**Parfitian Role Sheet - Indeterminate**

**Core Beliefs**

You are a proponent of the philosophy of Derek Parfit as it is outlined in “Equality and Priority”. This text provides the foundation of your beliefs. In some moments in the game it may be obvious how Parfit’s argument obliges you to speak and act. At other times however it will likely be unclear how to apply the essay’s abstract principles to political issues of the here and now. In such instances you will need to decide for yourself what to say or do. So long as your speech and actions do not contradict your foundational principles you will be living up to your role.

Your foundational essay is centrally concerned with inequality. In particular, it is concerned with identifying the various reasons we might find inequality unjust. Beyond this general orientation toward *egalitarianism* –the notion that inequality as such is somehow bad or unjust– Parfit is less obviously committal. Even so, he has two main concerns in this essay. First, he distinguishes two forms of egalitarianism, *telic* and *deontic*, and notes that they depend on different underlying assumptions and so are subject to different objections. Second, he explores “The Priority View”, which claims that “[b]enefitting people matters more the worse off these people are” (Parfit 1997: 213). He notes that this view (also called *prioritarianism*) is distinct from egalitarianism, even if they are often run together and even if they are potentially compatible with one another.

Though your foundational essay does not take an obvious stand in favor of one view or another, Parfit is attracted to prioritarianism and so you should consider this your primary allegiance, too. You are also sympathetic to egalitarianism, even if priority is your main concern.

While many roles in our game value equality in some form, they do so for diverse reasons and not all value equality as such. The small government faction and the Arnesonite indeterminates, for example, do not align with your views regarding equality. While your reasons for valuing equality might differ from other roles, this concern for equality provides a common orientation that you might highlight as you negotiate with various faction members and indeterminates, especially in the pursuit of your central goal: benefitting those who are the worst off.

Even if equality is generally favored, not every role in the game values equality for the same reason(s) as you or in the same way. Similarly, your alignment with prioritarianism is less widely shared. Utilitarians and members of the small government faction, for example, are apt to deny that there is anything better as such about benefitting those who are worse off. More generally, your view is plausibly opposed to those that are agnostic about whether or not inequality is bad or those who disagree that the leveling down objection represents a significant challenge to at least some forms of egalitarianism. By implication, it is also at odds with who object to state-based attempts to resolve inequality or those who would reject the notion that improving the plight of the worse off is, all else equal, better than improving the plight of those who are better off.

**Major Goal**

The central goal for you is to have the legislative assembly pass motions that distinctively benefit those persons who are worst off. These could take the form of social welfare programs that provide funds or no-cost health care to the impoverished. Or it might offer high-quality child care and early childhood education low income families. Or it might involve increased funding for accessibility in employment training programs for people with disabilities, or something else of your own devising. Exactly which proposals you make are up to you, but bear in mind that you may encounter resistance if you ask for too much, even if many roles are open to addressing inequality.

In the end, you will need to feel out what type of proposals have the best chance of being passed and make their passage your central goal. This outcome is far from assured: other indeterminates will have their own proposals that they will want to add to the agenda. You will need to build support for your initiative by forging alliances with other indeterminates and, especially, with members of the three main factions.

Unlike some other characters, you have a separate issue of concern. The United Nations will soon review its Human Development Index (HDI), an international ranking of countries according to their level of development. The notion of development that the HDI has traditionally employed is based on capabilities, reflecting the involvement of Amartya Sen. The review, however, means there is a real possibility that that may change. You believe that the HDI should be revised to reflect your commitment to the notion that benefitting those who are worst off matters most. It will be a major victory for you if you can convince the assembly to pass a resolution, written by you, stating as much. The purpose of doing so will be to send a message to the UN in the hope of influence its review.

Note that your resolution does not need to outline the particulars of the HDI in any detail: your concern is with the philosophy of its overall approach. So long as you can convince the assembly to endorse your broad philosophy as it pertains to the HDI, you will have achieved a significant personal victory. But be warned: there may be other players in the game who want the HDI to take a different approach. Remember that you can bargain with factions and other indeterminates, possibly voting to support a measure of theirs in return for their support of yours. More information on the HDI is available at: <http://hdr.undp.org/en/humandev>. See in particular the section, “Intellectual and Historical Underpinnings.”

**Tips and Strategies**

You are committed to priority and addressing inequality. Many other roles value equality, too, but your conception of equality and reasons for valuing it might not be the same as theirs. A careful reading Parfit’s discussion, and developing a sensitivity for the sorts of distinctions he makes, will serve you well. In particular, it may help you avoid the sorts of confusions he identifies. This skill will also help you determine what arguments might convince those who don’t yet agree with you but might, if properly convinced. Further, you might find you are more successful in convincing others to vote your way if you take the time to identify the core values or principles endorsed by other roles—even if their core principles are not obviously concerned with priority, it is possible that their policy preferences will converge with yours.

Since a broad range of policies are consistent with your commitment to priority and addressing inequality, you have wide latitude to decide which factions to vote with and which proposals to support. Regarding social welfare or immigration, you support policies that give priority to those who are relatively worse off. With regard to minority rights proposals, your support will depend on how they affect people who are worse off—for instance, you will need to decide whether you wish to include being culturally worse off as opposed to merely economically worse off. In the end, as long as the proposals you support do not conflict with priority and equality, you are entirely free to vote in the way that seems best to you. This makes you an appealing ally, if other factions take the time to ally with you.

Many of the philosophers whose work other roles are based on have written on inequality and how we ought to address it. Doing some digging to discover what these writings say could be of great benefit to you, if you invest time to do the research.

**Victory Objectives**

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| **Points** | **Objective** |
| 1/resolution | The assembly passes any resolution that enshrines any of the key distinctions expressed in your primary essay (e.g., priority vs equality, telic vs deontic egalitarianism): |
| 1 | The assembly passes a resolution on a topic or topics other than the HDI that explicitly benefits the worst off |
| -0.5 | The assembly passes a resolution on a topic or topics other than the HDI that explicitly rejects special benefits to the worst off |
| 2 | The assembly endorses your HDI proposal |
| 1 | The assembly votes on your HDI proposal (without passing) |
| -1 | The assembly endorses an HDI proposal other than yours |

**Primary Essay**

Parfit, Derek. (1997) Equality and Priority. *Ratio* 10:3, 202-221.