and American Negro history in particular, for it testifies to nothing less than the perpetual achievement of the impossible.... And here we are, at the center of the arc, trapped in the gaudiest, most valuable, and most improbable water wheel the world has ever seen. Everything now, we must assume, is in our hands; we have no rights to assume otherwise. If we – and now I mean the relatively conscious whites and the relatively conscious blacks, who must, like lovers, insist on, or create, the consciousness of the others – do not falter in our duty now,

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137 Ibid., 135.
we may be able, handful that we are, to end the racial nightmare, and achieve our country, and change the history of the world. If we do not now dare everything, the fulfillment of that prophecy, recreated from the Bible in song by a slave, is upon us: GOD GAVE NOAH THE RAINBOW SIGN NO MORE WATER, THE FIRE NEXT TIME! 138

We are living in perilous times. The opportunity for ordinary people to live a life of peace, sufficiency and dignity, and to participate in democratic institutions, which shape the destiny of their lives is a precious gift. And yet it is also an arduous project to sustain over time and space. The persistence of poverty and paranoia have undermined and destabilized real efforts to forge democracy. 139 Inequality generates distrust, which further enflames paranoia and deepens the social divide, and worsens the conflicts. And an honest examination of ourselves as a country would reveal that we are suffering from a perception gap. Race matters. Gender matters. Class matters. And the degree in which gender, race, and class matters in the plight and structural predicament of millions of fellow citizens is an essential measure of whether we will be able to maintain this fragile experiment we call American democracy. It is time to own up to the fact that this project began on the backs of blacks, and continues to thrive on the subordination and exclusion of women and poor working people of all races. These lucid colorblind dreams make the civil rights victories of the past seem hollow. These predicaments only make more real the need for recognition, and consequently the need to get into the habit of shared decision-making. Political

friendship makes fellow citizens’ well-being matter to all peoples, and thus, this reality distinguishes it from all other forms of commercial and governmental operations. Political friendship is about equality and most importantly, recognition.

If we are going to attain democratic equality, we must come to each other’s defense in the face of injustice. We must fight for justice beyond our own concerns and promote the well-being of other citizens, even if they do not share our socio-demographic characteristics and beliefs. We are united in larger “us” as citizens who share a common American creed and fate.140 Conceptualizing and treating other citizens as “others” helps rationalize our indifference to their plight, but also perniciously erodes the generalized trust between us, which is established on the symbolic representation of community. Our political friendship and shared national identity anchor us into a sense of community, which transcends economic, racial, gender, and sexual orientation differences. It reminds us our mutual obligations to each other, and thus, makes us more likely to support programs that ensure equal access to public resources that may not benefit us directly. Sympathy, empathy, and solidarity we share with political friends can traverse beyond borders and contacts us to our identity and friendship.

We can now see the essential role of politike philia. The active element of friendship has generally been ignored. Political unity has always included and

140Linked fate - is the recognition that our individual lives are inextricably tied to the nation as a whole. And so the general conditions of the nation impact our lives. It is true that the macro forces that shape our nation impact all of us differently; nevertheless, the illness and the health of the nation infect us all.
must again acknowledge the role of *philia* in its civic form. As Aristotle wrote, “Friendship seems too to hold states together, and lawgivers to care more for it than for justice. For when men are friends they have no need of justice, while when they are just they need friendship as well, and the truest form of justice is thought to be a friendly quality.”

This answer might strike some as completely improbable. For the skeptics are used to hearing that modern political unity is predicated on our fear of each other and the nasty, brutish, and short life in the state of nature or our collective desire for freedom and mutual material benefit. Nonetheless, the practice of friendship rings true to listening ears. The dominant modern position is wrong. Political friendship, which ensures the necessity of recognition and honor by perpetuating habitual power sharing and equal distribution of sacrifices and benefits allows for the maintenance of trust, and thus, the endurance of the democratic project. The cultivation of trust and the practice of friendship are medicine to our ailing democracy.

