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Equality Before Equeuenomy: A Queuestory of the Equeuenomics Division, PF 1–155

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Abstract. Over the entrance of the Equeuenomics Division in the First Ring are carved three words that every citizen of QL has read and almost none has thought about: EQUALITY BEFORE EQUEUENOMY. This article is the first full queuestory of the Division, from its first office in PF 1 to the present. It draws on the Division's minute-books, the published recalibrations of the Formula Review Panel, and interviews with serving officers. I argue that the Division's history is the story of a city learning two things in turn. First, it learned to measure what people do with what they have, rather than what they were born with; the Effort Revision of PF 19 is the decisive moment. Second, and more slowly, it learned to trust its own citizens with less procedure. The witness clause of PF 34 and its repeal in the Simplification of PF 96 mark the beginning and end of that second lesson. I give a table of every version of the formula, explain the origin of the term officers call "the shrug," and close with the Division's response to the Leveling. The motto, I suggest, means both of the things it can mean, and the founders intended both.

Keywords: Equeuenomics Division; Queue Quotient; Formula Review Panel; the Effort Revision; witness clause; the Simplification; the Leveling; measurement; Jantelagen

1. Introduction: three words over a door

Most people in QL pass under the Division's lintel without looking up. The ones who do look up tend to read the motto as a slogan, the way one reads the words on a commons kettle. EQUALITY BEFORE EQUEUENOMY. It is printed at the foot of every report the Division files.[1] Officers say it to each other the way people in other trades say "mind the step." One investigator told me he had said it so often it had "worn smooth."[2]

[1] Including, I can confirm, reports that are otherwise entirely blank, such as the monthly return of the Division's lost-property cupboard. In PF 154 the cupboard reported one glove, one ski, and a slate belonging to an officer who has asked not to be named. The motto appeared beneath all three.

[2] Interview with an investigator of the Equeuenomics Division, 14 September PF 155, notes in the author's possession (hereafter Interview, investigator). The interview was scheduled

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The phrase deserves better. It can be read two ways, and the founders, I will argue, meant both. On the first reading, *before* is a matter of order. Equality comes first, and the equeuenomy second. The basics are guaranteed to everyone, without condition, and only after that does any measuring begin. This is the order of the Charter itself, where Article I ("No citizen shall be made to earn their survival") stands before Article III ("Where goods are scarce, standing shall be earned, not bought").[3] On the second reading, *before* means *in the presence of*, as one is equal before a judge. Everyone stands equal before the formula. It does not care who your parents were, how tall you are, or how impressive you find yourself.

The history of the Division is the history of a city trying to make both readings true at once. It did not always manage. But it has never stopped trying, and in the century and a half since the first queue was kept on the back of a TimBor delivery form, it has come closer than any institution I know of in the historical record. That is my thesis. I do not think it is a modest one.

2. The Van, PF 1–9

The Division began in a vehicle. In the first winter after the Founding, the people allocating the city's few scarce goods worked out of the rear half of a TimBor delivery van, its wheels long gone, propped on blocks beside the first Earthhold. The minute-books call it "the office." Everyone else called it the Van.[4]

What did a city with nothing have to allocate? Not food, shelter, care, or safety. Those were guaranteed from the first day, and the minutes are proud of it. The first things queued were the things that could not be guaranteed because there was only one of them. The first recorded queue, opened in February PF 1, was for the city's only working piano.[5] The second was for places on the supply flights to PQ1. The third, in a hand that seems to have been in a hurry, was for "boots, size 44, any."

The word that names the Division's work first appears in a minute of March PF 2. It is misspelled. The minute-taker wrote *equenomics*. Someone else, in different ink, has inserted the missing *u* above the line, with a caret.[6]

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for one hour and lasted three. Its length is not evidence of anything except the investigator's willingness to disagree with a historian about her own subject, which was considerable, and which I discuss in §8.

