JULIE L. ROSE, *FREE TIME*, PRINCETON UNIVERSITY PRESS, PRINCETON, 2016.

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Liberal egalitarian theories of distributive justice focus predominantly on determining what a just society owes its citizens in terms of material resources (such as money), opportunities (such as the chance to obtain an education, to secure employment, to buy insurance, and to participate in political life), welfare, or capabilities. However, they tend to say nothing directly about the time people have available to pursue the ends they choose. Julie L. Rose's *Free Time* spotlights this omission.

Rose's specific concern is, as the title of her book indicates, *free time*, defined as "the time beyond that which it is objectively necessary for one to spend to meet one's own basic needs, or the basic needs of one's dependents, whether with necessary paid work, household labor, or personal care" (p. 58). Working within the boundaries of liberal egalitarianism that is committed to anti-paternalism, anti-perfectionism, and state neutrality (pp. 27–30), Rose argues forcefully that free time should be regarded as a separate and vital resource or opportunity, alongside money and other goods that figure prominently in theories of distributive justice. She further attempts, in a less developed way, to draw out the implications of recognizing free time as an independent concern for distributive justice in regulating working hours, as well as in assisting caregivers generally and parents specifically.

But, why have liberal egalitarian theories of distributive justice ignored free time in the first place? After all, it is during those hours in the day when we are not sleeping, doing housework, buying essentials, and earning enough "to attain a basic level of functioning in one's society" (p. 58) when almost all of what we really care about occurs. Rose offers two explanations for this neglect.

In Chapter 2, Rose provides a very good and useful summary of what political philosophers, such as John Rawls (1974 and subsequent writings), Michael Walzer (1983) and Phillipe Van Parijs (1995), have said on the topic. She characterizes these discussions as being about time as a specific good (which she labels as 'leisure'), whereas she is concerned with time as a general good (which she labels as 'free time') and thus as a resource in its own right (a claim defended in Chapter 3). The distinction between specific and general goods is that the former are "*particular* goods that one requires to pursue one's *particular* conception of the good," while the latter are "*all-purpose* means that one generally requires to pursue one's conception of the good, *whatever it may be*" (p. 27. Emphasis in the original).

In Chapter 4, the book's "normative core," however, Rose offers a different and more appealing explanation. Liberal egalitarians, namely, assume that if money,

opportunities, or other resources are distributed justly, everyone will have plenty of time left to spend as they please, whether in play, additional work, civic or religious activity, or whatever else matters to them. The *time-money substitutability claim*, Rose contends, is mistaken.

The time-money substitutability claim is false because it rests, according to Rose, on two further assumptions, both of which are false. The first assumption is *the perfect divisibility of labor demand*: namely, the assumption that "all individuals can freely choose to reduce their hours of paid work to the level they prefer" (p. 68). This assumption is empirically untrue: most employees cannot decide to work shorter hours if they like for reduced pay, jobs often specify working hours with little or no flexibility, and a variety of factors push employers to demand more rather than fewer hours from their workers, often in the form of nondiscretionary overtime (pp. 77–80).

The second mistaken assumption is *the perfect substitutability of money and basic needs satisfaction* which holds that "all individuals can unobjectionably meet their household and bodily basic needs by purchasing goods or services in the marketplace" (p. 68). However, some activities cannot be bought with money, such as sleeping or grooming, and for those whose (special) needs are extremely time-consuming to satisfy money is of no use (pp. 81–83). Moreover, under some social circumstances, Rose argues, hiring somebody to help meet one's household or bodily needs presents a threat to civic equality. Even when those (unspecified) social circumstances do not obtain, "citizens may reasonably believe that hiring the services of another to meet their household and caregiving needs may undermine the personal goods of commitment and intimacy in their relationships, degrade the value of the labor itself, or injure their own personhood" (pp. 83–84).

Chapter 4, furthermore, offers a defense of the book's central claim: all citizens are entitled, as a matter of justice, to their fair share of free time. The core argument relies on the widely endorsed *effective freedoms principle*, which states that legal freedoms are not enough for liberals: citizens need to be able to effectively use their formal liberties and opportunities. Free time is, hence, a precondition for the effective freedom to participate in politics, religion, and family life, as well as to exercise central rights such as freedom of speech, assembly, association, and occupation. Far from being trivial or illiberal, free time is necessary both for autonomy and for access to most of the fundamental liberal rights (pp. 69–74).

If we have a right to free time, as Rose argues, what institutional and policy changes would follow? The last two chapters of the book attempt to sketch out some of the implications.

In Chapter 5, Rose argues that for free time to be useful, at least a significant portion of it must be made available in a way that allows people to take real advantage of their freedom of association. Rose surveys three possibilities to accomplish this goal: universal basic income, mandated flexible working hours, and a common period of free time. Providing a universal basic income that offers abundant free time to all, however, may not be economically or politically feasible. Complete discretion over working hours, similarly, is likely to prove impractical. Rose, thus, advocates for a common period of free time, such as Sunday closing laws. In order to avoid her proposal from conflicting with economic and religious liberty, Rose argues that voluntary work on a rest day will generally not be prohibited; rather, what is important is that workers are able to refuse to work on Sundays. So, it is *access to a common period of free time* that is guaranteed. As for those who would have to work on Sundays anyway – such as the police, nurses and medical doctors, childcare providers, and transportation workers – they should do so voluntarily or on a shared rotation, Rose argues, and employers could be prohibited from inquiring about someone's willingness to work on Sundays or from providing a higher salary or benefits to those who do, to further protect a person's

right to effective freedom of association (pp. 93–111).

