

Altruistically Quarantined: Pandemic Ethics Beyond the Coronavirus Crisis

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Abstract

Renewed interest in the ethics of quarantines as a response to the challenges imposed by pandemic outbreak attempts to diminish the tension embedded in the pandemic management between public good and civil liberties. This paper suggests that Rawls' theory can benefit through critical engagement with the concept of reciprocal altruism as a proper response to the argument raised by quarantines' opponents as to when and where it is fair to concentrate the burdens associated with confinement to quarantines. Drawing on concrete examples of COVID-19 pandemic management, this paper explores how altruism can enhance public trust and an informed community participation.

Keywords: Quarantine, Pandemic Management, Distributive Justice, Reciprocity, Rawls, COVID-19.

Introduction

"Quarantine is the most extreme form of action a government takes in the name of public health . . . Although other [restraints on liberty] raise the issue of the state's power to sacrifice an individual's rights to protect the public, quarantine poses this question in its starkest form."

Wendy Parmet, 1985

On March 11, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared COVID-19 a pandemic embracing over 300,000 cases of the coronavirus across 110 countries and territories worldwide and the sustained risk of further global spread [1]. The health crisis led by the Coronavirus raises ethical concerns relating to the principle of distributive justice and the use of quarantine by public health authorities during an infectious disease outbreak. The emergency setting of the Coronavirus pandemic has led to a broadening government response including dramatically widen quarantine regime to deter the further spread of the disease. While China was the first country to forcibly quarantine of more than 50 million people, Europe, the United States, and the Middle East are currently witnessing quarantine regimes. Public criticism of the use of restrictive measurement of quarantine raises the entanglement of ethical concerns, such as infringements to individual rights, loss of employment and wages, shortage of health care staff members to quarantines for coronavirus infections, and the growing use of coercive measure such as citizen tracking and surveillance deployed by the government to track citizens who do not obey quarantine rules.

Historically, quarantine has primordial roots in the public health practices of the 14th century. Ships that arrived in Venice from plague-infected ports to come ashore were forced to wait for 40 days (namely, quar-antine) before allowing any passengers to embark [2]. One may note that the quarantines were used as a common measure, aimed at controlling disease outbreaks in Europe's plague-addled Middle Ages, and continued to be the principal means of controlling outbreaks until 1900. Nonetheless, with the early developments of vaccination and antibiotics, the relative costs of the quarantine have become questionable compared to its supposed benefits.

On the macro level, quarantine applied at the individual, group, or community level, confines individuals who are presumed to have been exposed to a contagious disease, but they are not considered ill. Thus, in order to bolster "social distancing" and establish a preventative measure against infections. The quarantine regime involves the sacrifice of individual rights for the collective good. The scarcity of resources and an intensified panic, particularly in epidemic forms, may extend the exercise of state power. For example, in 2018 The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention quietly expanded its authority to detain people without due process, despite the resistance of various legal and human-rights advocates. During the Ebola Epidemic in 2014, several states issued mandatory quarantines on health workers returning from three Ebola-ravaged West African countries, namely Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone. One American nurse drew much national attention, Kaci Hickox, when she was forcibly quarantined over Ebola fears when she returned to the United States after treating patients in West Africa. Hickox who did not have any symptoms of Ebola decided to file a federal civil-rights lawsuit for being unlawfully detained. This case delivers insights into the fairness of the distributive patterns associated with quarantines.

In this respect, in balancing community good, in quarantine, health, and well-being -with individual rights, namely autonomy and the right to choose; the goal is to protect the community with minimal restriction on the action and movement of individuals. The distributive patterns associated with quarantines are count as the preferred method of isolation for minimizing the total burden of widespread infectious disease. Nonetheless, they impose greater burdens on a group of persons compared to those under alternative preventative methods, such as receiving a vaccination individually [3] In terms of fairness, one may suggest that the quarantine appears unfair as it requires enacting burdens on a concentrated group of individuals rather than spreading them on greater sums of populations or treating particularly those infected.

The specific aim of this paper is to explore how distributive justice theory can be enhanced to better meet the distributive justice challenge imposed by the quarantine regime at the outbreak of pandemic by examining how public health programs are exhibiting reciprocal altruism under these circumstances. Thus, for strengthening the legitimacy of quarantine and its inevitable burdens, we scrutinize whether altruism may thrive in the Rawlsian reciprocity given the challenges posed by quarantines applied in a pandemic outbreak. Drawing on the growing recognition that pandemic control measures are sustainable at both individual and community levels, it is suggested that upholding the principle of reciprocity points to the government's obligation to provide compensation and support for the "pandemic fronts". This paper argues that Rawls' reciprocity as fairness acknowledges that quarantines concentrate burdens of confinement on the worse-off. However, compliance with quarantine measures to combat the infectious epidemic relies heavily a behavior that evinces a desire to act from a sense of justice and altruism. Thus, an appropriate balance between quarantine coercive power and individual rights is the subject of reciprocal altruism, which illuminates a pathway towards rethinking the idea of reciprocity means to a liberal thinker as Rawls to alter individuals' calculations of self-interest.