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Chapter III
The Public Space

“The only reason you say that race was not an issue is because you wish it was not. We all wish it was not. But it’s a lie. I came from a country where race was not an issue; I did not think of myself as black and I only became black when I came to America. When you are black in America and you fall in love with a white person, race doesn’t matter when you’re alone together because it’s just you and your love. But the minute you step outside, race matters. But we don’t talk about it. We don’t even tell our white partners the small things that piss us off and the things we wish they understood better, because we’re worried they will say we’re overreacting, or we’re being too sensitive. And we don’t want them to say, Look how far we’ve come, just forty years ago it would have been illegal for us to even be a couple blah blah blah, because you know what we’re thinking when they say that? We’re thinking why the fuck should it ever have been illegal anyway? But we don’t say any of this stuff. We let it pile up inside our heads and when we come to nice liberal dinners like this, we say that race doesn’t matter because that’s what we’re supposed to say, to keep our nice liberal friends comfortable. It’s true. I speak from experience.” — Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, “Americanah

I, too, sing America.¹⁴²

I am the darker brother.
They send me to eat in the kitchen
When company comes,
But I laugh,
And eat well,
And grow strong.

Tomorrow,
I’ll be at the table
When company comes.
Nobody’ll dare
Say to me,
“Eat in the kitchen,”
Then.

Besides,
They’ll see how beautiful I am
And be ashamed—

I, too, am America.

“too, sing America” is a poem by Langston Hughes that captures African Americans’ resilient spirit. Like the poems of Angelou and Dunbar, this poem explores African American experience and the unconscionable American political realm. It critiques our idealized conception of democratic life and illustrates how white citizens have been accustomed to maintaining public spaces as exclusively white to be used for perpetuating white supremacy and black subordination. The poem asserts African Americans’ right to feel and be American, even though it is an identity and status that has been historically denied to them. Acquiescing to such exclusionary norms, “they send me to eat in the kitchen,” has constituted the practical rules of black life. This spatial and experiential distance between white and black citizens engendered the perception gap between the races. And the hope of “tomorrow” lies in seeing and talking to each other for the first time.

The creation of the public space is an attempt to bridge the perception gap by establishing honest and consistent interaction and connection between citizens. It is a public voluntary space that invites citizens from diverse socio-economic, political, gender, and racial backgrounds to engage in constructive discourse. This experience will allow democratic strangers to reflect on their presumptions about the “other,” gain multidimensional perspectives about the different experiences of others, and, quintessentially, discover what is different and common about each other’s goals and identities. The space will help expand
the bounds of moral concern to minorities by altering our assumptions about the other.

The questions that still linger after the discussions of chapter two are how do we bring about trust and civic friendship? And the answer is through the public space. The public space is necessary for generating social capital, which enhances citizens’ habits of cooperation, self-moderation, and “other-regardingness.” Social capital is the features of social organization such as norms, trust, and networks, which can enhance the efficiency of society by facilitating and easing coordinated actions. These habits are embodied and reinforced by the social structure. Like in Putnam’s voluntary associations, the discourse within the public voluntary space tends to instill within citizens these virtues while also motivating wider change within the polity. Thus, participating in the public space does not only have an impact on one’s personal attitudes towards the “other,” but also fosters the maintenance of democracy. These public voluntary spaces are not bowling leagues, fraternities, and boy scout clubs. Rather they are public entities that function to cultivate individuals so they may learn to sacrifice and improve institutions such as suffrage, taxes and juries. And so social capital is a byproduct of engagement in the public space. It generates “other-regardingness” so that citizens can acknowledge the legitimate claims of previously subordinated minorities; moreover, it encourages them to support policies that will make up for continuing injustices.

The ideal public space would allow for all people to speak their minds and listen actively to others. This process of intensive interaction and deliberation, thus, inherently requires an extensive amount of time and effort. And so as the number of participants grows, the time and effort needed for all participants to be heard and listened to also increases proportionally.\textsuperscript{144} Hence, if all citizens are to be involved in rich interpersonal discourse, which results in the generation of trust, then those who participate must be able to afford the considerable costs in time and mental effort.\textsuperscript{145}

Participation in the public space is a costly endeavor. Those who participate must find the cost bearable. The unequal burden of participation for different citizens speaks to the degree of resources each participant has. The privilege and lack of privilege informs how difficult it is to participate. Hence, inequality between citizens will prevent the public space from producing fair outcomes. In particular, the problems of race, gender, and class impede mechanisms of deliberative-problem solving in the public space. Political participation exhibits significant favoritism towards the upper classes.\textsuperscript{146} Hence, the tendency of participatory projects to over represent the privileged and under represent the oppressed who lack the necessary resources (time and knowledge) to fully participate in voluntary public associations.\textsuperscript{147} And so when the poor and rich meet in the public space, the voices of women, minorities, and