Chapter 6, finally, aims to show that free time must be guaranteed to caregivers generally, and specifically (and more controversially) to parents. Many people, the vast majority of whom are women, relinquish some of their free time to care for others. Focusing particularly on the time parents spend on caring for their children, Rose recognizes that some liberals believe that children "are personal projects like any other, and parents have no more claim to additional public support to pursue their particular conceptions of the good than do any other citizens" (p. 120). Without offering new arguments, however, Rose endorses the opposing claim that children are public goods; those who benefit from childrens' existence should contribute to the cost of bearing, raising, and educating them (pp. 120–123).

Not surprisingly, Rose concludes that citizens with caregiving responsibilities are entitled to either (i) *publicly funded care* – that is, publicly funded (though not necessarily publicly provided) care services that are either free at the point of use or heavily subsidized for those engaged in full-time work, or (ii) *publicly funded income subsidies* – that is, publicly funded payments made to those caring for others directly and full-time. The first option provides citizens with a break from the demands of caring, while the second option provides citizens with disposable income. Rose also contends that citizens must be provided with (iii) *workplace accommodation* – that is, regulations that provide periods of publicly funded paid leave, part-time contracts, and flexible working hours (pp. 124–126). After all, to deny people the time and resources for direct caregiving would be to deprive them of one of their legitimate interests; to commit them to full-time caregiving would be to deny them occupational choice.

Free Time is certainly an admirable defense of a neglected issue in political philosophy. Although there is much to agree with, there are some pressing concerns. Due to limited space and the density of Rose's arguments, I shall only mention one substantive and two strategic.

Perhaps the most vexing issue is that Rose focuses throughout the book on the amount of free time citizens have per week. She is mysteriously silent, however, as to why (only) such a way of measuring our free time should be relevant. For, wouldn't the amount of free time a person has across her adult lifetime be an equally (if not more) appropriate concern? Imagine Anne and Becky, both at the age of 25. They have exactly the same working hours and same caregiving responsibilities throughout the week; likewise, they spend the same amount of time on other necessary activities, such as personal care. In other words, they have an equal amount of free time per week. The difference between Anne and Becky, however, is that Anne will only live for another five years, whereas Becky will live to be 80 years old. With her shorter lifespan, Anne suffers a corresponding free time deficit; that is, Anne will have less free time *overall*. What would be a fair share of free time for a person who is expected to live 30 years only and for a person who is expected to live 80 years?

Even if we were provided with an argument to the effect that it is free time per week that matters normatively, two strategic worries arise. First, Rose's approach to liberal egalitarianism is highly ecumenical. Her characterization of liberal theories of distributive justice is intended to encompass an impressive array of the most influential contemporary contributions: from John Rawls's justice as fairness, Ronald Dworkin's equality of resources, Richard Arneson's equal opportunity to welfare, G. A. Cohen's access to advantage, to Elizabeth Anderson's version of the capabilities approach. Adopting such a wide-ranging theoretical framework serves well for Rose's main end: namely, to establish that citizens have a justice claim to their fair share of free time. Nonetheless, it downplays the important differences within the family of liberal egalitarian theories of distributive justice, especially the diverse stances on the question of responsibility for our choices (such as where we live, which jobs

we accept, which skills we develop, or whether children are rightly seen as public goods). Thus, while a liberal egalitarian might agree with the book's key claim, she might vehemently disagree with the implications Rose herself develops.

Furthermore, Rose's (legitimate) decision to explore some issues rather than others may leave the reader wanting. One can easily find examples throughout the book that point out to other interesting, and perhaps even very radical, implications for distributive justice. Consider just one example from the book. An heiress who obtains a large fortune does not only gain materially over other members of society but also gains in terms of free time. With her wealth, she is not required to work in the same way that other members of society are. Even if she works 40 or 50 hours per week she does so as part of her free time; work for her is effectively a leisure activity (albeit one for which she also gains materially) (pp. 42–43). The radical implication of the heiress having more than her fair share of free time could be that such inheritances should be taxed at very high rates to equalize access to free time. Yet, this issue remains untreated.

Perhaps these two strategic worries are not disadvantageous at all; they can be seen as an invitation for liberal egalitarians of various stripes to engage with Rose's principal idea in more detail. Rose has, after all, opened an important new area of enquiry for those thinking about distributive justice. So, while there is certainly much more to say on this topic still, I hope that Rose's book gets the readership it deserves, influences law-makers to reconsider some of the ways in which societies are structured, and helps citizens to receive their fair share of free time (whether per week or during a lifetime).