By bringing these two constructs together is logical since both share a commitment to social justice. In a different but complementary way, reciprocal altruism becomes a valuable resource for Rawlsian reciprocity based-fairness for the institutionalization of reciprocity in times of pandemic to punctuate attention to inequality and social diversity. Thus, the purpose of this paper is to reveal Rawls' and reciprocal altruism unexpectedly complimentary ground for reciprocal altruism by demonstrating how a theoretical framework drawing on them both might lead to a better understanding of the normative import of reciprocity to reduce quarantine's burdens and guide the political and institutional mechanisms for its fulfillment. This argument consists of three parts, which will be further elaborated. We begin with a brief overview of pandemic management and quarantines as a measure to control infectious diseases. We continue discussing reciprocal altruism within the theoretical lens of Rawls distributive justice framework by laying out the apparent convergence of reciprocity as fairness and altruism as a productive way of considering ethically-motivated reciprocity mechanism applied into pandemic management through concrete examples of recent COVID-19 institutional arrangements.

Pandemic disease and the response of Quarantine

The global concern about the impact of the pandemic has led the international community and governments to adopt policies enabling to control communicable disease outbreaks. Notable incidents as the outbreak of the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) in 2002 and 2003, of the Avian Flu in 2005 and 2006, the Ebola - during the years 2014 - 2016 have undermined government agencies' and international organizations' public health capacities to tackle the spread of disease and to treat those exposed effectively [4]. As a result, these viruses have also increased public awareness of the potential costs associated with infectious diseases [5].

Following the above, it is important to note that influenza viruses are constantly changing, as some spread easily from person to person, while others are relatively less contagious.

Various types of flu viruses are limited to animal hosts, with little concern about them passing to humans. Therefore, Influenza involved human-to-human transmission requires a continued vigilance in order to protect society. Some may consider the influenza outbreak in 1918 as the deadliest incident of pandemic influenza in history. The impact of this flu virus was considered unique due to its fast spread from person to person which led to the death of healthy adults in the prime of their lives. The response efforts to the Influenza pandemic included isolation, quarantines, and school closing and cancellations of public gatherings (including public funerals). Most recreational activities were curtailed under the rationale of preventing people from gathering [6]. In addition, people were instructed to wear cloth masks, which were partially distributed by public health agencies and were required from citizens to be used in public. Moreover, they were also asked to stay in their homes for long time periods [7]. In this regard, the fact that the outbreak of influenza occurred subsequently to the end of World War I had raised the need to use extreme measures aimed at controlling the spread of this disease such as isolation, quarantine, and public separation [7,8]. As suggested by Anthony Fauci, MD, NIH, "a primary lesson of the 1918 influenza pandemic is that it is critical to intervene early." [9].

Furthermore, one may also mention the SARS in 2002, which was first identified in China and then spread to over 24 countries. [10]. During its spread, the Chinese government was criticized for not handling effectively the outbreak and for not sharing the relevant information concerning the extent of incidents and the seriousness of the illness with the World Health Organization (WHO). (U.S. GAO, 2004A) On March 23, 2014, WHO reported numerous cases of the Ebola Virus Disease (EVD), which was identified in the forested rural region of southeastern Guinea. The Ebola outbreak started in West Africa Ebola epidemic and has become one of the largest epidemics in human history. The controlling and containment efforts of the Ebola outbreak demonstrated weak surveillance systems and poor public health infrastructure. Thus, intensifying the existing difficulties, as it quickly spread to Guinea's bordering countries, Liberia and Sierra Leon. Currently, we are experiencing the outbreak of Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) that was first identified in Wuhan, China, in December 2019, and spread on a global scale. Currently, the world health organization (WHO) has warned that the coronavirus pandemic accelerates with more than 300,000 cases. In the case of the coronavirus, a desired public behavior is to obey the rules of quarantines and hygiene. Governments across the globe, called for "unconditionally" to obey quarantine instructions laid by public officials including the use of various methods of surveillance to track citizens who violate quarantine rules [11].

The Challenge of Quarantine

As highlighted in the previous overview of major epidemics and the aligned response activities, the quarantine is regarded as one of the oldest and debatable methods of controlling disease spread. Quarantine is a method of restricting individuals who got exposed to a contagious disease but are not ill. The quarantine can be applied at the individual, group, or community level [12]. Important to note, based on a judicial decision of the U.S. Supreme Court in 1905, the American government has authorized to use quarantine on citizens and/or forcibly vaccinate them, even against their will. (Jacobson v. Massachusetts, 25 S. Ct. 358, 361 (1905) Among the official list of quarantinable diseases for the United States, one can mention

the Cholera, Diphtheria, Infectious tuberculosis, Plague Smallpox, Yellow fever, and Viral hemorrhagic fevers (to include Lassa, Marburg, Ebola, Crimean-Congo, South American, and others not yet isolated or named) According to Department of Health and Human Services (HHS): "The goal of quarantine is to protect the public by separating those exposed to dangerous communicable disease from the general population. It represents collective action for the common good that is predicated on aiding individuals who are already infected or exposed and protecting others from inadvertent exposure".