[3] Charter of the Queue, arts. I and III, PF 0, Founding Series, box F-0/0, Record of Record, Science Institute Archive, QL.

[4] Equeuenomics Division, Minute-Book, vol. 1, PF 1–3, entry for 11 January PF 1, Division Series, box D-1/1, Record of Record, Science Institute Archive, QL (hereafter Minute-Book, with volume and date). The Van's side still carried, in faded letters, the name of a TimBor company that had promised its customers "Next-Day Everything." The minute-takers never mention it. I have chosen to regard this as tact.

[5] Minute-Book, vol. 1, 2 February PF 1. Forty-one names. The piano had been dragged out of a TimBor school by four people and a borrowed cart. The minute notes that it was "in tune, mostly." Playing it was not scored, then or later; only access to it was queued. The distinction between the art and the instrument is the oldest rule in the Division's history, and still one of the best.

[6] Minute-Book, vol. 1, 19 March PF 2. The correcting hand appears nowhere else in the volume. I like to think it belonged to someone who walked past the Van, looked in, saw the word, and could not let it go. Every institution needs one such person. Most institutions, in my experience, have several, and they all work in the archive.

By PF 2 the Van also had its first formula. The minute-books call it simply "the sheet." It scored each citizen on five equal terms: aptitude, work, contribution record, social standing, and conscientiousness, averaged together (Table 2). It was a sensible first attempt. It was also, within two decades, recognized as a serious mistake. The aptitude term measured something people largely brought with them, and so the sheet quietly rewarded the lucky for being lucky.[7]

The Division moved out of the Van in PF 9, into the earth-sheltered building it still occupies in the First Ring. The motto was carved over the door that year. The Van was taken apart in the yards. The minutes record that the officers held a small farewell for it, "with tea."[8]

3. The Effort Revision, PF 19

The decisive year in the Division's history is not, as most people suppose, the Founding, nor the Leveling. It is PF 19, when the Formula Review Panel replaced the sheet with the formula we still use, in all its essentials, today.

The change was simple to state and radical in effect. The aptitude term was abolished. In its place the Panel put a ratio. A citizen's *realized contribution* (RC) was divided by their *capacity quotient* (CQ), an assessment of what that person could reasonably be expected to contribute in their current role. The result was the *effort quotient* (EQ). It made the central measure of a life not how much one had, but how fully one used it. A citizen of modest capacity who gave everything scored the same as a gifted citizen who gave everything. A gifted citizen who coasted scored less than either.[9]

This principle has a TimBor ancestry. The philosopher John Rawls had argued, in 1971, that a just society would regard the distribution of natural talents as "a common asset," not as a private entitlement of the people who happened to receive them.[10] The Effort Revision is that sentence turned into arithmetic. CQ became the city's way of acknowledging that talent is a matter of luck, and of refusing to reward anyone for their luck.

The Revision also had a TimBor warning attached to it, and the Panel knew it. In 1958 the sociologist Michael Young published a satire, *The Rise of the Meritocracy*, in

[7] The first explicit statement of this objection I have found is in a letter to the Division of PF 11 from a schoolteacher in the Third Ring. "Your sheet," she wrote, "gives my cleverest pupil a head start for being clever, and my hardest-working pupil nothing for working hard. I teach them both. I would like you to explain to me, in writing, which of them you think the city is for." The Division did not reply in writing. It replied eight years later, with the Effort Revision. Letter, A. Holm to the Equeuenomics Division, 4 May PF 11, Division Series, box D-11/2, Record of Record.

[8] Minute-Book, vol. 4, 30 September PF 9. Nobody has been able to tell me what was said. The tea is recorded because the minute-takers recorded everything; it is one of their great virtues as sources and their great defects as company.

[9] Formula Review Panel, *Recalibration of PF 19* (the Effort Revision), Panel Series, box P-19/1, Record of Record (hereafter Panel, with year). The Panel's summary, in its entirety, reads: "The formula no longer asks what you were given. It asks what you did with it." Panel summaries were usually much longer than this. I think the authors knew they had written the best sentence in the history of the Division and had the sense to stop.

