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COLLEGIAL RELATIONSHIPS AND THE NON-MONETARY GOODS OF WORK

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This article offers a novel account of collegial relationships and shows how it is of value to the normative assessment of work arrangements. We first argue that the literature on collegial relationships has overlooked an important form that such relationships take: next to professional relationships (Betzler and Löschke 2021) and collegial friendships (Mlonyeni 2023), there are collaborative relationships, which can produce the distinct goods of shared achievement and shared experience. We then argue that attending to collegial relationships can refine the normative assessment of work arrangements. This argument proceeds in three steps. Drawing on the example of click work, we first illustrate the possibility of *collegiality gaps*: work can be arranged in ways that severely restrict the opportunity to form collegial relationships (of each type). We argue that collegiality gaps are normatively relevant and that their possibility extends far beyond click work. Finally, we show how attending to collegiality gaps can help refine accounts of the non-monetary goods of work and improve ongoing debates about the desirability and permissibility of specific employment arrangements, like gig work. The article closes by briefly assessing the political upshots of collegiality gaps, distinguishing an individual and a societal perspective on the value of collegiality.

1. Introduction

Collegial relationships are a kind of personal relationship, like friendships or romantic relationships. They are important: many people spend a significant part of their lives in the company of and interacting with colleagues. Yet, collegial relationships have received much less attention in the philosophical literature than other forms of interpersonal relationships. This article aims to contribute to the emerging philosophical research on collegial relationships and to connect it to recent discussions of the non-monetary goods of work and the precarity of novel, non-standard forms of work. It does so in two ways: first, by developing a novel, more comprehensive account of collegial relationships; and second, by putting this account to work in assessing the occurrence and normative relevance of what we call "collegiality gaps,"

i.e., workplace arrangements resulting in reduced opportunities to enter into collegial relationships of various kinds.

The emerging philosophical literature on collegial relationships distinguishes two kinds of collegial relationships. First, Monika Betzler and Jörg Löschke offer an account of what one might call *professional collegial relationships*. These relationships allow workers to realize the goods of solidarity and recognition (Betzler and Löschke 2021). Second, there are what Philip Maxwell Thingbø Mlonyeni calls *collegial friendships.* Collegial friendships can generate the goods of personal support and appreciation (Mlonyeni 2023). We argue that an important third type of collegial relationship has remained overlooked: collegial relationships can take a *collaborative* form and as such produce the distinctive goods of shared achievement and shared experience. In making this case, we provide a comprehensive analysis of what it means to be a colleague and of the different forms that being a good colleague can take. Further, we submit that this novel account of collegial relationships is not only of theoretical interest but also of practical value. Specifically, our account reveals how workplace arrangements can reduce opportunities to enter into collegial relationships. We initially illustrate this by reference to "click work," understood as work that involves the remote completion of small tasks distributed via online platforms, and then discuss to what extent our findings generalize to other work arrangements. We argue that the resulting collegiality gaps are normatively relevant: they deprive workers of an opportunity to realize relationship-based goods, which are valuable for individual workers and for society. This is especially important as many people spend a considerable amount of their time at work.[1]

1. While discussions about the non-monetary goods of work tend to emphasize the importance of social relationships, they do not focus on relationships with colleagues specifically (see, e.g., Gheaus and Herzog's (2016) influential account). The literature on the normative relevance of specific work arrangements, such as novel forms of platform-based "gig work," has identified several concerns about the exploitation and harm of workers, but it has not attended to their effect on collegial relationships (see, e.g., Halliday (2021) and Bieber and Moggia (2021)).

The article proceeds as follows. Section 2 offers an account of who counts as colleagues and what colleagueship requires, refining definitions put forward by Betzler and Löschke (2021). Section 3 puts forward a comprehensive account of the value of collegial relationships. It argues that collaborative companionship is an important form of collegial relationships that has so far been ignored and that can yield two values: shared achievement and the experience of working together. Section 4 puts this account to work: it identifies features of workplace arrangements that result in a limited opportunity to realize each of the three types of collegial relationships and argues that the resulting "collegiality gaps", while not necessarily an injustice to workers, are critical to the normative assessment of the organization of work. Section 5 offers a brief discussion of the political upshot of collegiality gaps, distinguishing between the perspective of individual workers and that of society at large. Section 6 concludes.

2. Colleagues and Colleagueship

In contrast to friendships or romantic relationships, the nature and value of collegial relationships has attracted little attention from philosophers. A notable exception is the recent discussion by Betzler and Löschke (2021). They first discuss how we should define "colleagues" and then examine the goods that can be realized in collegial relationships. We follow the same structure here.

In Betzler and Löschke's view, being colleagues implies some sort of "sameness" (2021, 217). More formally:

> *Colleagues:* "Two people qualify as colleagues if they share: (i) the same work content or domain of activity; (ii) the same institutional affiliation or common purpose; and/or (iii) the same status or level of responsibility" (Betzler and Löschke 2021, 217).

Betzler and Löschke concede that, if read as a disjunctive, this definition is too broad: it would imply, e.g., that workers at the opposite end of company hierarchies are colleagues. But if read as a conjunctive, the definition appears too narrow: it would imply that a salesperson

and an accountant at the same firm cannot be colleagues. In light of this, Betzler and Löschke argue that while sameness in one of the three respects does not usually suffice for two people to be colleagues, sameness in two respects does (Betzler and Löschke 2021, 218).