The principles of modern quarantine and social isolation may transform based on their applicability to the phase and intensity of a disease outbreak. The HHS guidelines also species the conditions that must be fulfilled by the government for individuals under quarantines. Thus, including the distribution of food and household goods, as well as medical care and vaccines. As a result, the enforcement of a quarantine, whether voluntary or mandatory, raises major challenges to liberties. Quarantines lead some individuals to endure the burdens of contracting the disease, which are not limited to the medical aspect alone. They also include the burdens of confinement, such as financial burdens, discrimination, stigmatization, and breaches of privacy. Furthermore, the practice of quarantine seems to justify the concentration of individuals who have been exposed (but not infected) together with those who suffer from the disease and therefore serve as a threatening agent to the healthy population. As such, individuals who enter the quarantine without being infected at all may face a greater risk of contagion at this phase rather than without any physical restriction. Consequently, this method may reduce the disease outbreak but will likely increase the odds these individuals will get exposed to the disease [3].

Modern Prism of Quarantine: The COVID-19 Pandemic

Various states have employed widespread public health measures to reduce COVID-19 transmission, with emphasis on quarantine and contact tracing measures. The rationale for social and physical distancing is to reduce mortality and minimise the pressure on the health system: [13]

"[t]he quarantine of family members of patients with covid-19 was modelled to reduce demand for intensive care beds and deaths from the disease, when combined with other interventions."

To deal with the key ethical challenges of quarantine during the COVID-19, some suggest a relational approach to ethics that promotes the core values of solidarity, equity, trust, and reciprocity. Nonetheless, quarantine has detrimental ethical and legal implications as it puts "limits on an individual's freedom and autonomy and is justified by the principle of utility, one acts to maximise aggregate welfare." [14,15].

Therefore, there raises an ethical need to balance between the common good and one's civil liberties. Important to mention, an ethically justifiable quarantine must be held in case of person-to-person spread of allegedly severe disease, and the restrictions shall be proportional and reciprocal. As highlighted above, one should put further attention to in-risk groups, such as ethnic minorities and elderly people, which are more susceptible to discriminatory patterns and stigmatization resulting from quarantine and other public health measures [16].

From a global prism, public health threats increase significantly compared to the pre-industrial era: "quarantine in a world which is becoming more tangibly connected than it has ever been at any other point in history." [17] The globalized structure of society requires a complex and global conceptualization of public health and establish preventive measures accordingly. Thus, to better analyze the nexus between globalization and infectious disease. As Alqahtani further explains:

"[w]hen people move what is also transported are elements of their larger, surrounding environment. [...] aspects of travel and mobility that serve to influence and impact the incidence, prevalence and spread of infection [...] the relationship between human mobility and disease-causing organisms creates a pattern of disease presence and epidemiology that is not only fluid, but is also evolving" (p. 86)

From a digital prism, notable AI-based techniques are used to manage and monitor quarantines globally. For instance, China and Italy, whose infection rate is extremely high, have employed strict quarantine regimes to diminish the spread of the pandemic [18,19]. Moreover, the Ministry of Interior and Safety of South Korea has established a monitoring app of quarantined citizens using GPS technologies, thus in order to mitigate the pandemic spread and prevent quarantine violations [20]. Similarly, Israeli Emergency Regulations enable the enforcement of quarantine limitations on possibly infected individuals [21].

In this regard, the technological tools used to enforce quarantine have the potential to amplify the ethical controversy, as they include real-time monitoring of individuals under quarantine restrictions, and ensure they remain separated from their environment. For instance, one may mention Taiwan's Electronic Fence that monitors quarantined overseas arrivals, thus using mobile data [22]. An additional controversy raises the question of developing voluntary or non-voluntary apps for quarantine monitoring. On the one hand, quarantine as a social distancing measure may become less efficient once held voluntarily. On the other hand, government actors may abuse their technological permissions to undermine one's autonomy and force health polices, as happened with the creation of shadow profiles for returning citizens in the Polish quarantine app [23,24]

Following the discussion above, the scholar Nicholas Evans raises an interesting insight regarding the ethics of clinical research in quarantine. Despite the alleged lacking ethical or legal justification of liberty limiting measures, some may claim that the quarantine provides an opportunity to develop the study of disease course and transmission and therefore research quarantined individuals and groups. Nonetheless, society must prevent the quarantined individuals from turning into "victims of injustice", since: "[t]hey are confined without being convicted of a crime or committing some other wrong, in a way that frequently fails to achieve a substantive public health goal." (p. 2).