[10] John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1971), 101.

which a future Britain sorts its citizens by intelligence plus effort and becomes, in consequence, a cold and arrogant caste society. Young did not quite invent the word *meritocracy*; the sociologist Alan Fox had used it two years earlier. But Young made it famous, as an insult.[11] The minute of the PF 19 debate shows the Panel reading Young aloud.[12] Their answer was the denominator. Young's meritocracy measured merit as intelligence plus effort. The Panel removed intelligence from the top of the fraction and put a measure of capacity on the bottom, where it could only ever reduce a gifted person's advantage.

4. Decay and decency, PF 27–33

Two further reforms followed in the next decade, and between them they gave the formula its temper.

The first was decay. Until PF 27, a citizen's contribution record accumulated for life. A good decade early on carried a person forever. A bad one marked them forever. In PF 27 the Panel introduced the rolling five-year window. Contributions older than five years fell away. It is hard to overstate what this did to the moral feeling of the system. A bad period stopped being a scar. Redemption became arithmetic.[13] The same recalibration capped EQ at 2.0, to keep a single unusual year from distorting a queue.

The second reform was not a change to the formula at all, but to what people were allowed to see of it. From PF 30 the Division stopped publishing individual scores. A citizen could see their own band, and only their band: Thriving, Contributing, At Risk, or Intervention. The continuous number lived inside the allocation itself and nowhere else.[14] This was a deliberate attack on status. It was reinforced by a cultural norm that the founders had imported, consciously, from TimBor Scandinavia: the code that the Danish-Norwegian novelist Aksel Sandemose had named, and mocked, as the Law of Jante. Its first article was, more or less, "You shall not think you are anything special."[15] In QL to ask another person their number, or to admire one's own, became what it remains: a small, unmistakable lapse of character, like talking

[11] Michael Young, *The Rise of the Meritocracy, 1870–2033: An Essay on Education and Equality* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1958). Young's narrator writes in 2033, on the eve of the revolt against the meritocrats. He was three years off the Founding and wrong about nearly everything else, which by the standards of TimBor futurology makes him one of its more reliable practitioners.

[12] Panel, PF 19, minute of 2 June, items 4–7. One member is recorded as saying that Young "describes exactly what we must not become, and we must keep his book on the table so that we are never allowed to forget what it looks like." The minute adds: "Book kept on the table." A later hand has added: "Book now holding up the table. Leg short."

[13] Panel, PF 27. The window was proposed by a member who had lost two years to grief after the death of a child and had watched her score fall, and stay fallen, long after she had recovered. Her proposal is the only one in the Panel's history to be adopted without a single amendment. The minute records no discussion. I have read this silence several times. I think it was respect.

[14] Panel, PF 30, "On Display." The same document established the principle that a citizen's raw CQ is never shown to them, "lest a ceiling be mistaken for a sentence."

[15] Aksel Sandemose, *A Fugitive Crosses His Tracks*, trans. Eugene Gay-Tifft (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1936). The novel was first published in Norwegian in 1933. Sandemose meant his Law as a portrait of small-town spite. The founders took it as a manual. I do not think he would have been pleased, but I suspect he would have been amused, which is the most one

Table 1. The burden of the witness clause, PF 34–95. *Sources:* for PF 34–39, Panel, *Recalibration of PF 96*, annex 3; thereafter Formula Review Panel, *Annual Returns*, PF 40–95.

Period	Witness-hours per attestation (mean)	Evaluation backlog (months)	Share of all evaluation work spent witnessing
PF 34–45	0.8	1	9%
PF 46–60	1.9	3	17%
PF 61–75	3.2	7	24%
PF 76–85	4.6	11	30%
PF 86–95	5.3	14	34%

loudly about one's dinner.

