

- You despise people who work hard for their money, live their own lives, and don't rely on the government for help cradle to grave.
- You've had 5 kids from 3 different men and you need the welfare check.

These emails were overflowing with moral content, yet I had a hard time categorizing that content using Moral Foundations Theory. Much of it was related to fairness, but this kind of fairness had nothing to do with equality. It was the fairness of the Protestant work ethic and the Hindu law of karma: People should reap what they sow. People who work hard should get to keep the fruits of their labor. People who are lazy and irresponsible should suffer the consequences.

This email and other responses from economic conservatives made me realize that I and my colleagues at YourMorals.org had done a poor job of capturing conservative notions of fairness, which focused on proportionality, not equality. People should get what they deserve, based on what they have done. We had assumed that equality and proportionality were both part of the Fairness foundation, but the questions we used to measure this foundation were mostly about equality and equal rights. We therefore found that liberals cared more about fairness, and that's what had made these economic conservatives so angry at me. They believed that liberals don't give a damn about fairness (as proportionality).

Are proportionality and equality two different expressions of the same underlying cognitive module, as we had been assuming? Are they both related to reciprocal altruism, as Robert Trivers had described it? It's easy to explain why people care about proportionality and are so keen to catch cheaters. That follows directly from Trivers's analysis of how we gain by exchanging favors with reliable partners. But what

about equality? Are liberal concerns about political and economic equality really related to reciprocal altruism? Is the passion anger people feel toward bullies and oppressors the same as the anger they feel toward cheaters?

I looked into what was known about the egalitarianism of hunter-gatherers, and found a strong argument for splitting apart these two kinds of fairness. The desire for equality seems to be more closely related to the psychology of liberty and oppression than to the psychology of reciprocity and exchange. After talking about these issues with my colleagues at YourMorals.org, and after we ran some new studies on various kinds of fairness and liberty, we added a provisional sixth foundation—Liberty/oppression.³⁵ We also decided to revise our thinking about fairness to place more emphasis on proportionality. Let me explain.

THE LIBERTY/OPPRESSION FOUNDATION

In the last chapter I suggested that humans are, like our primate ancestors, innately equipped to live in dominance hierarchies that can be quite brutal. But if that's true, then how come nomadic hunter-gatherers are always egalitarian? There's no hierarchy (at least among the adult males), there's no chief, and the norms of the group actively encourage sharing resources, particularly meat.³⁶ The archaeological evidence supports this view, indicating that our ancestors lived for hundreds of thousands of years in egalitarian bands of mobile hunter-gatherers.³⁷ Hierarchy only becomes widespread around the time that groups take up agriculture or domesticate animals and become more sedentary. These changes create much more private property and much larger group sizes. They also put an end to equality: The best land and a share of