But this conclusion is too hasty. Even sameness in all three of the noted respects does not generally establish that two workers are colleagues. Consider Aneesha, an early career researcher who has recently changed institutions and is introducing a guest at her party. "This is Martin, my former colleague and office mate," Aneesha might say. Assume that Aneesha and Martin are both early career philosophers: their work has the same content (writing papers, teaching), status (early career), and purpose (figuring out answers to philosophical questions). So, Aneesha and Martin are colleagues in all three respects, and yet it does not seem that Aneesha is making a conceptual mistake when she calls Martin a *former* colleague, implying that he is no longer a *current* colleague.

To capture this case, it is worth distinguishing between sharing the same affiliation and sharing the same purpose, thus splitting condition (ii) into two. This gives us four conditions. If all four conditions are fulfilled, then the two people in question qualify as what one might call *colleagues in the narrow sense*, whereas if two or three of these conditions are fulfilled, then the two people in question qualify as what one might call *colleagues in the broad sense.* In sum, we propose the following account of what it means to be a colleague:

> *Colleagues*:* Two people qualify as colleagues in the narrow sense if they share: (i) the same work content or domain of activity; (ii) the same institutional affiliation; (iii) a common purpose;[2] and (iv) the same status or level of responsibility. Two people qualify as colleagues in the broad sense if they share at least two of those features.[3]

So, for example, Aneesha and Martin count as colleagues in the broad sense. However, Aneesha's comment at the party makes sense. Having stopped working at the same institution, she and Martin are no longer colleagues in the narrow sense.

As Betzler and Löschke note, two people might be colleagues yet not actually work together or even know of each other. They thus draw a distinction between being colleagues and being in a collegial relationship. We believe that this is reasonable: someone who has just joined your team qualifies as your colleague even if you have not interacted yet; however, you do not (yet) stand in a collegial relationship with them. A colleagueship, or collegial relationship, only obtains when colleagues, in fact, interact. More formally:

> *Colleagueship*: Two people are in a collegial relationship if and only if they (i) are colleagues, and (ii) "[actualize] interconnected and enduring behaviour chains in a work-related context" (Betzler and Löschke 2021, 217).

There is vagueness in the notions of interconnectivity and endurance of behavior chains. But this is a feature rather than a defect of Betzler and

2. The expression "a common purpose" is ambivalent: it can denote having the same purpose or having a shared purpose. These are distinct. Consider two early career philosophers who are both working on a theory of collegiality. They might both have the same purpose, to develop a theory of collegiality, but this purpose may not be shared: they might develop their respective theories in secret. As we see it, having the same purpose is sufficient for being colleagues, but a shared purpose can contribute to the experience of working together (see section 3.2).
3. An alternative view would be to insist that colleagueship comes in degrees, with colleagues being closer the more of these features they share, but with one feature being sufficient. However, we think that it is closer to common usage of the term to reserve "colleagues" for those who share at least two of the features.

Löschke's view: collegial relationships can be more or less close. The more interconnected and enduring the behavior within it, the stronger the colleagueship.

In addition, one might wonder what counts as a "work-related" context. Clearly, we can interact with colleagues and realize values of colleagueship outside the workplace. For example, business ideas might be shared at networking dinners and support might be provided through informal online mentoring schemes, which have been set up by workers themselves. In our view, talk of "work-related" contexts obscures a related, and crucial, distinction: that between colleagueship within the work context, i.e., within formal settings and structures provided by the employer, and outside the work context, i.e., within informal settings and structures set up or used by the workers themselves. We submit that there is value in being able to realize the values of colleagueship, which we detail in the next section, both *within* and *outside* the work context. As we will see in section 4, certain forms of work diminish the opportunities to realize the values of colleagueship *within work*. We contend that this can remain a problem even when workers can partly compensate for it by developing collegial relationships *outside the work context*.

3. Three Forms of Collegial Relationships

Collegial relationships are an instance of interpersonal relationships. As such, they matter: collegial relationships, when fulfilling, are an important element of good work and, since work is a major part of life for most people, of a good life. Having nice and friendly colleagues makes long hours of work bearable; their support and advice makes work easier; and interacting with them is one way in which we can find connection and be part of a community.[4] This section argues that to capture the full value of collegial relationships, we need to acknowledge three forms of collegial relationships: professional relationships (Betzler and Löschke 2021), collegial friendships (Mlonyeni 2023), and collaborative relationships (so far neglected).

3.1 Existing Accounts: Professional Collegial Relationships and Collegial Friendships

According to Betzler and Löschke's (2021) *relationship goods account*, the value of collegial relationships lies in the specific goods they can realize, namely solidarity and recognition (Betzler and Löschke 2021, 219). *Solidarity* is a form of assistance, which colleagues can provide. For example, colleagues can show solidarity by helping with work tasks and giving advice about how to solve problems.[5] According to Betzler and Löschke (2021, 220), solidarity is a good because it expresses respect for one's colleagues and can alleviate competitiveness between colleagues. *Recognition*, meanwhile, consists in appreciating a colleague's achievements and in understanding work-related matters. Such appreciation

4. This view is reflected in theoretical and empirical accounts of work. Gheaus and Herzog (2016) argue that we desire to experience community with others at work, noting that being part of a work community satisfies our psychological need for belonging (2016, 76–77). In her account of meaningful work, Veltman (2016) identifies "integrating elements of a worker's life" (2016, 117), which includes the social context of the worker (2016, 132), as a key dimension of meaningful work. Relatedly, Chalofsky and Cavallero (2019) note that interpersonal relationships at work show "how we fit into, or belong to, the social fabric of work and life" (2019, 105), which can give work meaning. Summarizing the empirical literature on meaningful work, Bailey et al. (2019) note that "positive workplace relationships have been found to be important for meaningful work" (2019, 96). More specifically, Lips-Wiersma and Morris (2009) identify the "unity" that workers experience with others as a theme of meaningful work, which encompasses shared values, the feeling of belonging, and that of working together (2009, 501).
5. Betzler and Löschke further claim that good colleagues show more solidarity with closer colleagues; for example, they do not provide more advice to colleagues from rival companies than to their own team members (2021, 220).