5. The witness clause, PF 34–96

The next sixty years of the Division's history were dominated by a rule that most citizens have never heard of. I teach it every year. I have come to think of it as the founders' last act of fear.

In PF 34, after a decade of disputes over attestation, the Panel adopted the witness clause. Under it, no outcome in any citizen's contribution record could be attested by one person alone. Every attestation had to be witnessed by two citizens drawn by lot from outside the worker's directorate, who examined the work and the record together, and neither of whom could answer to the worker's supervisor.[16] The intention was obvious and honorable. The founders had seen TimBor. They knew what happens when the person who controls your work also decides what it was worth. They built a wall between the two.

The wall was heavy. Table 1 gives the figures. In its first decade the clause added, on average, under an hour of witnessing to each attestation. By the late PF 80s the city was larger, its work more varied, and the witnesses harder to find. Each attestation consumed more than five hours of strangers' time. Panels were backlogged for more than a year. Citizens waited months for an evaluation that would change their place in a queue, and some waited so long that their window had moved on before the evaluation arrived.[17]

The clause also expressed a view of the citizen that the city had, by then, outgrown. It assumed that a supervisor, left alone with a worker's record, would cheat. Perhaps in PF 34 that was prudent. Two generations later the culture of the city had changed beneath the rule. The Jante norm had done its work. Random re-verification of records, introduced in PF 58, gave the Division a second, lighter line of defense: each year audi-

can ask of a source.

[16] I give the clause here from the Panel's consolidated digest of PF 60, which reproduces it in full. The original rulebooks of the PF 30s and 40s survive in the archive's cage, under lock; the digest is complete, legible, and does not require the clerk to find the key. Formula Review Panel, *Consolidated Digest of Rules in Force*, PF 60, Panel Series, box P-60/1, Record of Record.

[17] Panel, *Annual Returns*, PF 40–95, Panel Series, boxes P-40/2 to P-95/2, Record of Record. The returns for PF 88 include a complaint from a citizen of the Ninth Ring who had been drawn as a witness eleven times in a single year, and who asked, with some force, whether the Panel "had considered drawing someone else." The Panel replied that the lot was the lot. She was drawn twice more the following year.

tors drew a sample of attestations and checked that every one was complete, signed, and consistent with the rest of the record.[18] The witness clause had become a monument to a fear the city no longer felt.

6. The shrug and the panel, PF 58–64

Before I come to the Simplification, two smaller reforms of the same period deserve notice, because they show the Division thinking hard about the limits of its own measures.

TimBor had a name for the problem, though it had several, and the economist Charles Goodhart is usually credited with the best known. Goodhart observed that any statistical regularity tends to collapse once pressure is placed on it for purposes of control.[19] The anthropologist Marilyn Strathern later gave it the form in which it became proverbial: "When a measure becomes a target, it ceases to be a good measure."[20] The social psychologist Donald Campbell had made a similar point about social indicators: the more any quantitative measure is used for decisions, the more it will be corrupted, and the more it will corrupt the process it was meant to monitor.[21]

The Panel's answer came in two parts. In PF 58 it added the qualitative adjustment (QA), a small, bounded correction of up to a tenth of a point either way, made by rotating panels of peers who read a citizen's record as a whole, the way a committee reads letters alongside a list of achievements. Numbers alone would not decide.

Then, in PF 64, it added something stranger. It introduced a tiny random term, no more than two hundredths of a point in either direction, drawn publicly and redrawn at intervals, and added to every citizen's score. Its symbol in the formula is ε. Its name among officers, from the first year, has been *the shrug*.[22]

The shrug is not a flaw in the formula. It is its most honest feature. The Panel's reasoning, which I find still persuasive, was that a system believed to be perfectly fair is crueler to those at the bottom than one that admits to an element of chance. If the measure is perfect, then a poor result can only mean a poor person. The shrug leaves everyone a true sentence to say: *I was unlucky*.[23]

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[18] Panel, PF 58. The Panel described the audits as "no less a deterrent for being occasional." They asked a small fraction of the time the witness clause did, since they examined records rather than work.

