

When the Poorest Are Neglected

A Vignette Experiment on Need-Based Distributive Justice

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Abstract: We examine the role of need satisfaction in non-comparative justice ratings about endowments with goods. As normative approaches, we discuss utilitarianism, prioritarianism, and sufficientarianism. Using a vignette experiment, we show that a need context increases the prevalence of prioritarianistic and sufficientarianistic justice ratings, which leads to an ethically problematic sigmoid shape of the justice evaluation function.

Keywords: Basic Needs, Justice Principles, Prioritarianism, Sufficientarianism, Utilitarianism, Vignette Experiment

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