and understanding are especially valuable, the authors claim, because colleagues know from first-hand experience how hard it is to achieve certain goals, how much a specific professional disappointment hurts, and so on. They conclude: "[c]olleagues are, therefore, not only better able to recognise each other's skills and abilities; they can also provide warrant to each other's work-related experiences" (Betzler and Löschke 2021, 223).[6]

In offering this assessment, Betzler and Löschke focus on what we may call *professional collegial relationships.* According to them, collegial recognition differs from friendship recognition in that collegial recognition is based on a purely professional appreciation of the other person. If colleagues are also friends, their "recognition might become less valuable" as their judgment might be biased by personal affection (Betzler and Löschke 2021, 223). Imagine Aneesha and Martin, who are friends and colleagues, discussing Martin's work. As Martin's friend, Aneesha might be willing to give his ideas more credit and interpret them more charitably than if he were "just a colleague." Such cases might have led Betzler and Löschke to conclude that the best possible colleague is not also our friend (2021, 223).[7]

Mlonyeni (2023) goes beyond this account and distinguishes two forms of collegial relationships. Mlonyeni motivates this by raising an objection to Betzler and Löschke's account, which he deems "quasi-Kantian" in virtue of maintaining that colleagues *qua* colleagues can provide certain goods for each other, and have reason to do so, "because they respect and acknowledge each other as equals" (2023, 114). According to Mlonyeni, this account remains unsatisfactory because it fails to acknowledge that one can also be a good colleague by being a friend. Mlonyeni thus introduces the notion of *collegial friendships* as a second form of collegial relationships. Collegial friendships are friendships with limited scope: they are confined to, and defined by, the work context. For collegial friends, being "colleagues is not tangential to their friendship, it is a part of it. It determines what it means for them to appreciate one another for who they are" (Mlonyeni 2023, 118). Collegial friendships, claims Mlonyeni, provide the same goods as friendships, such as *emotional support* and *appreciation* of one another's personality (see 2023, 114). As we understand Mlonyeni, emotional support is unlike solidarity in that it explicitly takes into account the other's personal characteristics and seeks to help them in light of what is best for them as a person; and it is unlike recognition in that it explicitly appreciates the other person as a person, not merely in their abilities as a colleague.[8]

In our view, Mlonyeni is right to point out that it is difficult to draw a sharp line between colleagueship and friendship, or between caring for each other in work-related matters only and caring for the entire person, and that it is strange to claim that a collegial friendship could not exist or be valuable. Plausibly, a good colleague will take note if someone in the office has a difficult time at home and perhaps offer support in work-related issues. And arguably, being a colleague enables them to do so in a way that is informed by and respects professional norms, existing hierarchies, and the work-related ambitions of their colleague. This consideration supports the idea that there is something distinctive about collegial friendships and that it makes sense to treat them as a second form of collegial relationship.

3.2 Collaborative Collegial Relationships

While Mlonyeni's critical discussion of Betzler and Löschke yields an expanded account of collegiality, we believe that it is still missing an

6. The understanding a colleague can provide is not necessarily superior to that of non-colleagues. Perhaps most obviously, retired colleagues or those who have moved up the hierarchy or into a different area might have a comprehensive understanding of the work context. However, we contend that there remains special value in the understanding of current colleagues, who share experiences in the immediate situation.
7. They do, however, admit that there "can be reasons for not being the best possible colleague" (2021, 223).
8. To illustrate, Martin might appreciate his collegial friend Aneesha's ability to deal with student requests in an efficient manner. Martin appreciates Aneesha as a person, but the appreciation remains in the work context: he does not appreciate Aneesha's great taste in films or her knitting skills.

important ingredient. There is a third form of collegial relationships: *collaborative relationships* that can realize the goods of *shared achievement* and *shared experience*.

Working together with colleagues is, paradigmatically, a collaborative, goal-oriented activity. As elaborated above, we do not require individuals to work together to count as colleagues. That said, colleagues often work together to reach short- and long-term goals, for example in performing a surgical procedure, producing a movie, or instructing a class of kids at nursery.[9] Reaching these goals amounts to an achievement: the successful surgery, the finished movie, the well-supervised children.

We understand working together as a special case of "acting together" in Margaret Gilbert's (2013) sense. According to Gilbert:

> [T]wo or more people are acting together if they are jointly committed to espousing as a body a certain goal, and each one is acting in a way appropriate to the achievement of that goal, where each one is doing this in light of the fact that he or she is subject to a joint commitment to espouse the goal in question as a body. (Gilbert 2013, 34)

In order for people to work together as colleagues, we submit, three conditions must then be fulfilled: (i) the agents in question are colleagues; (ii) they are jointly committed to achieving a goal that constitutes an output or objective of their work; (iii) the agents engage in work activities that are suitable for achieving this goal, and they do so in order to satisfy their joint work commitment.

This account does not conflict with division of labor practices: shared goals can be broken down into sub-goals, which are fulfilled by individual team members. For example, a team tasked with writing a report might allocate the writing of one section to each team member. Individual team members might then focus on reaching their sub-goal, i.e., to complete their section. But this should not distract from the fact that their individual goals only make sense within the context of the shared goal, in this case, the final report (see Gilbert 2013, 32).[10]

Collaborative collegial relationships, we submit, enable workers to realize two distinct, but related, goods. First, there is value in reaching a goal in collaboration with others. We call this good *shared achievement*. Second, there is value in the process of collaboration. We call this good the *shared experience* of working together.