\textsuperscript{144} Jack Nagel, “Combining Deliberation and Fair Representation in Community Health Decisions”, University Pennsylvania Law Review 140, no. 5 (1992), 165.
\textsuperscript{146} Ibid., 108.
\textsuperscript{147}Ibid., 108.
less educated citizens is always drowned out by the confidence and eloquence of the privileged class. Therefore, this reality not only calls for the substantial redistribution of resources; furthermore, it also strongly demands the establishment of strict rules on how we participate in the public space. The public space must be designed to counteract the normal biases towards the privileged.

The absence of redistribution will yield unfair outcomes where the oppressed will always be silenced. If we wish for the public space to work effectively towards its goal of producing trust and civic friendship among all citizens, then all voices need to be represented fairly. This means addressing inequality through distributive mechanisms that would allow the underprivileged the capacity to participate effectively. For instance, education reform is necessary so persons have less difficulty participating. Educated and knowledgeable individuals are usually articulate and more comfortable with expressing their arguments during debate and discussion. And so if we do not address the consequences of marginalized voices in the public space, then the public space will degenerate into an instrument of the elite in which they discuss their own interests. The dominated will see no reason to participate in a space, which furthers their marginalization. As I have said before, the way government deals with inequality determines the level of trust among the vulnerable. And so policies that ensure equality among citizens will allow the public space to inspire trust among democratic strangers. Ultimately, it will be the instrument, which helps us overcome the perception gap.
It should be asserted and made clear that the public space is an ideal. It is not a policy recommendation but a political paradigm that is part of the solution to democratic sacrifice. The instrument can help galvanize the necessary conversations that can get us over the perception gap, and finally into a place in which we can acknowledge the democratic sacrifice of others. These introspective, honest, and other-regarding conversations will ultimately, cultivate the vital trust and civic friendship, which our democracy needs. However, inequality impedes the functioning of public spaces. And so the problem needs to be approached dialectally, by using public spaces to advance polices that reduce inequality that in turn strengthens public spaces and advance trust and civic friendship that in turn encourages policies to reduce inequality. This means that the expansion of the welfare state is a way not only to limit the stakes of political life, but also an instrument to provide the objective capacities to actively participate within the public space. This ideal is meant to be a part of the solution to political loss.

Talking in the public space

But how do we know that incessant interpersonal contact does not simply exacerbate the problems of exclusion, distrust, and discrimination? In cases where minorities are drowned out and sophistic citizens merely dribble acrimonious words, interpersonal discourse will not produce the desired effects, the perception gap will remain and distrust and inequality will continue.
Nonetheless, strict rules of the public space disallow such rhetoric. The purpose of public discourse is to articulate your reasons for a particular cause or policy. It is not an opportunity to make people angry or to articulate arguments that are aimed at initiating problematic actions like the persecution of other citizens. On the contrary, the public space is provided in order to allow citizens to put forth persuasive arguments to an audience of strangers, which then allows citizens the occasion to decide for themselves the appropriate position and measures. It is an opening to cultivate the character of friendship and goodwill (elaborate later) between citizens.

To get to an understanding of how social capital production can be cultivated between speakers and audience members, we must first begin with distrust. Firstly, there is a distrust that develops from the instability of our economy and political climate.\(^{148}\) The difficulty that comes with judging facts, taking history into account and prognosticating about our future creates indecisiveness about causes and effects that shaped our current climate. Secondly, there is also a distrust that arises out of our misgivings about fellow citizens. This is a derivative of our uncertainty about how others’ interests will impact our concerns and vulnerabilities. In order to deal with the first account of distrust, which stems from factual uncertainty, a speaker must give her listeners robust reasons and factually concrete evidence for citizens to believe her position. Furthermore, she must deal with the most pressing counter arguments

and essentially prove why her policies will avoid future problems, and ultimately result in a desired outcome. In dispelling interpersonal distrust, a speaker must confront the emotions of resentment, loss, vulnerability, and anger. She must demonstrate that the opinion and proposed action do not necessarily mean mutual benefit; however, it acknowledges the impact it could have on a diverse population. And in doing so, the speaker is not always making a pragmatic argument, which could result in a Pareto optimal way to deal with student debt, health care, and public schooling; nevertheless, the speaker is also attempting to generate trust and goodwill overtime.