As an instructive way for attempting to lessen this tension between the quarantine coercive power and civil liberties, the ethics of quarantines goes to the heart of a long-standing confrontation between two approaches to distributive justice, namely liberalism and communitarianism [25]. We suggest addressing the relationship between quarantines and reciprocity by clarifying the criteria for distinguishing between legitimate and illegitimate uses of quarantines in a way that increases the

ethically-motivated reciprocity mechanism built into pandemic management. To better understand how the discussion of liberal distributive justice can benefit from the insights of reciprocal altruism in times of pandemic, it is useful to sketch out reciprocal altruism central tenants.

A Reciprocity Appeal to Altruism: New Frontiers of Social Justice

Reciprocal Altruism

Reciprocal altruism finds its origins in the evolutionary biology, whereby it is defined as, "A behavior that benefits another organism, not closely related, while being apparently detrimental to the organism performing the behavior, benefit, and detriment being defined in terms of contribution to inclusive fitness" [26]. A substantial body of theoretical research has blossomed on the subject of cooperative behavior [27,28], which seeks to answer the overarching question of why an individual would engage in a behavior which is costly to carry out but benefits others? [29,27]

In order to understand how this question manifests and is answered in the ethical and philosophical arena, it is important to review the relevant literature. Within the social evolution theory, several explanations attempt to present solutions to this question. Broadly speaking, all theoretical models for explaining cooperative behavior are either categorized as offering direct or indirect benefits. Discussing direct benefits, Sachs et al. (2004) [30], put forth that cooperation might provide evolutionary (fitness) benefits for the individual which eclipse the performative cost. On this point, Kokko et al. (2001) [31] offer the example of cooperative breeding, in which a larger group might offer survival advantages, but individuals may raise offspring which are not their own. Hamilton (1964, 1970) [28,32] framed the indirect benefits as those an individual might experience by passing on the cooperative gene. He puts forth that this process could occur if the individual helped a relative reproduce, thereby passing on its own genes to the next generation .

Following these examples, the definitions for cooperative behaviors tend to focus on the outcomes. Brosnan and de Waal (2002) [30] aptly point out that most of the literature on cooperation is usually anchored on fitness consequences for actors. Similar definitions, which are predicated on outcomes alone, fail to account for cooperative efforts [33]. Brosnan and de Waal (2002) [33] offer a process-based definition to cooperative behavior which seeks to overcome the problematic nature of outcome-based definitions, "voluntary acting together of two or more individuals that brings about, or could potentially bring about, an end situation that benefits one, both, or all of them in a way that could not have been brought about individually". [33]

Within the larger category of cooperative behavior, there exists a sub-category of altruism which describes more nuanced mechanisms of cooperative behavior. According to West, Griffin, and Gardner (2007) [27], altruism is predicated on two conditions: (I) It is in terms of the lifetime consequences of behavior and (II) whether it increases or decreases the individual's fitness [27]. Brosnan and de Waal define reciprocal altruism as, "the exchange of goods or services (costly acts) between individuals such that one individual benefits from an act of the other, and then the other individual benefits in return." (Brosnan & de Waal, 2002, 131) [24] They distinguish

reciprocal altruism from mutualism, whereby all parties benefit simultaneously, rather than a benefit which is separated by the time of receipt [35]. Experts have pointed out that in contrast to high-cost reciprocity, low-cost reciprocity, which is relatively risk-free, is more common [36].

Although reciprocal altruism indeed owes its inception to evolutionary biology, the theoretical field has been incorporated into economic and sociological theoretical modes to explain prosocial behaviors. Cosmides and Tooby (1992) [37] offer the definition of reciprocal altruism in humans as, "cooperation between two or more individuals for mutual benefit." (169) Trivers (1971) [26] notes that examples of reciprocal altruism in humans could manifest as helping the wounded, offering aid to those in crisis, and food sharing. It is important to note that reciprocal altruism within the field of sociology has laid the foundation for several prosocial phenomena related to international relations, such as the United Nations, the international crisis relief, and NATO [38]. On a personal level, experts have posited that individuals may engage with reciprocal altruism as a result of a drive to comply with socially-normative behavior. Reflecting on its normative uptake and reach, reciprocal altruism is useful in a situation where the benefit and cost are not only measured in the short term, and that there is to some extent a longer-term benefit (i.e. it is mutually beneficial and not altruistic).

Given the potential consequences faced by society as a whole at the pandemic outbreak, the government should also ensure that those adversely affected by the measures implemented receive support. Reciprocal altruism requires society to support those who face a disproportionate burden in protecting the public good and take steps to minimize burdens as much as possible during and after a pandemic. Quarantines impose adverse consequences in the short and long term in numerous ways. For example, a loss of income may threaten individuals' financial security, and affect the stability of the economy as the private sector experience declining sales and income. Quarantines aim to protect the public good but are more likely to impose a disproportionate burden on those whose behavior is restricted. Therefore, the public health personnel who put themselves in danger to protect society should be offered public support or funding in return in the form of getting priority in receiving medication or an insurance fund for life. Citizens who comply with restrictive measures such as quarantine also deserve recognition for their sacrifice and compensation for adverse consequences associated with quarantine. Thus, altruist-motivated reciprocity mechanisms should be built into pandemic plans in way that individuals will not view society in oppositional, zero-sum terms for governments to achieve greater trust and compliance.