Our understanding of shared achievement builds on Gwen Bradford's (2015) account of achievement. According to Bradford, "achievements are comprised by a process and product, where the process is difficult, and competently causes the product" (2015, 25). For example, writing a philosophy paper is an achievement, if writing it is difficult, if the philosopher's writing causes the paper to exist, and if the philosopher competently writes it.[11] This example generalizes. Many work processes result in achievements: teaching a child to write, placing a patient's broken leg in a cast, and fixing a faulty aircraft engine are all achievements in Bradford's sense. Work-related achievements are often *shared* in the sense that at least two parties engage in a process, and

9. Gheaus and Herzog make a similar point when they note that "working together is a specific experience, as it involves being part of a project of collective agency. Community at work can come with the special bonus of joint accomplishments resulting from joint sustained effort" (2016, 76).

10. Our argument applies primarily to what we call *close collaboration*, where colleagues work together toward specific, small, shared goals, such as writing a paper or co-teaching a class. In what we call *wide collaboration*, colleagues work together toward less specific, broader shared goals, such as developing new approaches to a specific philosophical debate or providing an education to students at a certain institution. While there is arguably some leeway, there are limits to how contained the goal and how transparent the work process needs to be for agents to count as working together. In our view, colleagues need at least to be aware *that* their work is contributing to some specific output, *which* output it contributes to, and *that their colleague* contributes to the same output. Lack of information can limit the extent to which workers can coordinate, and thereby limit collaborative collegial relationships.

11. What would count as non-competent writing? Imagine a philosopher who uses dice and a dictionary to determine each word in sequence. If, against all the odds, the resulting paper were coherent and insightful, it would not have been written competently. According to Bradford, writing this paper would not qualify as an achievement.

they each make a causal contribution and their contributions are each necessary and jointly sufficient to cause the product.[12] For example, a group of teachers might jointly instruct a year group to write, or a team of cleaners might jointly clean the hotel at the start of the season. In these cases, workers collaborate in bringing about an achievement.

Shared achievement is valuable in at least three regards.[13] First and most immediately, there is value in its product, in the same way that the product would have value had it been achieved by a single individual. Building a house, repairing a pair of shoes, and translating a book are examples of valuable achievements, and contributing to such achievements is itself valuable.[14]

Second, achievements we reach as a team often consist in more significant outcomes. In this way, shared achievements can have a greater value than what each of us could have accomplished on our own. Consider NASA's moon landings: many workers, like the engineers developing the rockets and spacecraft, the workers furnishing and assembling the components, the astronauts, and the control room personnel, played an important part in making the moon landings possible. Yet none of them would have been able to achieve the first flight to the moon in isolation.

Third, collaborating may itself be difficult, such that successfully mastering the challenge of working together as a team can constitute an achievement in its own right. Working in a team presents difficulties that do not arise when working alone: tasks need to be coordinated, interests aligned, and team morale supported. Consider a group developing a software prototype. There are many steps, from idea to development, testing and marketing. This requires people with different sets of expertise to work together. Targets and deadlines must be agreed on, contributions coordinated, and communication maintained. In addition to making their contribution to the final output (e.g., by writing code or producing designs), team members also contribute to the separate objective of working together as a team (e.g., by reviewing others' work, keeping colleagues up to date, and discussing problems as they arise). Successful collaboration constitutes a shared achievement in itself.

In addition to shared achievement, a second aspect that makes collaborative collegial relationships valuable is the shared experience in the process of work. As Lips-Wiersma and Morris note, "[w]orking together is intrinsically meaningful because the act of doing something together creates a bond and gives an experience of common purpose" (2009, 501).[15] The experience of working together, we contend, is valuable in at least two respects.[16]

First, there is value in the experience of working toward a shared goal. Collaborating on a project involves the joint attempt of making a goal happen, which frequently means collectively rooting for success or commiserating failure, thus creating a sense of camaraderie. Each worker within a group might have their own individual goal or pur-

12. Causality may be interpreted here in the sense of NESS causality (see Braham and van Hees 2012, 612–15), whereby to make a causal contribution, one need not make a difference, but one's action merely needs to be a necessary element of some sufficient set of actions.
13. One might worry that, on our account, making the achievement of tasks unnecessarily difficult for ourselves makes their completion more valuable. Our response is twofold. First, preparing the ground so that certain tasks are no longer difficult can itself be an achievement (consider the pianist who has practiced playing Rachmaninoff for years). Second, that said, there might at times be value in completing a task that has been made deliberately difficult (consider the pianist who decides to play one-handed or blindfolded).
14. On our understanding of shared achievement, it is not required that each worker contributes equally; it is sufficient for everyone to make some contribution to count as contributors.
15. The good of the experience of working together is related to what Schnell, Höge, and Weber (2019) call "belonging", i.e., "forming and maintaining interpersonal relationships" (2019, 165), which contributes to the perceived meaningfulness of work (2019, 168).
16. We assume that the worker's experience is justified, that is, they have achieved something worthwhile through working together. An interesting question, which we do not address here, is whether a shared sense of achievement can provide value even where it is not objectively justified. For example, if a gang of criminals successfully pulls off a complex heist, is there value to their shared sense of achievement (see Bradford 2022, fn. 5)?

pose, e.g., finishing their individual project. But an additional good lies in sharing a purpose with others: the experience of striving together, a team spirit that persists through setbacks and failed attempts, and the knowledge that others are working toward the same end give additional meaning to one's work.[17] The shared purpose provides the context for one's own contribution and gives it meaning by situating it within a larger project or goal.[18]