Aristotle argues that language equips us with the abilities to deal with the issues of distrust: firstly, our ability to make logically consistent arguments, secondly, its capacity to convey character, and lastly its ability to engage people’s emotions.149 Aristotle explains that reason extends beyond arguments about concrete facts about history and political systems. It also extends to subjective matters that can be dealt by demonstrative logic, and ultimately has the capability of helping us make conclusions about how others will be treated. This conclusion is about human probabilities. What is the probability the speaker is speaking the truth when they are addressing facts about crime? Is the speaker being dogmatic when they are addressing economic concerns? Is the speaker articulating these sentiments for my vote or do they honestly believe their words? All the speakers’ words and postures, which speak to causes and effects,

provide information about the speaker’s reliability. Regardless of how reasonable the arguments are for universal health care, which are based on the few facts that we can collectively agree upon, they alone will not convince the audience about the credibility of the speaker. They are always counterarguments to the political positions we hold. And so listeners will turn to the assessment of the speaker’s character.

Speakers’ arguments are critical to conveying their character to the audience. The general principles they espouse are an expression of their character. Arguments around and about general principles reveal their ethical commitments concerning the treatment of “others” and the maintenance of the community. After listening to the speaker articulate their principles, the audience can judge whether they believe the speaker is reliable. If the speaker has managed to be logically consistent and hence was able to deal with the issue of factual uncertainty was able to demonstrate that her principles are reasonable and character exhibiting she still has to deal with the negative emotions of loss, disappointment, and resentment. These emotions are symptoms of unmanaged sacrifice and are enflamed by self-interest and the perceptual gaps we suffer from.

The emotions of loss indicate when people have experienced sacrifice (in their political lives). Joy marks the moments when people have experienced satisfaction with the political arrangement. Speakers who seek to inspire trust must be concerned with the emotions of loss and disappointment. We must learn how to convert the negative emotions into other emotions like confidence, which
I conceptualize as the exercise of courage over fear. This conversion of political loss is even prior to any effort to inspire goodwill. Goodwill is the essential emotion, which can arise between strangers that creates a way to political friendship. But for citizens get to political friendship they must be able to cultivate goodwill and overcome the negative emotions, which are exacerbated by sacrifice.

A question that can be raised now is: how is confidence cultivated? Aristotle argues that emotions have a conceptual structure to them, and it is this nature that makes it possible to talk people out of them. Anger for instance, arises when one gets less than what one thinks is due. Therefore, people are talked into their feelings of loss insofar as their assessments of what is owed to them is predicated on ideas about what is due to them within the polity, which are assumptions generated by political discourse. And so people are talked into their sense of loss, and therefore, may be talked out of it, if the grounds of their claims are anemic. One can counter the anger by explaining to citizens why the distribution of resources needs to be unequal in certain instances. And furthermore, safeguards can be created in order to ensure the unequal distribution does not lead to one-sided sacrifice. And so if speakers are going to minimize these emotions of loss and convert them into confidence and then goodwill they must identify the emotions that are generating this distrust.

Citizens’ about events and the political climate influences their beliefs about what is due to them and others within the polity. The subjective

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experience of loss is politically significant because this feeling influences citizens’ consent to policy. And so citizens generate trust and negotiate loss on this shifting ground of subjective perception. And in dealing with this perception gap around the issue of apparent loss, we must explain that certain losses are only apparent and not real. And so for instance, when white citizens like Abigail Fisher complain about the discriminatory nature of affirmative action they must be shown credible evidence that proves otherwise. Their intellectually bankrupt anecdotes should be dissected and proven to originate from bigoted views, poorly designed social science research, and predetermined political beliefs. In presenting these arguments we show that feelings of loss are only apparent. And if citizens can be convinced of this reality, then their feelings of apparent loss should dissipate. But we would then have to deal with the remaining feelings of disappointment.