Reciprocity through the Lens of Rawls' theory of Justice

How, then, can individuals, torn between their own interests and the demands of others successfully balance these factors in a way that will shape individuals' self-evaluations such that they give a high priority to the public health and their civil commitments?

For that we need to address the condition of reciprocal altruism by drawing on the way reciprocity is envisioned in the Rawlsian theory of distributive justice [39] for this demand to be actualized and such actions be undertaken by public institutions, we suggest considering how Rawls' idea of reciprocity appeals

to fairness. In what follows, we discuss whether Rawls' criterion of reciprocity allows a reassessment of altruism for effective compliance of citizens with quarantine rules during pandemic through the lens of reciprocal altruism construct.

In his paramount work, *Justice as Fairness* (1999) [40], Rawls discusses the notion of reasonable pluralism – the vast diversity of ideologies and beliefs which represents the organic and inherent byproduct of democratic societies. He points out that the reasonable persons living in liberal democratic societies invariably will come to subscribe to a variety of different “comprehensive doctrines”, which are reflective of unique and varied religious, moral and philosophical worldviews. Moreover, he puts forth that pluralism of reasonable comprehensive doctrines is an inevitable feature of a modern liberal democratic society that results from “the work of free practical reason within the framework of free institutions” [41]. This pluralism is clearly reflected in the contentious public dispute about quarantines as a measure to combat the spread of infectious disease. At its core, the debate on the legitimacy of quarantines brings forth the essential question of individual freedom versus the altruistic common good. At the heart of the quarantine discourse lies the axiomatic tension between pluralistic individualism and the willingness to make sacrifices for the belief in the greater good—a tension which is central to democratic societies. In the following sections, we discuss how the concept of reciprocal altruism can serve as the key to fostering resolutions among quarantine opponents.

Reciprocity-based appeals to fairness are regulated by accepted rules or procedures that participants accept which enable members of society to realize their own good in ways they regard as fair. As Rawls points out [42]: “Fair terms of cooperation specify an idea of reciprocity, or mutuality: all who do their part as the recognized rules require are to benefit as specified by a public and agreed-upon standard.”

The idea of reciprocity does not necessarily mean that individuals benefit equally; whether equality is required depends on publicly accepted standards. A well-ordered society “is a fair system of social cooperation over time from one generation to the next” [42], in which the “role of the principles of justice ...is to specify the fair terms of social cooperation” [39]. Reciprocity is realized under the recognition of socially-shared priorities embedded in the commitment to live cooperatively with others which demands that one will be “ready to propose principles and standards as fair terms of cooperation and to abide by them willingly, given the assurance that others will likewise do so” [43]. Rawls proposes that by embracing reciprocity, individuals prompt their commitment to justify one's actions to others on the ground upon which they could not be reasonably discarded. Moreover, Rawls asserts that individuals will not comply with the principles of justice without a reasonable assurance that others will comply as well. This requirement is magnified by the individualism and import of personal freedom. In this way, Rawls' notion of reciprocity mitigates the American bias towards individualism -encouraging citizens to consider the collective good under the condition that political power should have a justification that meets our shared reason [44].

Rawls describes altruism as the morality of ‘unchosen’ commitments which one must carry out regardless of his or her personal beliefs or values [45]. Therefore, altruism in the context of the pandemic discourse perceives the compulsory quarantine as the duty of every citizen. Altruism, in fact,

subverts individualism and personal value systems altogether by labeling it as what Immanuel Kant noted is intrinsically “a necessitation (constraint) of free choice through the law” [46]. This notion challenges Rawls' contractual model of cooperation, which attempts to promote the idea that reasonable agreement underlies fair terms of cooperation. Reciprocity may appeal to altruism only if we are to understand reciprocity as beyond the capacity of justification/judgment. We must look not simply at citizens' capacities to make judgements but at the expectations relating to the self while interacting with others: what we can demand of others and what they can demand of us. Reciprocity is then understood as a response to infringements of what people perceive to be the immunities, they, or others with whom they identify, can expect based on their rights and privileges and what they understand to be their reasonable expectations regarding the behavior of other.

Since the use of quarantines raises notable ambiguous circumstances for Rawls' reciprocity reinforced by fairness, we now turn to this issue and show how altruism may thrive under reciprocity. Thus, by re-evaluating Rawls' overall framework for distributive justice in light of the concept of reciprocal altruism we aim to reveal important areas for the improvement of quarantine management during the pandemic and more expansive portrayal of justice as fairness considerations that affect the operationalization quarantine on both state and global level.