Second, the experience of working together can, in some cases, lead to the formation and strengthening of collegial relationships more broadly. Collaboration involves a form of regular communication and interaction that can foster professional relationships, or even collegial friendships. When two software developers work on a joint project, or two philosophers undertake to write a paper, they will likely interact more frequently, and in greater depth, than they would if they each had their own projects. Moreover, working together in a team can increase not just the opportunity but also the motivation to show solidarity, recognition, and give support and appreciation: the work process can run more smoothly when colleagues give advice and support; the end product is often better when people are more motivated; and the process is more fun when people endeavor to make working together an enjoyable experience.[19]

In sum, we believe that collegial relationships come in three distinct forms: professional colleagueship; collegial friendships; and collaborative relationships. These are not mutually exclusive (though there might be some tension between being a professional colleague and a collegial friend). As such, colleagueship can provide a range of non-monetary goods of work: solidarity and recognition; personal support and appreciation; and shared achievements and experience. The next section will illustrate the practical relevance of this claim by showing how the structure and organization of work influences the extent to which workers have opportunity to form and maintain collegial relationships.

17. In addition, collaboration might be particularly empowering, as others' trust and reliance might increase one's ability to conform to these expectations. For this line of argument, see McGeer and Pettit (2017).
18. Consider a group organizing an amateur theater show: some people act, others design posters or sell tickets. The experience of working together within the context of the shared project gives the individual tasks additional value.
19. While we focus here on the goods of working together, there can certainly be bads as well. Working together can create negative dynamics, with workers being vindictive, unsupportive, or lazy.

4. Collegiality Gaps and the Organization of Work

Having set out a novel account of collegial relationships, we now explore its practical relevance. We argue that our account is of practical value in two respects. Most immediately, it allows us to identify workplace arrangements that create "collegiality gaps": conditions that limit the opportunity to develop valuable collegial relationships. This allows us to compare different workplace arrangements and to identify those that pose a threat to collegial relationships. In addition, and relatedly, the account contributes an important perspective to the normative assessment of the organization of work. Existing frameworks of the non-monetary goods of work, as well as more specific discussions of the downsides of particular arrangements like platform-based gig work, mostly ignore collegial relationships. But as our account indicates, collegial relationships can generate important non-monetary goods of work, and the opportunity to realize these goods is relevant to the normative assessment of specific work arrangements.

In making this case, the section proceeds in three steps. We begin by introducing a stylized case of a worker who performs fragmented tasks remotely via the internet. We argue that this "click worker" is subject to a threefold collegiality gap and identify features of the work arrangement that limit this worker's opportunity to develop valuable collegial relationships. Next, we illustrate the broader significance of this argument by showing that other work arrangements share similar features and thus are also at risk of collegiality gaps. Finally, we show how our account complements existing approaches to the normative evaluation of work arrangements. At a general level, it complements

Anca Gheaus and Lisa Herzog's account of non-monetary goods of work. At a more specific level, it adds an additional dimension, and nuance, to the debate about the relative burdens and benefits of gig work.

4.1 Click Work and the Threefold Collegiality Gap

This section explores the possibility of collegiality gaps. We seek to arrive at a general account of workplace arrangements that limit workers' opportunities to form and maintain collegial relationships, but to render our discussion concrete, we initially focus on a highly specific case.

> *Click Worker*: Mariam works for a digital platform. She does so remotely from home, competing with other workers all over the world for the allocation of tasks by the automated system. These tasks include labeling images, rating text passages, or filling in research questionnaires. Mariam is not told which outputs her work contributes to, how her tasks contribute to the outputs, or who else is working on related tasks.

The case of Mariam is stylized and underdetermined, but we believe it captures the working conditions of what we may call "click workers": people who engage in work that involves the remote completion of self-contained tasks that are distributed and submitted via online platforms.[20] Click work, so understood, qualifies as a particular instance of gig work, which may be defined as work where contracts are limited to the completion of specific tasks and which is mediated through (though not necessarily performed on) digital platforms.

Building on the account of what it means to be a colleague set out in section 2, Mariam does not lack colleagues. Many other click workers will count as Mariam's colleagues in the narrow sense, as they perform similar tasks (condition (i)), work for the same platform (condition (ii)), have a common purpose in the sense that they also label images or fill in surveys, perhaps even contributing to related projects (condition (iii)), and have the same status or level of responsibility (condition (iv)).

Even so, we believe that Mariam's workplace leaves her with limited opportunity to realize the goods of the three types of collegial relationships identified above, and that this is due to structural features of the arrangement of the work. This does not imply that she cannot, under any circumstances, realize the goods of collegial relationships. Rather, our assessment is relative: compared to most workplace settings, the specific arrangement of click work gives Mariam less opportunity to realize these goods. This matters, because Mariam spends a significant part of her life at work, where, as we argue below, she has only limited access to the goods that collegial relationships can provide.

Consider, first, professional collegial relationships and the goods of solidarity and recognition. We believe that there are two structural features of click work that make it difficult to realize these goods. First, due to the *isolated nature of the work*, and the lack of regular interaction with colleagues in the context of her work, Mariam simply has less opportunity to engage in professional collegial relationships. She might be able to go about her work without ever talking to others: she can simply sign up, log into her account on the platform, and finish the tasks assigned to her. It might not even be possible for her to know who else works for the same platform. This stands in marked contrast to most regular workplaces, where people share physical spaces in which they regularly interact (think of a factory floor, office cubicles, or the changing room of a hospital) and where employers have incentives to facilitate such exchange for team-building purposes.[21] It also stands in contrast to the typical self-employed, such as independent craftspeople or shop owners: they often have employees, but even if they work

20. Amazon Mechanical Turk is perhaps the most prominent platform based on this model for allocating work.

21. Even in professions where work itself is fairly isolated, like that of bus drivers, workers typically have access to some shared space, like a break room in the bus depot.

on their own, they typically interact with people who pursue similar trades in their area, for example in the context of professional associations.