Public discussions about losses and apparent losses are crucial to democracies. These discussions allow communities the opportunity to address the mirage that is the perception gap, which only furthers the vastly different assumptions individuals hold about sacrifices, benefits, recognition, and agency within the polity; however, by addressing negative emotions with the view of wanting to generate goodwill, which results in the establishment of political friendship and ultimately a more democratic approach to the problem of political loss. Citizens in public discourse must then listen carefully to each other in order to identify the emotions that are at play; consequently, citizen-speakers-listeners must cultivate methods to deal with the eruption of emotions.
How can speakers prove to their citizen-listeners their willingness to befriend them? A willingness to enter into a political friendship means individuals must acknowledge each other’s equality and autonomy. Hence, citizens must address each other as equals, which entails letting citizens judge for themselves instead of dogmatically asserting what one believes as the Truth about political affairs and silencing other opinions. Secondly, citizens who are political friends do not stoop down to using patronizing and pejorative language to engage with each other. Sophistic arguments are strictly unwarranted. Speakers essentially must be willing to share the stage and power with their audience members. This practice is crucial in generating trust because goodwill will sprout when citizen-speakers demonstrate their concern for the whole citizenry and not just their constituents. In practicing the habits of sharing we reduce the mushrooming of negative emotions. Thirdly, in exercising sympathy and empathy the citizens-speakers reflect on how the proposals will be received by “others.” This practice of “other-regarding” allows citizens the opportunity to explore the demands of sacrifice before they articulate unreasonable positions. In attempting to circumvent the feelings of political vulnerability, citizens-speakers are learning how not to induce feelings of insecurity; moreover, when necessary, they are also allowing themselves to be critiqued openly by fellow citizen.

Equity is at the core of friendship and trust production. Equitability is demonstrated when citizens moderate their own interests for the sake of others. And so when citizens take less than what they want on occasion for the sake of
the community, they will generate goodwill and above all else social capital. This act proves that they are willing to live an equitable life and not an egoistic one. This display of moderation and friendship mollifies the citizen-listeners distrust of other citizens’ motives. Thus, when words have failed, and speakers are not able to convince the audiences of their trustworthiness, they can always make a signal sacrifice, which are material manifestations of their self-denying commitment to the community. Nonetheless, it should be made clear that there is no single act of sacrifice that can complete the work of establishing a political friendship; however, the instituting of friendship is also predicated on the other reciprocating the gesture.

Participating in public spaces paradoxically also requires a truncation of agency. If we truly wish for our own voice to be respected and exercised without unwarranted attempts at subduing it, then we must recognize others’ right and not exercise our agency to the point in which we negate others voices. This acknowledgement of African Americans agency means that in public spaces we are not only required to raise our concern, but we must actively also listen to others to ensure that they are heard and that our voice is not working as a muzzle, which is satisfied with its own echo. But, in fact, it adds to people’s conception of the conversation. The public space demands us to be thoughtful and active listeners who are sharing words that are adding to each other and the conversation. And I am sure there will be numerous moments of tumultuous disagreement; nevertheless, in this disagreement I expect us to think the best of
each other’s intentions. We must listen and acknowledge each other’s right to articulate reasonable opinions in the public space.

**Limits**

The exercise of empathy helps redraw the boundaries of moral concern to include minorities. But this effort to establish interpersonal contact and trust between democratic strangers, must acknowledge the limits of empathy. Interpersonal contact is a means to overcome the perception gap, which divides our realities and help sustain the subordination of African Americans. Yet even with the interpersonal contact, which is established through the public space, we must admit that we are limited human beings. Empathetic identification is simply imperfect. For when we are attempting to identify with others, we reflect on their experiences through our own subjective conception of the world. And so our own perspectives and experiences run the risk of being the universal benchmark for others. By using our own experience as the “norm” or the base on which to reflect on others’ experiences, we risk the problem of not quite understanding others, because we are imposing our conceptions of reality on them. Thus, we must abate our egos and enter every conversation with humility. We must actively listen and take seriously the words of others. We must Socratically interrogate the assumptions we hold. We must incessantly revise the presuppositions we embrace. We must courageously question our own histories and privileges in order to be free from dogma, rigid ideas, and open
ourselves to new understandings. We must critically examine ourselves knowing the potential cost.