It is then claimed that both Rawls' justice as fairness share the understanding that reciprocity is an essential factor in classifying civic duties while identifying the limits existing in reciprocity – that all human beings have varied levels of physical capacities that make them seek to join civil society, often at all costs. Such constraint seems to be essential if the government is able to provide appropriate protection for the goods that citizens entrust to public institutions without diminishing citizens' self-respect and personal freedom [47]. With respect to citizens' self-respect, we explain that Rawls' insistence that “self-respect” be secured for all citizens effectively inoculates this aspect in the lexical priority of civil and political rights [48-51].

Reciprocal Altruism in times of Pandemic

The contemporary debate over the ethical justification of quarantine programs in pandemic response imposes important and complex questions about how the conception of reciprocity as fairness could evolve to incorporate claims of altruism raised by both advocates and opponents in a way that respects rights of individuals and the community. We will now consider some of these claims and show that they raise the proper grounds to strengthen Rawls' contention that reciprocity appeals to altruism in justifying governmental and societal compensation programs for restrictive practices such as quarantines. In what follows, we aim to show that reciprocal altruism can be supported, not undermined by the Rawlsian theory of distributive justice.

For that, we must delve deeper into Rawls' account of primary goods as this account is of the utmost importance when evaluating the distributive fairness of quarantines and measuring the individual burdens and benefits that they involve. Rawls' theory of justice entails principles of justice that govern the distribution of primary goods, that is, “things that every rational man is presumed to want” [43]. Primary goods consist of social goods such as “rights and liberties, powers and opportunities, income and wealth” and the social source of self-respect along with natural primary goods (NPG), such as, “health and vigor,

intelligence and imagination” [43]. Accordingly, primary goods display a more demanding conception of social justice since they are considered as an impetus for the successful execution of any life plan for rational persons: “... things which it is supposed a rational man wants whatever else he wants. Regardless of what an individual’s rational plans are in detail, it is assumed that there are various things which he would prefer more of rather than less” [41] Rawls’ primary goods theory develops a practical ground for interpersonal comparisons induced by citizens’ social circumstances open to view: “Provided due precautions are taken, we can, if need be, expand the list to include other goods, for example, leisure time, and even certain mental states such as freedom from physical pain.” [41]. Thus, this approach resists the static representation of citizens’ primary goods. Social circumstances in times of pandemic include the absence of social relationship and support networks which are found to impact citizen’s social wellbeing, leading to increased anxiety and lowered self-esteem. In particular, during the COVID-19 pandemic, older people were commonly recognized at risk for social isolation and loneliness. However, young people were also recognized at risk as they have been found to be socially isolated through unemployment and online-higher education systems. To illustrate, during the current COVID-19, in the Netherlands, part of the Proactive Primary Care Approach for the Frail Elderly (U-PROFIT) nurses evaluate patients’ health and social needs or issues, including loneliness by using a structured questionnaire. If patients identified positive for loneliness, a nurse can organize a social district team involving informal caregivers and community volunteers to assist the patient and primary care practitioners to manage social interactions. This policy allows building an individualized health and social care plan based on a patient’s social circumstances so that the social isolation scale is built on interpersonal comparisons.

It is then suggested that Rawls’ theory of justice aims to accomplish this by placing special emphasis on the importance of lexical priority of that support individuals’ sense of self-worth which has both agent and social-relative aspect. For Rawls, the priority of liberty, in conjunction with the principles of justice as fairness, provides a social context that helps wean individuals from considering socioeconomic factors as indicators of their worth [40,50,51]. The corresponding effect of such approach is that individuals may recognize that the institutional rules are what enable a more supportive reciprocal environment in which they pursue their interests and secure their self-respect and, as a result, their desire to comply to restrictive practices such as quarantine becomes regulative.

In Rawls’ later work, *Political Liberalism* (1993) [41], Rawls retorted to a communitarian perception of distributed goods derived from the “basic intuitive ideas”, which are “embedded in the political institutions” of a democratic society (i.e., distinctly political values) [49,50]. Rawls clarifies his prioritization of reason in defining distributive goods in society. Considering the effects of primary goods trigger distributive instincts where health is framed as security risk which may swamp rights in times of pandemic outbreak. Rawls’ concern with the ethics of quarantine lies in that confinement to quarantine which ignores what is essential to pluralism – when goods are not considered as a source of power. In a democracy, it is particularly important for elites to appreciate the goods distributed mainly with the connection of wealth and influence so that the actual quarantine often becomes an undistorted

market that isolates the economically unproductive (persons of an unfortunate few) to bear the financial costs of the disease. In pandemic events most often under constructions of risk, health experts and powerful elites can thus direct institutions and shape people’s conception of goods without the sort of public discussion and consent that characterizes democratic processes of decision making [51,53,54]. Thus, when government/federal compensation for those who suffer the burdens of protecting the public good is obtained, there is no need to convince people that collective goods are legitimate or to motivate them to pursue those goals by appeals to a rational argument or personal convictions.