In addition, even when Mariam does enter into professional collegial relationships, the *ubiquitous competition* she experiences can render it more difficult for her to realize the goods of solidarity and recognition. In a sense, click workers like Mariam who perform similar work are often, and regardless of their physical location, continuously competing for work. In this regard, they differ from most ordinary employees. For example, construction workers may become rivals during economic downturns or when their firm downsizes. But in an everyday context, they primarily work as a team. We agree with Gheaus and Herzog that excessive competition can undermine community (2016, 78), a sentiment echoed by Waheed Hussain (2020), who argues that it becomes difficult to genuinely share in the success of others if social structures pit individuals against one another. By placing workers in adversarial positions, gig work makes it more difficult to realize the goods of solidarity and recognition. Whether or not click workers *in fact* perceive each other to be competitors, they *have reason to* do so (tasks in the gig economy in general are often effectively auctioned off, with the pay offer increasing until someone accepts the job), and thus reason to see each other in ways that render it difficult to display solidarity and recognition.

Next, consider collegial friendship. In our view, the *isolated nature* of Mariam's work can be an obstacle here because building collegial friendships takes time and requires continued interactions. We submit that informal, spontaneous, face-to-face interactions are often more conducive to the formation of friendships than online interactions. Consider a new colleague who appears in the office one morning to join our team. We can immediately enter into a professional relationship with them: we can show solidarity, by introducing them, and show recognition, by expressing appreciation for the skills they bring to the team. Yet, assuming that we do not already know the person, we can hardly enter into a collegial friendship right away. Becoming friends requires a form of intimacy that cannot be created instantaneously. We will not be able to provide personal support to our new co-worker in the way we do for our friends: we do not know them well enough and lack a history of shared experiences. Similarly, expressing appreciation of their personal character presupposes a closeness that we still lack. However, Mariam has few opportunities to engage with colleagues, and where such opportunities exist, they are likely to be brief interactions via text messages online. We believe that for many people, being limited to online interactions makes it more difficult to establish the deeper personal relationships required for collegial friendships, in particular where interactions are infrequent, based on messages rather than video chat, and where the format and structure of the interactions do not allow for informal or deeper conversation.[22]

In addition, click work of the type outlined here typically features a *high fluctuation of workers* (see Mims 2019). This adds to the difficulty of turning collegial relationships into collegial friendships in two ways. First, if one's colleague moves on to another job after only a short time, then there might simply not be sufficient time to build a more intimate relationship. Second, anticipating this, one has less incentive to invest in relationships in the first place.

Finally, we submit that the *fragmentation and isolation* of click work result in Mariam having less opportunity to enter into collaborative collegial relationships and thus to realize the goods of shared achievement and shared experience. Fragmentation and isolation are related but conceptually distinct: while task fragmentation is often also a precondition for isolated conditions of work, the factory floors of the industrial era that spearheaded the fragmentation of work could be rather sociable places. Click work is both fragmented and isolated: it is divided into microtasks, which can be done from anywhere. It is also opaque: the purpose of the work and how it fits into a larger project are typically not evident to the workers themselves. We believe

22. See Mlonyeni (2023) for the argument that remote work inhibits collegial friendships.

that, in combination with opacity, fragmentation primarily results in diminished access to shared achievement, whereas isolation results in reduced opportunities to realize the good of shared experience.

Click workers like Mariam often contribute to larger projects, such as research projects, but the fragmented nature of the tasks, and the opacity that fragmentation facilitates, means that they will typically not be in the epistemic position to understand how their work does so and have little opportunity to collaborate in ways that amount to a shared achievement. Kate Vredenburgh (2022, 87) discusses the example of an image labeler, who is sent a number of images and is asked to label the images according to instructions, with other workers receiving different images, feeding into the same project of training an image recognition algorithm. As Vredenburgh argues, the fragmentation of these tasks makes it difficult, if not impossible, for workers to understand the circumstances of their work (2022, 87). The image labeler does not see his or her work contributing to a visible output in the way that a worker in a car factory, say, might see the newly produced cars at the end of the production line. In this way, fragmentation inhibits the ability of workers to form joint commitments that go beyond their own contribution, because it does not make clear what one would be committing to. But joint commitments, on our account, are necessary for what we call "working together." As we have argued above, if workers do not work together in this sense, they cannot realize the good of shared achievement.[23]

At the same time, the isolation of, and discreteness of the tasks performed by, click workers means that there is less opportunity to have a shared experience of working together. This holds true of activities that are not part of a larger project as well as of activities that are part of a larger project, but with tasks performed discretely, independently, and absent meaningful interaction (whether in person or virtually). This point may seem obvious, but it is significant. If click workers pursue tasks all by themselves, then they miss out on two important benefits of collaboration: the immediate sense of "being in it together," which the pursuit of a joint task can create in moments of crisis and moments of triumph alike; and the future-oriented benefits of shared experiences fostering the development of richer interpersonal relationships.

A click worker like Mariam thus suffers from a threefold *collegiality gap*: the work arrangement offers less opportunity to realize collegial relationships of each of the three forms we have identified. In our view, there is reason to think that the third collegiality gap is most severe because it is harder to compensate for. Mariam might form professional collegial relationships and collegial friendships at the margins, or outside, of her work (for example, by bonding with colleagues privately). By contrast, collaborative collegial relationships cannot similarly be realized at the margins of work because they are tied to the shared activity itself.