No policy can garner uniform acceptance from citizens. Thus, the inescapability of sacrifice illustrates the salience of equity. In order for consensus politics to work, it requires mechanisms to deal with the collective decisions that dissatisfy individual or group interests. And so we can conceptualize political friendship, as an instrument that reconciles the problem of individuals consenting to policies, which disadvantage them. Political friendship motivates citizens to consciously give up their own interests for the sake of others. This “other-regarding” act is done with the expectation of reciprocity. And the public space is a vehicle to generate social capital, which is necessary for other-regarding actions. In initiating public discourse we are attempting to acknowledge the problem of political loss, confront the issue of perception gaps, and inspire citizens to recognize and act on the problems of others.

The public space is one single solution and structure that is necessary to make democracy work. For even if public opinion about African American marginalization altered drastically, and conclusively, even if all Americans accepted the notion of systemic racism – racism would still persist unless the acknowledgment is also accompanied by policy change. This reality stresses the inescapability of sacrifice, and more importantly, highlights the limits of the public space. The public space is allowing for our moral bounds to expand and include the other; however, it is up to Americans to promote policies that
advance minority interests, which at times would mean sacrificing of individual benefits. This “other-regarding” act will only be done with the expectation of reciprocity. Citizens will act magnanimously to each other -- knowing that they will be repaid for their self-sacrifice. This reality means that one group cannot continually sacrifice for another. Sacrifice has to be shared fairly. And so policies that ceaselessly maintain African American sacrifice need to be eradicated.

Democracy will be strengthened by citizens’ ability to talk and share.

Interpersonal contact established by the public space is not the only instrument that can help cultivate a sense of empathy. Literature (and the arts in general) has always been a medium, which consistently reveals the surprising things that biased perception prevents us from seeing. It has always functioned as the mirror to our lives and the window to others. Its discursive themes and cognitive praxis captures the internal and external journeys of people. And from its inexhaustible fountains we have been able to reflect and displace ourselves as the center of humanity. And it is through this existential reflex that we awaken to our entangled condition. Literature facilities the cultivation of empathy because of its capacity to show us - “us.”

This ontological perspective on democracy sees democracy from the top down and bottom up. And so we recognize a salient role for the government to play in organizing society, particularly in honoring sacrifice. Honoring sacrifice has to do with advancing equality and liberty through the fair distribution of resources. This means that every citizen should have access to enough resources that allow them to escape and avoid subordination. Furthermore, seeing
democracy bottom up means that the maintenance of democracy is predicated on the cultivation of democratic attitudes that will ensure that citizens have the capacity to collaborate and manage loss. This means that public spaces are designed to generate social capital that is necessary for the execution of collective action and fair distribution of sacrifice. Thus, the catastrophe of our democracy is predicated not only on our drastic inequalities, but also on our incapacity to regard others as our equals and objects of our concern. And so in calling for the establishment of public spaces, I am offering a remedy to the declining trust, lack of other-regardingness, and failure of cooperation between citizens.

To assume that citizenly relations are a monolithic entity is downright erroneous. Relationships are never infinitely stable; however, they change over time. And are inundated with myriad currents and countercurrents that animate history. Sometimes trust is well and alive in a relationship, and sometimes it is lacking. Sometimes it is increasing and sometimes it is lost in oblivion. The public space is an institution, which attempts to ensure that trust is a renewable resource. Political friendship, which is a product of the discussions, space, and sacrifice, is a mechanism that resists the disintegration of trust. And so in seeking the generation of political friendship, and not intimacy, between democratic strangers we have found the light of a lighthouse in the murky waters of time, history, and space. And in this boat of democracy we are able to maintain the trust that will keep us in it and paddling.

**Things to remember about the public space**

Perception gap: When engaging in discourse we should realize that all individuals have different experiences that inform their realities and outlook on the world. This assertion does not negate the potential for overlapping perspectives on the world and neither does it concur with radical notions of relativism. It is merely acknowledging the different lenses through which we view life.

Maintain “other-regardingness”: To truly bridge the perception gap between our personalized views and the privilege, which blind us to the experiences of “others.” We must first listen and stop making assumptions about “others.” And when listening we must believe others words to be true. And; furthermore, we must open ourselves up fully to receiving others stories and perspectives. Empathy’s other-regarding function and moral capacity will inspire connection, and potentially moral action.