When referring to the community of justice as the proper context and setting of distribution of NPG, inequities are only allowed if they do not violate basic rights, liberties, and material benefits that all autonomous individuals capable of rational self-determination deserve [41]. Perhaps most crucially, Rawls does not consider the citizens of the community of justice as passive arbiters of their lives. Rather, given their capacity to take responsibility for their actions, citizens are thus accountable for their moral responsibilities to one another and to society, “... That capacity is part of the moral power to form, to revise, and rationally to pursue conceptions of good; and it is public knowledge conveyed by the political conception that citizens are to be held responsible.” [43]. Such conceptualization can provide a proper ‘platform’ from which citizens can be more proactive than the state at meeting social needs as they commonly rooted within communities and increase self-esteem, confidence and social capital at times of social isolation.

When citizens are exposed to “horror stories” that classify the risks involved in the spread of infectious disease, these accounts may lead them to become the “worried well” as they fret over unlikely scenarios and risks. In times of pandemic outbreak, there is a constant tension between public health’s scientific data management and powerfully reinforcing images of pandemic whereby: ‘[d]ifferent worst case scenarios lend mutual support to each other’ and rope in the amplification of risk associated with ‘the articulation ... of more generalized fears and anxieties,’ such as those regarding greater permeability of national borders [60]. Perceptions of the preservation of national security and critical infrastructure against the ‘risks’ posed by weak public health systems and health standards in Asia [58] intensify the mobilisation of the rhetoric of fear (and of the blame of Asian governments for ‘allowing’ the virus ‘out’) [59], along with reinforcing the legitimacy and power of national governments and global agencies such as WHO, to deploy restrictive measures in combating pandemic [58,60,61].

Thus, the distribution of NPG carries the condition of fairness as an important component in the Rawlsian approach to reciprocity. Since the burdens of quarantines are borne by a few members of the community- the inequalities in NPG are the results of concentrating harm upon the worst-off. And if so, one can argue that reciprocal altruism requires society to compensate inequalities/individuals who adversely affected by the increased within -quarantines risks of infection and the direct costs of confinement (e.g., loss of liberty, loss of wage) that are the results of things people in society are responsible for. Reciprocity within this context is more than the informed community participation driven decision making about the needed public health measures to protect the community but also the acceptance of full responsibility to support those who suffer

disproportionate burdens in protecting the public good through confinement measures rendered in times of pandemic. Under these circumstances, providing incentives for cooperative action seems to be more stringent than Rawls' concept of reciprocity offers. Extending Rawls' reciprocity to incorporate altruism to govern medical quarantine programs can be done by building public trust. The justice motivation is not grounded merely in the advantage that individuals gain from their society as a whole but from the sense of justice that is rooted in reciprocity and mutuality which affirm their moral worth [40]. This entails that the government is obliged to compensate the public health personnel putting themselves in the front line of the pandemic as well as who comply with restrictive government measures such as quarantines for financial losses. These incentives are targeted to encourage individuals to act from a sense of justice as fairness rather than from calculations of self-interest. For example, the government of Ireland has relaxed application requirements for people to claim statutory sickness benefits during the COVID-19 pandemic. The changes give everyone, including those working in the gig economy, a temporary income, and incentivize them to stay in quarantine if they have symptoms of the virus. Moreover, the six-day waiting period to claim illness benefits has been removed for anyone who has COVID-19 or has been advised by health services to self-isolate. Applicants are able to receive a 50% increase in their payments, rising to €305 per week. This applies for two weeks medically required self-isolation or for the duration of a work absence once a coronavirus diagnosis has been confirmed. Indeed, employers in Ireland are being called by the government to continue paying any employee who is unable to attend work or is self-isolating the difference between the newly bolstered illness benefits and their normal wages as part of the government.

Under Rawls' hypothetical construct of the "original position" which sustains that any distribution of primary social goods can be vindicated under the detachment from one's merit and ability [41], no one is advantaged or disadvantaged in the selection of basic principles by the outcome of natural chance or the contingencies of social circumstance [41,40]. The principle of justice that is generated from the "veil of ignorance" abstraction guaranteed that where economic and social inequalities prevail they should be met with equal opportunity rooted in fairness and that these must be of the greatest advantage to the least well-off (the "difference principle"), "In order to make the principle regulating inequalities determinate, one looks at the system from the standpoint of the least advantaged representative man. Inequalities are permissible when they maximize, or at least all contribute to, the long-term expectations of the least fortunate group in society." [43]. The importance of creating these structures based on the condition of the veil of ignorance attempts to prevent us from the temptation to prefer or endorse structures or practices on a purely prudential, self-serving, or personal basis [61]. However, the first principle of justice as fairness, the principle that governs the basic liberties, enjoys lexical priority over the second principle which governs distribution of income and wealth [40]. This underlies Rawls' belief that the relationship between self-respect and socioeconomic status is a problematic one thereby, government practices in times of pandemic should not emerge to undermine equal liberty as the primary support for individual's self-respect [49].