[19] C. A. E. Goodhart, "Problems of Monetary Management: The U.K. Experience," in *Papers in Monetary Economics*, vol. 1 (Sydney: Reserve Bank of Australia, 1975).

[20] Marilyn Strathern, "'Improving Ratings': Audit in the British University System," *European Review* 5, no. 3 (1997): 308. Strathern was writing about TimBor universities, which ranked their scholars by counting their publications. I have been asked whether the Queuestory Department does anything of the kind. It does not. I mention, for no particular reason, that this is my fourth article in the *Annals*.

[21] Donald T. Campbell, "Assessing the Impact of Planned Social Change," *Evaluation and Program Planning* 2, no. 1 (1979): 67–90.

[22] The earliest written use I have found is a marginal note in the Minute-Book, vol. 31, 3 August PF 65: "Arguing with K. about a tenth-place tie. Told him it came down to the shrug. He did not find this as satisfying as I did." Officers today use the phrase as a farewell ("May the shrug be kind") and, among the older ones, as a verb. To be *shrugged* is to lose a place in a queue to someone whose score was identical to yours in every respect except luck.

[23] Panel, PF 64, "On Acknowledged Chance." The argument has a TimBor parallel in the philosopher Michael Sandel's late critique of meritocracy, which made much the same case

7. The Simplification, PF 96

And so we come to the Simplification, the reform for which the Division is best known outside it, and the one I have called, in some forty lectures to schoolchildren, *the year the Queue grew up*.[24]

The Simplification was a single recalibration of the Formula Review Panel, adopted in PF 96 after three years of hearings. It made forty-one changes to the rules in force. Most were technical. The one that matters was item nineteen, which repealed the witness clause. The Panel's minute gives its reason in two sentences and a question, and I quote it in full because I do not think it can be improved:

> The witness requirement is found to be slow, costly in the time of the witnesses, and redundant in practice. The supervisor knows the work. Who else would know?[25]

The effects were immediate. A third of all evaluation work in the system disappeared. Within two years the backlog was gone. Citizens received their evaluations on time for the first time in a generation, and the people of the city, who had been drawn as witnesses eleven or thirteen times a year, got their evenings back.[26]

The Simplification is often described, by those who know about it at all, as an efficiency measure. That is true, but it misses its meaning. The witness clause had been written by people who did not trust each other, for good reasons, in a city that was still learning what it was. Its repeal was written by people who did. The question at the end of the minute is not a careless question. It is a confident one. *Who else would know?* It is the sound of a society that has decided that the person closest to the work, inside a culture that punishes vanity and a system that audits its records at random, can be believed. A city that is afraid of itself needs two strangers in every room. A city that has grown up does not.[27]

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against societies that teach their winners they deserve everything and their losers that they deserve nothing. See Michael J. Sandel, *The Tyranny of Merit: What's Become of the Common Good?* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2020).

[24] I should be honest that I did not coin the phrase. I heard it from my own teacher, who heard it from hers. It has been in use in the Queuestory Department for at least half a century. I have never heard anyone argue with it, and I see no reason anyone should.

[25] Panel, *Recalibration of PF 96* (the Simplification), minute, item 19, Panel Series, box P-96/1, Record of Record. The minute is bound in a thin blue volume. It is, I think, the most often requested document in the Panel series, and the one whose spine has most clearly been cracked by schoolchildren. I have never had the heart to complain.

[26] Panel, *Annual Returns*, PF 97–99. In PF 98 the Panel received what its clerk recorded as "the first letter of thanks this office has ever been sent." It came from the same citizen of the Ninth Ring who had complained in PF 88. It was one line long. It read: "Thank you for drawing someone else."