Addressing audiences: When speaking to the audience, citizens should always be attempting to convince everybody about their points. Being in the space is not about amassing further support from your own group, but presenting your point to everybody and highlighting the impact your policy will have on all constituents.
**Disagreement:** We must realize that disagreement is inevitable in public discussions. Individuals with different perspectives will disagree on points, which results in conflict. Conflict is perfectly admissible in this context. Conflict helps us grow and further understand each other’s perspectives, as long as we keep our minds open.

**Emotions:** Emotions are at stake when engaging in political and social discourse.

**Safety and comfort:** Feeling unsafe means that your emotional, psychological, and physical well-being is under threat. This precarious condition can potentially be triggered by the speeches of others. Nonetheless, we should not conflate unsafely with discomfort. These experiences are fundamentally different. Being uncomfortable means that one is experiencing dissonance in which they are unsure of their feelings of nervousness, guilt, trepidation, and anger. The experience of peril shuts us down completely and no longer allows us to engage fully. However, discomfort is an invitation for growth. Being uncomfortable means that our presuppositions about reality and ourselves are under question. These scathing criticisms are challenging us to reflect deeply, and more profoundly, pressing us to reassess our conception of the world and our place in it. This meditation, and potentially repositioning of our *Weltanschauung* (cognitive orientation) maybe difficult; however, it is necessary to come to terms with realities beyond our own.
Listeners: When listening citizens should differentiate between the speakers, proposals and their character. Furthermore, they should ask, the speaker, who is sacrificing what and for whom; furthermore, how will these acts, be reciprocated.

Judgment: Openly discussing matters pertaining to racism, sexism, classism and community does not mean that we are endeavoring to convince people to see the world in our perspective. However, we are merely pressing others to realize that the world is more and larger than them. And their truths and experiences are not the only valid claims to reality. And so we are offering each other the opportunity to expand our conception of the world. However, we are still respecting each other’s volition, and recognizing that citizens need to make their own judgments.
Conclusion
We can scuttle or we can sail the seas

We black folk, our history and our present being, are a mirror of all the manifold experiences of America. What we want, what we represent, what we endure is what America is. If we black folk perish, America will perish. If America has forgotten her past, then let her look into the mirror of our consciousness and she will see the living past living in the present, for our memories go back, through our black folk of today, through the recollections of our black parents, and through the tales of slavery told by our black grandparents, to the time when none of us, black or white, lived in this fertile land. The differences between black folk and white folk are not blood or color, and the ties that bind us are deeper than those that separate us. The common road of hope which we all traveled has brought us into a stronger kinship than any words, laws, or legal claims. – Richard Wright, “12 Million Black Voices”

151 Picture circulating around social media platforms comparing the deaths of Emmett Till and Tamir Rice.

Mamie Till could not lean on her country for comfort or help.

When it comes to her sons, the society ignores their inherent value. In a hoodie, they are delinquents, political
symbols for all of our misgivings. They playfulness is an indicator of future mischief. Forgetting the value of black bodies has become apart of the dream. White America has forgotten the scale of its systemic terror that isolated, silenced, and plundered black communities. Thousands of young black men have been incarcerated in the name of a “War on Drugs.” The oppression blacks have endured has lead to the production of ghettos and the New Jim Crow (mass prison industrial complex). To remember and realize the unremittingly atrocious is to give up the Dream. It is to recognize the reality of continuing sacrifice; moreover, the burden that African Americans disproportionately carry. To remember and know is to give up the exceptional dream and to live down here with us, in the concrete world, where political loss exists. To awaken is to recognize that this empire was built on black domination, and continues its rituals of violence on black boys. We must awaken to this dark and ugly reality that unceasingly haunts us beyond slavery and Jim Crow.