Drawing on reciprocal altruism, the principles derived from the veil of ignorance abstraction are aimed at reducing the adverse consequences of quarantine by ensuring that the benefit from risk-taking (associated with patterns of confinement that quarantines involve) is returned. It is claimed that pandemic programs should create a herd immunity or community immunity where virtually all community members are protected from infection including the more disadvantaged members of the community. Thus, including the disabled, the aged, the immune-compromised, those too young to receive vaccines or who do not gain immunity from vaccines, and pregnant women whose fetuses could be harmed by exposure to some illnesses. The herd immunity approach to pandemic management provides indirect protection to most people when a large portion of the population becomes immune to an infectious disease. It is crucial to note that the success of this strategy is predicated on the proportion of the individuals who comply with the infection control measure.

There remains a question of how Rawls' theory of distributive justice can be more compelling for public institutions to meet the criteria of reciprocity as fairness to facilitate both trust and compliance with quarantines?

The equality of liberty principle that is secured under reciprocity as fairness should make liberty the primary status indicator that individuals consider when evaluating their worth and commitment to comply with quarantine in times of pandemic. This source of equality requires greater depth and complexity than placing the distribution of goods within the fairness frame of reference, which highlights the individual 'rights' while ignoring the importance of a social or cultural perspective in the management of pandemics for reducing the harms borne by the worst-off. A sufficient basis for an effective pandemic planning response must include essential support services and community response for those who comply with quarantine measures to reduce long term post-pandemic costs. Thus, including disseminating information that accounts for language gaps, stigmatization, and differing social norms to the public about pandemic risks, and control measures during a pandemic outbreak such as quarantine and social isolation can provide a unique opportunity for building strong alliances among diverse social justice organizations. After a pandemic outbreak, one should focus on the health benefits and general wellness rather than fear-based pandemic messaging and using local community organizations to facilitate information-sharing and reinforce social networks that can provide crucial community services and emotional support for those who comply with quarantines. Such an extension of social and community support measures for those who suffer the costs of quarantines, aims to strengthen the connections between the individual and the community in times of pandemic and enable to motivate the community members to sacrifice their freedom for securing the public good. Appropriate compensation and support services must resonate with community members and promote the value of individual and civic responsibility for a community's well-being.

This aspect of reciprocal altruism employed in a pandemic may turn citizens to recognize their role as "key responders" to the pandemic outbreak to help their own families and neighbors and be prepared to make a sacrifice for society as a whole which are intimately tied to individuals' sense of worth. While control measures such as quarantine often view citizens as passive subjects for management and power, rather than as active

citizens, through the lens of reciprocal altruism, distributive justice theory may build public trust and accountability into quarantine reducing undue stigmatisation of individuals or groups within and unsocial behaviours that would result in increased spread of disease.

The premise of Rawlsian reciprocity becomes sympathetic to Walzer's argument to take seriously what is perceived as logical to differently situated people, and the need to institutionalize reciprocal altruism in pandemic management. Extending compensation for those who bear the costs of quarantine by considering social meanings and cultural norms attached to distributed goods is essential to reciprocal altruism in order to provide a solid ground for contracting and institutionalization of civic duties and responsibilities in times of pandemic.

Conclusion

This paper has focused on how Rawls' reciprocity based-fairness may benefit from the theoretical insights of reciprocal altruism to better meet the ethical challenges of quarantine measure in times of pandemic. The COVID-19 spread has led to detrimental ethical implications globally, with emphasis on government policies to enact intrusive public health measures, such as the quarantine. This traditional method has become highly sophisticated with technological development, thus increasing its efficiency and accuracy, albeit possibly violating fundamental liberties and exposing in-risk groups to discrimination and stigmatization. In this paper, we argue that Rawls' justice as fairness framework may secure individuals' liberties and their sense of self-worth while bearing the costs of quarantine by enabling them to alter their calculations of self-interest when doing so is advantageous to the society as a whole.

Bringing distributive justice theory in conversation with the construct of reciprocal altruism, allows us to identify a criterion for the institutionalization of reciprocal altruism to reduce quarantine burdens exemplified at the outbreak of a pandemic. Within the context of pandemic management, citizens' obedience to restrictive measures to control the infectious disease can be achieved by individuals in actual communities, respected as if they were independent civil personalities capable of trusting rather than bargaining. Justice as fairness engagement with reciprocity achieves congruence between principles of justice and individuals' conceptions of good. By employing a thick description of Rawls' idea of reciprocity, reciprocal altruism becomes a normative requirement that provides protections and incentives to the community members' who bear the adverse consequences of quarantine, and to their potential of empowered expression and participation in pandemic planning decisions. Public institutions engaged in pandemic management have an opportunity to assist individuals in quarantines to regain their capacities and enter a rightful position from which compliance can be realized.

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