[27] An investigator of the Division put it to me during our interview that the repeal "took out a check and replaced it with a hope." I record the objection because I promised to record all of his objections, and there were a great many. I do not share it. A check that consumes a third of all evaluation work, and that guards against a danger the system has outgrown, is not a check but a ritual. The city was right to stop performing it. Interview, investigator.

8. The Leveling and the Division, PF 100–155

The Leveling of 2130 tested the Division more severely than anything before or since. On a single day the entire population of the world under the Charter, some fifty million people of every age, became biologically the same age, and every one of QL's million and a half among them. Every queue in the city had been built on the assumption that people were different, that some had decades ahead of them and some had only years. Overnight that assumption was false.

The Division's first response was what officers still call the Great Reassessment. Every citizen's capacity had to be assessed again, because a body of eighty made young was not the same worker it had been the week before. The minute-books for the season after the Leveling are the thickest in the Division's history. Officers worked through the Lull for the only time on record.[28]

The second response was a recalibration. The Leveling had widened the spread of contribution in a way the old cap was too loose to contain: some citizens, given decades back, threw themselves into their work with a force that would have sent their effort quotients far past any sensible limit. In PF 101 the Panel lowered the cap from 2.0 to 1.5, and split realized contribution into *output*, documentable production, weighted lower because it is easiest to game, and *outcome*, verified benefit, weighted higher.[29] The formula has not changed in any essential since (Table 2).

The third response was to the queues themselves. With fertility restored to everyone the Leveling touched, the parenthood queue grew longer in a single season than it had in the previous fifty years. The Division did not set its terms; those belong to the Concord. But it carried its weight, and it still does. Of all the queues the Division keeps, it is the one officers speak about most carefully, and the one about which they disagree most. I have heard all sides of that disagreement. I have heard some sides of it for considerably longer than others.[30]

9. The Division today

At the time of writing, the Division occupies the same earth-sheltered building in the First Ring that it moved into in PF 9, enlarged twice. Its corridors run just under the meadow, beneath a long skylight. Its investigators sit in a dark room before a chart of the whole adult city, stripped of names, turning slowly in the air. They look for the shapes that should not be there.

Every citizen I spoke to inside the Division described their work in the same way: not as policing, but as maintenance. The formula is a machine for turning effort into fairness. Like any machine, it wears. The Division's job is to listen for the grinding.[31]

[28] Minute-Book, vol. 49, December PF 100. The entry for 24 December consists of a single line: "Still here. Bring soup." The entry for the next day reads: "Soup brought. Thank you, whoever you were." I have tried to discover who brought the soup. The Division's own records do not say. It seems right that they do not.

[29] Panel, PF 101. The same recalibration fixed the social quotient (SQ) on the same scale as EQ, normalized to a population mean of 1.0 and capped at 1.5, so that neither term could swamp the other. The arithmetic was done, the minute records, "on paper, in pencil, twice, by two people who did not like each other." The two answers agreed. The minute does not say whether the two people came to like each other. I hope so.

[30] Interview, investigator. I will say only that the investigator's views on the parenthood queue were held with great confidence and supported by a chart, and that they were wrong.

[31] This image is mine, but the officers I interviewed accepted it, with one exception. The inves-

Table 2. Versions of the Queue Quotient formula, PF 2–155. *Sources:* Minute-Book, vols. 1–4; Formula Review Panel, *Recalibrations*, PF 19, 27, 30, 34, 58, 64, 96, 101.