How do we build a political order that places recognition at its center? How do we organize a fair society? Poor black citizens are social victims who are deprived of access to major public resources and institutions. The dilemma of black poverty is due to the distribution of income, wealth, power, and racism. Throughout this thesis I have shown that the burdens of democratic sacrifice are unfairly distributed. The collective decisions we take do not ameliorate every citizen’s life; however, some citizens are benefited at the expense of others. And it is this cost that perpetuates suffering. And so to alleviate the burdens of sacrifice means limiting the stakes of political life by expanding the welfare state
in order to guarantee decent life prospects. Nonetheless, expanding the welfare state is only half of the solution to democratic sacrifice. We must admit that hope in the movement does not only rest in expanding the welfare state, but also in waking up the dreamers. Citizens have to promote policies that further women’s, blacks’, and immigrants’ concerns, which at times means sacrificing your own interests. And so we must engender the public space, as a means of waking the dreamers to the reality of others and the demands of living with others. It is an instrument that can generate the social capital necessary for the cultivation of other-regarding sentiments and values. In initiating public discourse, we are attempting to expand the moral bounds to include the “other”, and essentially are also acknowledging the problems of unshared sacrifice. Nonetheless, for the public space to be effective, the inequalities that afflict our democracy need to be solved. Hence, the welfare state is a way not only to safeguard life prospects, but also a tool to ensure the objective capacities to participate within the public space. The welfare state and the public space are complementary solutions to the burdens of sacrifice.

As we have seen, discourse between democratic strangers is an effective way to cultivate modes of citizenship that secure political volition through participation in the public space. Political friendship is a means to reconcile the burdens of individual sacrifice. Political friendship motivates citizens to give up their own interests for the concerns of others. In proposing these arguments I have attempted to challenge common assumptions about contemporary society. Unrestrained self-interest shouldn’t be the order of the day. The conditions of
modernity do propel citizens to concern themselves with self-interest, which is fine to a degree. However, self-centered interest does not always lead to social benefits. In fact, unchecked self-interest results in the erosion of trust. The capacity to fairly moderate self-interest with regards to other citizens’ concerns is the mark of democratic citizenship. To employ the habits of political friendship solve the problems of competing self-interests by converting it into equitable self-interest. Secondly, citizens entangled lives and sacrifices draw them into a network of mutual obligation. The fact that we benefit from other citizens’ sacrifices means that we must reciprocate those sacrifices.

Interpersonal contact with strangers in the public space cultivates habits of empathetic identification, and ultimately can generate politically and socially transformative experiences. Citizens must see themselves through the eyes of strangers and also attempt to understand the perspectives of others. These efforts may enable citizens to see how different notions of the good derive from particular perspectives and experiences and are not reflections of some Absolute Truth. Therefore, citizens have to be aware of their relations to each other, in order, to get to broader and more inclusive solutions. If citizens aren’t able to recognize and honor the intricate entanglements of their relationships, they will continue to pursue policies that further particular interests and that ignore the realities experienced by others, especially those who have been historically marginalized. They must accept the demands of being with each other.

Dismissals of others’ realities and experiences will reinforce marginalization; moreover, such dismissals of historical patterns of inequality and sacrifice fundamentally, deplete the reservoirs of trust and eventually undercut political legitimacy.\footnote{Danielle Allen, *Talking to Strangers: Anxieties of Citizenship since Brown v. Board of Education* (Chicago: University Press, 1971), 165.} Hence, citizens must be attentive to the distribution of benefits and sacrifices among themselves. Benefits and sacrifices must be shared fairly otherwise trust will corrode into distrust.

What is critical to understand is that how we set up the terms of discourse will shape our perception and response to the problem. As I have said before, people experience their sentiments of loss based on their assessments of what is owed to them, so by changing these assessments through engagement and discourse their sentiments will also change. To engage in a serious conversation about race, class, and gender we must not begin with the problem of black people, poor people, and women. But the conversations must raise questions about the faults of American society and how its current choices shape its unfair conditions. How these conversations play out determine how we perceive and respond to our problems. And as long as black people, women, and poor people are conceptualized as the “other”, the burden of race relations will fall upon them to solve.

We can choose to be a nation that extends concern to the most vulnerable. We can seek for others opportunities that we wish for ourselves. Expanding our moral bounds, and accomplishing this degree of inclusivity,
means learning how to sacrifice. It means giving up fierce defenses of policies and strategies that further exploit the weak and only to secure our egotistic concerns. It means listening to the most vulnerable and stop rationalizing their suffering as individual incapacities. Yes, we are currently on this path of shame and blame, and it has lead to a familiar end – subordination and suffering. But in this gloom we have a fork road ahead. We can commit to an alternative path. The alternatives remain the same, as in all ages. We can scuttle or we can sail the seas. We can choose to change or stay on the same treacherous bearing. We can choose to listen or continue snubbing the voices of the suffering. We can be a nation that lifts every voice to sing.