4.2 Collegiality Gaps and the Labor Market

If the account of collegial relationships put forward in section 3 is broadly correct, then it implies that collegiality gaps are relevant: because the goods of collegial relationships are valuable and because most people spend a large share of their time in work, it matters whether one's work arrangement facilitates the formation of such relationships. And while our analysis has proceeded by reference to the specific case of click work, it has identified a number of underlying features that contribute to the lack of opportunity to realize valuable collegial relationships: a persistently competitive set-up; a high degree of instability and fluctuation; and the isolation and fragmentation of work. These features provide guidance in the search for collegiality gaps elsewhere. Consider two examples: remote work and contract staffing.

In the case of remote work, workers do not share a physical office,

23. An additional concern is raised by Danaher and Nyholm (2021), who argue that automation gives rise to situations where workers deserve less credit for the output of their work. For example, warehouse workers who follow fine-grained machine orders, but do not engage in autonomous planning, attain less achievement (2021, 232).

though they might interact continuously in the digital sphere. The extent to which remote work suffers from collegiality gaps will depend on the technological tools available for interacting with colleagues. In our view, the simple fact that one is not physically in the same place does not generally prevent one from forming professional or collaborative collegial relationships. However, the physical isolation can make it more difficult to form close personal relationships and thus to form collegial friendships.

Contract staffing is an arrangement whereby firms hire specific workers for flexible, and often short, periods of time from temporary staffing agencies. Contract staffing shares the feature of fluctuation and, in some ways, that of competitiveness. We believe that contract staffing therefore runs the risk of giving rise to a two-fold collegiality gap. The competitive set-up, whereby regular workers have reason to see their temporary colleagues as competitors, makes it difficult to realize professional collegial relationships; meanwhile, the temporary nature of the work can make it more difficult to build collegial friendships.

4.3 Collegiality and the Normative Assessment of the Arrangement of Work

Our account of collegial relationships is of practical value not only because it allows us to identify collegiality gaps. It also supports the normative assessment of workplace arrangements. We make this case in two ways. At a general level, we show how our account refines existing lists of non-monetary goods of work. At a more specific level, we show how it can improve the discussion about the permissibility of platform-based gig work.

The goods of collegial relationships we have identified are properly understood as non-material goods of work: they are goods we can derive from work (and some might not be easily available outside of work). We believe that these goods complement existing lists of the non-monetary goods of work, such as the prominent account put forward by Gheaus and Herzog (2016), who list excellence, social contribution, community, and social recognition. This list arguably covers some of the goods we have identified. For example, Gheaus and Herzog define "community" as "the experience of doing things together with people with whom they [i.e., workers] stand in relatively free and equal relationships" (2016, 76), which can be interpreted as capturing at least the central case of our concern with shared experience; and professional colleagues are an important group of people who can provide social recognition. However, our account of collegial relationships introduces considerations arguably not covered by Gheaus and Herzog, such as those about emotional support and shared achievement. Moreover, our account of collegial relationships adds a higher resolution and additional explanatory power to the goods identified by Gheaus and Herzog. Our account allows us to emphasize specific, colleagueship-based aspects of excellence, social contribution, community, and recognition in a way that provides an explanation for why these are important.

At the same time, our account helps to refine the normative assessment of specific work arrangements. One recent debate has been about platform-based gig work, where work contracts are limited to the completion of specific tasks and contracts are mediated through digital platforms. Paradigmatic examples of such work are driving for ridesharing or food delivery firms. A number of concerns about such work have been put forward, such as the worry that it simultaneously denies workers the securities characteristic of employment and the freedoms characteristic of self-employment (Halliday 2021), that it shifts the burden of risk from businesses onto workers and thereby threatens to undermine workers' effective agency (Bieber and Moggia 2021) and that it exacerbates imbalances of power (Bieber 2024). The prism of collegial relationships provides an additional and valuable perspective. As our discussion of click work (a specific type of such gig work) indicates, gig work can pose a distinct threat to workers' ability to realize valuable non-monetary goods. Given the value of these goods, this is an important potential downside that has so far been neglected. The prism of collegiality also allows for additional nuance. Not all types of platform-based gig work will be like click work in this regard. For ex-

ample, those working for food delivery platforms might frequently run into colleagues at restaurants and might thus have more opportunity to build professional collegial relationships and collegial friendships through personal interactions. Attending to the effects of these work arrangements on the opportunity to engage in valuable collegial relationships can thus bring out the full burden of some forms of gig work, while also allowing us to draw a distinction between arrangements of gig work that score differently in this respect.

5. The Political Upshot of Collegiality Gaps

This final section offers a brief discussion of the political upshot of collegiality gaps. Its aim is not to lay out a conclusive policy response, but to highlight three considerations that are relevant to designing a policy response and to briefly indicate what forms a policy response could take.

First, the mere fact that some workers are exposed to a collegiality gap does not imply that they suffer an injustice. There are advantages and disadvantages to all types of work, and valuable collegial relationships are just one non-monetary good of work among many (albeit, arguably, an important one). Moreover, the extent to which individuals value collegial relationships may differ; in fact, those of a more introverted character may be happy to mostly forego such relationships altogether. We cannot, then, infer from the fact that someone's job exposes them to a collegiality gap that they suffer an injustice. Instead, if a person makes a voluntary and well-informed choice to engage in some type of work that suffers from a collegiality gap, then this indicates that they have deemed the upsides of this work, like income, flexibility, or meaningfulness, to be more significant.[24] Even so, identifying collegiality gaps is important for assessing labor justice. It highlights a feature of work that will, for many workers, come with a distinct disadvantage that easily escapes notice. This disadvantage can be normatively significant even if individuals choose it voluntarily, namely, where they do so for a lack of reasonable alternatives. In thinking about the demands of labor justice in the context of new forms of work such as click work, as well as remote work and highly fragmented work more generally, an awareness of collegiality gaps is critical.

