Responsibility, Equality, and Unemployment Insurance

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Abstract

It is a central political goal to secure involuntarily unemployed individuals the same opportunities as others to pursue their conception of a good life. This goal reflects an ambition to combine an egalitarian and a liberal intuition. The egalitarian intuition is that any inequality between individuals must be justified by appealing to differences in some responsibility factors. The liberal intuition is that redistribution only can be justified by appealing to differences in some non-responsibility factors. In this dissertation I analyze how a system of unemployment insurance should ideally be designed in order to respect both the egalitarian and the liberal intuitions. The dissertation asks how the different unemployment insurance instruments, such as the UI benefit level, the entitlement conditions, the eligibility criteria, and the distribution of the costs associated with UI should ideally be designed and combined given that the aim is to maximize conformity to both the egalitarian and the liberal intuitions. The dissertation also asks how the different OECD unemployment insurance schemes have combined the egalitarian and the liberal intuitions in the design of their respective unemployment policy instruments.
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Bio

Cornelius Cappelen is of Norwegian citizenship. He graduated from The Department of Comparative Politics, University of Bergen (Norway), in 2004. After graduating from the University of Bergen, but prior to commencing his PhD at the EUI in 2005, he was granted a scholarship at The Ethics Programme in Oslo (Norway), an interdisciplinary and cross-faculty research program, which overriding aim is to promote and support ethics research and normative reflection at the University of Oslo. During his PhD, he was a visiting scholar at the Harvard University Program in Ethics and Health (Harvard University), a program in research, training and teaching on ethical issues arising in population health, global health, clinical care and human subjects research. Cappelen’s research interests include work in political philosophy, with a special focus on distributive justice. Other research interests include comparative welfare policy and democracy.