PF	Name	Formula or rule; principal change
2	"The sheet"	QQ = (aptitude + work + record + social + conscientiousness) ÷ 5
19	The Effort Revision	QQ = 0.7 EQ + 0.3 SQ; EQ = RC ÷ CQ. Aptitude abolished
27	Decay	RC on a rolling five-year window; EQ capped at 2.0
30	On Display	Only bands shown to citizens; raw CQ never shown
34	The witness clause	Every attestation witnessed by two citizens drawn by lot
58	The panel	+ QA ($\pm$0.1), rotating peer panels; random audits begin
64	The shrug	+ ε ($\pm$0.02), public random draw
96	The Simplification	Witness clause repealed (item 19); 41 changes in all
101	Post-Leveling	EQ cap lowered to 1.5; RC split into output and outcome; SQ capped at 1.5
155	In force	QQ = 0.7 EQ + 0.3 SQ + QA + ε; EQ = RC ÷ CQ, capped at 1.5

The TimBor scholar most often cited on institutions like this one is Max Weber, who described the bureaucratic office as a machine of rules, records and impersonal procedure, and feared it as an "iron cage."[32] Weber would, I think, recognize much in the Division: its minute-books, its rules in force, its insistence on writing everything down. He would recognize less in its temper. The cage he feared was one that took human judgment out of human affairs. The Division has spent a century and a half putting it back in, carefully and in bounded amounts: the denominator, the window, the panel, the shrug. It is a bureaucracy with a conscience. In the Simplification it showed that it also had the confidence to take down a wall it no longer needed.

There is one TimBor problem the Division has never claimed to solve, and its honesty about this is to its credit. The economist Fred Hirsch observed that some goods are valuable precisely because not everyone can have them.[33] The city can make enough coats for everyone. It cannot make enough first places in the queue for the lions. Someone is always last. The Division does not pretend otherwise. It makes the line as fair as a line can be, and then it puts three words over the door to remind everyone that the line is not the point.

tigator mentioned above objected that the Division "only ever finds what it already knows how to look for," and that the most dangerous shapes would be the ones that looked like nothing at all. I explained to him, at some length, why this was wrong. He was unpersuaded. I record his view so that future historians can see that I was fair to it. Interview, investigator.

[32] Max Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, ed. Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich, 2 vols. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 2:956–1005. The phrase "iron cage" comes from Weber's earlier work, in Talcott Parsons's famously free translation: Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. Talcott Parsons (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1930), 181. A more literal rendering is "a shell as hard as steel," which is less quotable and, I think, more accurate. Translators, like formulas, are always choosing between the two.

[33] Fred Hirsch, *Social Limits to Growth* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1976).

10. Conclusion

EQUALITY BEFORE EQUEUENOMY. Equality first, and the equeuenomy after it: the guaranteed floor before any measuring begins. And equality in the presence of the equeuenomy: everyone equal before the formula, which asks not what you were given but what you did with it. The founders carved both meanings into one lintel and left the Division to live up to them.

For a century and a half, it has. It abolished the advantage of birth in PF 19. It made redemption possible in PF 27. It admitted its own luck in PF 64. And in PF 96 it trusted its citizens enough to stop watching them through the eyes of strangers. The Division is not finished, and its officers would be the first to say so; there will be new shapes on the chart, and new arguments about the parenthood queue, at very great length. But it is the best institution of its kind that anyone has ever built. The van on blocks has become a building in the First Ring. The first queue, for a piano that was in tune, mostly, has become a system that a city of a million and a half people can trust.

The formula, as its officers like to say, is not the point. It is how the point gets kept.

Acknowledgments. I thank the reading-room clerk of the lowest level, who brought me the Division's minute-books in the order I asked for them, and then in the order I should have asked for them. I thank the officers of the Equeuenomics Division who gave me their time, and in particular an officer of the Division who gave me three hours and was wrong about nearly everything; this paper is better for every one of his objections, and so, I like to think, is he. I thank the carer at the crèche of the Third Ring cluster, who returned my daughter to me every evening of the revision in approximately the condition in which I had left her, and who never once asked how the paper was going. Two anonymous reviewers read the manuscript with great care. One asked for more tables. The other asked for fewer jokes. I have given the first reviewer two tables and the second reviewer this sentence.

Conflicts. None. The author's band is not relevant to this article and will not be disclosed, in the spirit of PF 30.

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