Second, collegiality gaps are of concern not only from the perspective of individual workers, but also at a social level. This is because a lack of collegial relationships tends to have a detrimental effect on society as a whole. The workplace is an important site for the development of democratic citizenship (Breen 2015), and empirical studies find that weaker social relations in general correlate with lower levels of trust and civic engagement (Putnam 2000). In this sense, regardless of the preferences of individuals, collegiality gaps impose a negative externality on society. Whether the social effect of collegiality gaps is severe enough to warrant state intervention will depend on a range of factors: how widespread the work that features collegiality gaps is; the extent to which other social activities succeed in fostering democratic citizenship and creating trust and civic engagement; and the relative weight one attaches to these virtues. While the first two issues are empirical in nature, the last one is normative. We need not pronounce a final verdict though: for our purposes, it suffices to have shown that in assessing collegiality gaps, we need to consider their social externalities, too. It is individuals who immediately suffer from collegiality gaps, but these gaps may affect their behavior in ways that are of relevance to society at large.

Third, these social externalities of the collegiality gap also indicate that recent arguments that artificial agents could make up for a loss in human collegial relationships are overly optimistic. Nyholm and Smids argue that robots can "live up to—and will soon be better at living up to—many of the criteria it is plausible to associate with the ideal of being a good colleague" (2020, 2084). This suggests a solution to the

24. This is not strictly implied, because it presupposes that they act rationally. But even if a person did not act rationally, provided they had an adequate alternative available, the outcome appears regrettable rather than unjust, as it resulted from free choice. (That said, if such decisions are not easily reversed, they can arguably become a concern of justice, namely if the state has a duty to protect individuals from the harm incurred.)

collegiality gap: if new types of work arrangements fail to realize the goods of human collegial relationships, we can compensate for the loss by introducing robots, or artificial systems, who are good colleagues. On the basis of our argument here, it appears questionable whether we could have collegial relationships with non-human "colleagues" in a meaningful sense. But even if, for the sake of argument, we grant Nyholm and Smids' claim that we can, it is evident that such *artificial* collegial relationships could not compensate for the social externalities of the *human* collegiality gap. It is, after all, our fellow citizens with whom we need to arrange our civic life, and if a weakening of social relations with them reduces trust and civic engagement, then this loss would remain relevant even if we were to find personal solace in collegial relationships with robots. This indicates that, once we take account of the social implications of the collegiality gap, it becomes clear that this gap is harder to plug than it might first appear.

Our account of collegial relationships does not yield any clear policy directive. Instead, it aims to serve as a framework that allows us to integrate concerns with collegial relationships into a broader account of workplace justice – where many other considerations are relevant, too. Even so, it suggests two sets of policies that could be conducive to increasing people's opportunity to form valuable collegial relationships.[25] First, the state could introduce regulatory requirements, whereby (sufficiently large) firms are required to offer at least minimal opportunities for co-workers to interact (e.g., a firm like Uber might be required to enable drivers to communicate with each other through the platform) or to be transparent about how their work is being used (e.g., in analogy to best-practice rules for participants in scientific studies). Alternatively, the state could seek to more directly create or support an environment that is conducive to exchange between colleagues – be this in the form of physical space (e.g., a public park where delivery drivers can meet), digital space (e.g., a website that provides or links to existing forums of exchange), or wider communities (e.g., unions or worker initiatives).

25. We submit that the imposition of regulation on employers might be justified where the inadequate opportunity to develop collegial relationships amounts to an injustice. This, we contend, holds even where employers have no unilateral obligation to create better opportunities to develop collegial relationships.

6. Conclusion

Collegial relationships are underexplored in the philosophical literature. In this article, we have proposed a novel account of collegial relationships, expanding on recent accounts of collegial relationships as a particular instance of interpersonal relationships. We have proposed to distinguish three forms of collegial relationships, each of which can generate distinct goods: professional relationships; collegial friendships; and collaborative relationships. We have argued that this account is of both theoretical value and practical relevance. Most immediately, it helps us identify features of workplace arrangements that make it difficult to realize collegial relationships of various types, thereby creating what we have called "collegiality gaps." In addition, it provides a tool for refining the normative assessment of specific arrangements of work. Collegiality gaps matter, we have claimed, because they imply that workers have reduced access to a distinctive set of relationship-based goods. Moreover, even if people voluntarily choose to subject themselves to the collegiality gap, and do so against adequate alternatives, the collegiality gap is of social concern: strong collegial relationships are instrumentally valuable to maintaining high levels of social trust and engagement. But this relevance of collegial relationships is not acknowledged by existing accounts of the non-monetary goods of work, nor in the discussion of the downsides of non-standard work arrangements, like platform-based gig work.

In one sense, the aim of this article has been limited. We have not provided an account of the precise conditions under which the collegiality gap amounts to an injustice. Nor have we offered an account of how specifically the state should respond. In another sense, the aim has been ambitious: we have tried to develop a theoretical toolkit to better understand the value of collegial relationships and to appreciate

the burdens that result from losing the opportunity to form valuable collegial relationships. We hope that even those who disagree with the specifics of our argument—such as our account of who qualifies as a colleague, our claims about click work's threefold collegiality gap, or even our account of the value of collaborative relationships—will find this framework fruitful. For we believe that while there may be reasonable disagreement on more specific questions, and the details of our account, it would be implausible to deny that collegial relationships are of critical importance. And if such relationships are indeed important, then a comprehensive account of them, and the respective goods they can provide, is needed. This article constitutes an attempt to provide such an account and to illustrate how it can be put to use.

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